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As we have seen in this sermon series, Scripture tells us that God is indulgent towards us. He shows excessive leniency, generosity, and consideration to us, far beyond our wildest dreams and much more than we deserve. Regardless of our present circumstances, we know that God is good to us. When we find ourselves in a bad situation, we tend to judge God by that. But when we do, we must catch ourselves and go back to Scripture and let the truth of God's indulgence affect the way we think and live. Today we will look again at Jesus' indulgence, because He and God are one in character.

In Luke 7, Jesus is invited to dine at Simon the Pharisee's house. It is helpful to know the context of this invitation. From Chapters 1-9 the relationship between Jesus and the Pharisees is declining, and from chapter 9 to the end, the Pharisees are overtly hostile towards Jesus and plotting his death. Chapter 7 is in the first part of Luke. So while Simon is attempting to act cordial by inviting Jesus, there most likely is some ulterior motive. Simon probably wants to test Jesus or discredit Him.

In verse 37, a woman of ill repute, most likely the town prostitute, worships Jesus and kisses His feet. Everyone in the house knew who this was. Simon, in verse 39, thought that Jesus must not be a prophet, because if He was, He would know who the woman was and wouldn't let her touch Him.

The first aspect of Jesus' indulgence is that He **did** know who she was and allowed her to touch him anyway. Simon thought Jesus wouldn't welcome her because it was defiling to be touched by such a woman, but Jesus allowed it. He doesn't respond to the lowly and outcast in the way normal humans do. We would shun such a person, but He welcomes her. This is an example we can follow. Even though the people we think of as societal outcasts don't usual frequent Walnut Creek, there are still many people even in this church who just don't seem to fit in for one reason or another. We should imitate Jesus and welcome them, instead of avoiding them.

Secondly, Jesus came to the woman's level. While she was worshipping Him, He did not act proudly towards her. He did not say, "You missed a spot, wash and wipe this part too."

Instead He welcomed her and came to her level. This is the same way we ought to interact with children.

Thirdly, the way Jesus answers Simon reveals His indulgence. He tells a story of two debtors, one who owed 500 denarii and one who owed 50. They were both forgiven by the creditor. When Jesus asks who will love the moneylender more, Simon said the one who owed more. Though it seems like he got the answer correct, Jesus' rebuke of Simon in the next verse shows that Simon completely missed the point of the story. Even though one debtor owed 10 times more than the other, *both* debtors had a debt that they could not repay, so *both* should love the moneylender for canceling the debt. What makes the woman special is not that she owed more and thus loved Jesus more, but that she realized that she could not repay her debt and so loved Jesus. Simon may have owed less, but he thought he would pay it back himself, and so he did not worship and love Jesus in the way the woman did. We must recognize that however much or little we owe, we can never pay it back. Jesus cancels all our debts, and we should love Him for it.

Fourthly, Jesus tells the woman that she can go in peace. There is peace now between her and God. There is no more separation between them. It might seem that Jesus favors the woman, but I challenge that understanding. Jesus cared about Simon's salvation just as much as the woman's. The fact that He tells the parable to correct Simon shows that he wants Simon to realize that he can't repay his debt, as the woman had already realized. Jesus loves both those who recognize their sin and those who do not; He calls both to His forgiveness. That is the extent of His indulgence.

For believers, we should be impressed by His indulgence. The key to having the right attitude about God and His indulgence is to face our own sins. Whether we owe 50 or 500, we cannot repay it. Only when we realize this can we truly appreciate God's leniency and mercy.

For those who do not know Jesus, they must know that Jesus welcomes them. It doesn't matter if they are of lowly estate, or if they haven't realized the gravity of their sins yet. Jesus still loves them and is willing to cancel their debt. That is the indulgence of our God. And so we praise our sovereign and merciful Lord Jesus.