

Good morning. My microphone's, oh, it's on now? Good, okay. We usually have music when I walk up. There wasn't any, so if anybody wants to kind of whistle while I'm walking, just say.

So anybody else have their glasses steam up when you came outside today because of the humidity? I'm quite certain there will be no humidity in the new heaven and new earth, but if there is, I may need to reconsider. So not really, not really. Okay, top 10, by my own estimation, top 10 people wanna be like from movies, all right? So top 10, I'm gonna ask you to pick one and we're all gonna say it at the very end, all right?

So people you would want to be like, all right? People you wanna put yourself in that movie, all right? First one, Tony Stark from Iron Man. He's genius, he's witty, he's charming. He's also a billionaire.

There's Indiana Jones. He's adventurous, archaeologist, really good with a whip, and he's just cool. Then there's James Bond, lethal skills, impeccable suits, and really cool cars. Captain Jack Sparrow from Pirates of the Caribbean, total freedom. He's quirky, he's a genius, and he's got style.

Luke Skywalker from Star Wars, he wields a lightsaber, he masters the Force, and he has epic galactic quests. And there's Elle Woods from Legally Blonde. She's fiercely fashionable, fiercely brilliant, and unapologetically kind. Then there's Katniss Everdeen from Hunger Games. She is fiercely protective, pragmatic, and resourceful.

Batman from Bruce Wayne, martial arts billionaire. He has a cool cape. Maybe not the tights, but the cape, right? Then there's Maria. I had to get for the over-60 crowd.

Sound of Music. She's free-spirited, she's kind, she's brave, she's full of song and joy. I was gonna also say Mary Poppins, but that'd be 2 times with Julia, wait, what's her name? Whatever her name, Julie Andrews, yeah. You can't have 2 people in the same one, right?

And then Maximus Decimus Meridius from Gladiator. He's unyieldingly loyal, fiercely resilient, and has deep family love. So I don't care if you're male, female, you can choose whatever, but on the count of 3, I want you to say the number of the person you would wanna be like, all right? Choose, 1, 2, 3. 9.

9. Wow, some emotion going on over here. In the second service I said numbers but somebody yelled out, Maximus Decimus. I was like, okay, I gotcha, that's who you wanna be. I did that because we're gonna look at a passage of scripture today and we're gonna do, and I think it's an ancient practice of the church, I'm gonna ask you to put yourself into the story as certain characters.

Sometimes when you read the Bible that way, you see what they saw, hear what they heard, felt what they felt, maybe in some different ways than just reading black words on white page. So I'm gonna ask you to put yourself into some characters into the account we're reading today about Jesus. The series is called Block Party, and every week this summer we're just looking at passages in the Bible where Jesus is in somebody's home, most likely often for a dinner. Some of them weren't necessarily dinner parties per se, but they were for dinners, and it was his interaction with people at that kind of level of life, that kind of space of life. So it's from Luke chapter 7.

Maggie read the first part. Put that back on the screen, what Maggie read. So just give you a little— where's the Luke 7? There we go. So this is just— she read this.

People had heard about Jesus, been doing some incredible things. He gets invited over to a Pharisee's house. The Pharisee's name is Simon. There's also Simon Peter, one of the apostles. That's not him.

Simon was a very common name. So Simon, a Pharisee, decides to invite Jesus over to his house, and it's pretty clear that it wasn't a hospitable invite. It was a skeptical curiosity invite because Jesus was getting popularity and begin a lot of traction that the Pharisees were losing, and they didn't like the fact that he was preaching and teaching something different. So he gets invited to the house, and in those days, it said Jesus reclined at the table. In those days, they ate at tables like really low.

They didn't have chairs. If you ever go to Turquoise Cafe on Kirkwood or Third Street, wherever it is, you'll see one, there's a table like that where you, so they would lean on the table with their elbows. That was okay, polite-wise, elbows on the table. And they would eat that way, all right? So let's just say, let's say, here's, let's say Simon's on this end of the table, some of his Pharisee cronies here.

Jesus, let's say, is leaning on this end of the table. So that's the scenario, and then it says the woman comes into the house. We don't know, she obviously had heard about Jesus. She probably had seen some of the things he'd done, heard of the things he'd done, saw him do miracles. She comes into the house, and what Maggie just read, which is in the Scripture, She stands over his feet, so his feet are like behind him, and she's weeping, obviously down her face onto his feet.

Then she wipes her, she must bend over at this point, she wipes his feet with her hair. Then she leans over more and starts kissing them, and then she puts perfume on them. So that's what's happening. We'll revisit some of these things in a second, but that's what's happening. So if you slow that down, it's kind of shocking especially if you're a religious, self-righteous person like Simon, all right?

So we're gonna read the rest of the passage and go to the next slide here. I'm gonna read Simon. I'm gonna be the Pharisee. I'll throw myself under the bus. You're gonna read the Jesus words, all right?

So this is the conversation. Simon's watching this happen, and it's known this woman is a sinful woman. Jesus even repeats it later in the passage. She's a very sinful woman, all right? So you can imagine what a self-righteous person is thinking.

So what starts all this off for Simon is this. He's thinking to himself, he's not speaking out loud, and he says to himself, if this man were a prophet, so I'm Simon, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is, that she is a sinner. Jesus says he knew what Simon was thinking, and Jesus says what?

Tell me, teacher. Go.

Well, I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven. Okay, now Jesus, next one. Jesus is now looking at the woman— but he's talking to Simon and he says— and all those things he's talking about were common hospitality things in that culture, done usually by servants and slaves. All right, now Jesus then— For the first time we see Jesus turns and talks to the woman and he says— The other guests, I'll be the other Pharisees. Who is this who even forgives sins?

So we're gonna look at a couple different characters, 3 actually. We're gonna put yourself in the place of Simon the Pharisee, in the place of the woman, and then we're gonna look at Jesus. We're gonna look at all 3 of these characters, I'll call it, in this verse. This particular account of Jesus. So we're gonna start off with Simon, and maybe you can relate to Simon the Pharisee.

If you think, "Oh no, I would never be like that," then I would assert that you're wrong 'cause we all have the Pharisee in us. We can all be a little bit self-righteous. I know I can be. So maybe you can relate to Simon. The Pharisees, they were the religious leaders of that day.

They were feared by the ordinary people because they were strict, they were self-righteous, Their job was to judge you and tell you what you're doing wrong. They were proud. They were hypocritical. There may have been a few in there that had good hearts, and we read about Scripture there were some, but for the most part they didn't. They were known as being hypocrites, self-righteous, and he's the one who said, "Well, if Jesus really— if Jesus was a real prophet, he'd know this woman is touching him." So let's talk about Pharisees a little bit because In Luke, this is Luke 7.

If you back up to Luke 5 and 6, there's a, Jesus has other conflicts with the Pharisees. He forgives sins of somebody and in Luke 5 the Pharisees say, "Who does he think he is? That's blasphemy. Only God

can forgive sins." They're always on the judgment side, right? In Luke chapter 6, Jesus' disciples are eating grain on the Sabbath from the field 'cause they were hungry.

You weren't supposed to work on the Sabbath. So the Pharisees are saying, "Why are they breaking the law by working on the Sabbath?" They're always doing that, all right? Then in Luke 6, Jesus heals a man's deformed hand on the Sabbath. Not supposed to work on the Sabbath, but this guy has a deformed hand. They're watching Jesus to see if he'll break the laws, not God's laws, Pharisee interpretation of the laws.

Jesus heals the man's hand, and this is shocking to me. It says the result of him healing this man on the Sabbath, the Pharisees were wild with rage. They were angry at Jesus. So that's the kind of tone these people, the Pharisees had. And then Luke, right in the middle of this is when Jesus, in the middle of this Luke 5, Luke 6, and end of 6, Jesus makes the statement to people about, "Judge not lest ye be judged." We know that, a lot of you have heard that phrase.

Jesus has encouraged them not to exercise what I'll call condemning judgment. We'll talk about the difference in a second, but it's interesting that shows up in this passage. Luke included that there surrounded by these other stories where the Pharisees are being very judgy, right? So then it's in this passage, Luke chapter 7, when the Pharisee thinks to himself and Jesus knows what's going on. He says, "If this guy were a real prophet, he would know this woman." Women should never touch men that weren't their husband.

Plus this woman was known, she must've been known in the community, everybody knew who she was. Maybe she was that woman in the town. You know, sins, Jesus even said her sins are many. So she was known as at the lowest level of the socially acceptable religious rung. And they're saying, and he's making this judgmental statement.

And then what's interesting in this passage, it says that Jesus answered her. Jesus answered Simon's thoughts. So Jesus, Simon was thinking something, Jesus knew what he was thinking. Well, that shows up in Luke chapter 5. It says that Jesus knew what they were thinking about the Pharisees 'cause they were being judgmental about him healing.

In Luke chapter 6, Jesus knew their thoughts after he healed the man on the Sabbath. Here, Jesus answered his thoughts. So is Jesus a mind reader? Well, I thought he kinda gave up some of his God powers to become, yeah, he did. He chose a limited, he still could do miracles, but it's like, how did he know what they were thinking?

I'm gonna assert that I think it's probably, Jesus wasn't a mind reader. It wasn't like, hmm, you know, like, you know, again. But he

probably was an expert in reading nonverbals. If I'm judging somebody or if I'm being judged by somebody, You know, you've had the experience where they either they roll their eyes or they don't roll their eyes, but you know inside they are, right? You know they're making a judgment about something you said or did.

All right, so it's this nonverbal thing. So I thought to help us out, I just, this is my emoji of the week. All right, this is the, no, this is this. I actually created this myself, so I should probably copyright it, but it's a Pharisee. This is judgmentalness.

This is like, I think I'm better than you. I'm wagging my finger at you. That was the Pharisees.

This person is inside all of us to some degree. All right, this is the Pharisee, and this was their tone toward Jesus. It wasn't because they loved God, because they loved being in the place of honor and self-righteousness. But so Jesus could read that. He can read that in us.

He knows what's going on. Of course he does now. But God knows, the Holy Spirit knows when you're being judgmental of others. So I'm saying that because I want us to kind of put ourselves in Simon's chair. Maybe we're more like him at times than we care to admit.

There was a— oh, probably, I don't know, 15, 20 years ago, I had a chance to go to the Holy Land. To Jerusalem and it was with a group of pastors and one of the, the guy who was leading the trip was a guy named Pastor Jack. Really, I revere him and he's been a mentor to me. He's passed away now. But we were at a shrine that was a building built over where people thought the Bethlehem manger was, all right?

We don't really know 'cause even centuries after all that happened, there wasn't a tourist business yet. But it's somewhere in Jerusalem, they built this shrine, some fancy stone, like a structure, like a church almost like. And then the place where they assume, they think Jesus, or they're telling the tourists where Jesus was born, it's this beautiful marble tile floor and crowds of people. And I'm standing there, there were probably 4 or 5 older women who were on their hands and knees crying and kissing the floor.

I was like, oh, come on. That seems a little, I thought it felt like, I felt it felt like a superstition, overemotion, and I was this. I was totally this in my heart toward them. 'Cause I thought, I don't feel a need to do that. So I walk out and Pastor Jack was outside while the other pastors were inside.

I said, Pastor Jack, what do you, I was hoping he'd agree with me, what do you make of that? The women that are crying and kissing the floor and on their knees. Again, I was hoping he would confirm that I had a righteous judgment. But he said, you know what, Matt? I've come

to the realization that the mercy of God toward us is enormous.

And I think when he sees that, he may see something beautiful. I was just like, "Ugh." I thought you were gonna agree with me, but I needed that rebuke. It was a rebuke. He didn't say it that way. He said it with gentleness, but it was like, "Don't be judgy of their actions 'cause maybe that's something Jesus sees as beautiful." So I'm saying that 'cause as much as we don't wanna be Simon and his cronies at the Pharisee table, we can be that way, and when you find yourself being that way, sometimes I'm just uttering a prayer in my head or I'll say it out loud, "Jesus, I don't wanna be this way." Change my heart.

I don't want to be this way toward that person or those kind of people. Because the judgment of the Pharisees, condemning judgment, is like, I'm better than you. I'm gonna talk down to you. I'm gonna wag my finger. Scripture's full of times where we're called to exercise discerning judgment, right?

If somebody's in sexual sin, there's discerning judgment that I might say to them, not with a condemning tone, but say to them, you gotta stop. It's not leading to the life you think it is. I don't think you want. Or if I was being harsh with my wife, I would hope somebody would say to me, Matt, you gotta stop. That's not good for your soul or her soul.

That's discerning judgment. It's not condemning judgment. So we're called to exercise discerning judgment. We're never called, when Jesus says, judge not lest ye be judged, he's talking about this condemning judgment the Pharisees were experts at and sometimes we can be too, right? That's what he was saying.

Don't be that way. But it has to be a supernatural change, so God changed my heart. So that's Simon. Other major character apart from Jesus is the woman. So maybe you can relate to the woman.

She was a sinner. Jesus even says her sins were many. He doesn't gloss over that. He's not like an overly generous grandparent who says, "Oh no, it's not a big deal." Jesus said her sins are many. So she, let's explain what she might have been feeling.

Full of shame, full of guilt. She probably knew she was mocked by the religious community or at least looked down on. And she felt the heaviness of condemnation. I'm guessing many of you here, if not all of you here, know exactly what I mean. When you've had a sin issue, I've shared in my past about stuff with pornography and other things, but you know, so many of you know the heaviness of self-condemnation.

And she was living under that all the time. Guilt, the isolation that comes with that, the fear of rejection in social circles 'cause people know you're a bad person. Boy, if they only knew about me, this is

what they would think about me. So you have to hide all the time. You have to pretend all the time.

And so do you wanna be her? I'm asking you to put yourself in her place. Heavy, heavy condemnation. She must have heard about Jesus or seen him, so she shows up at this house. She's standing over his feet initially and just weeping, and apparently her tears hit his feet.

She wipes them off with hair, kisses them. These were dirty feet, people, right? In that time, it was typical to have water and a towel for people when they came in 'cause they wore sandals. It was dusty. So we have sweaty, dusty feet going on here, probably smelly.

Pharisee didn't provide servants to do that, so this woman does it for Jesus. And so, oh, this, and you probably can know what she felt like. She was living under condemnation. So I'm thinking, if I'm Simon the Pharisee, that's wrong. She shouldn't even be, a woman should never touch a man that wasn't her husband.

Well, that's wrong. Plus, this woman has a reputation. And she's on the floor now kissing his feet. How undignified. I mean, isn't religion supposed to be dignified?

Shouldn't we care about how we look to other people? But that's very undignified. And it's very vulnerable 'cause she's opening herself up to more condemnation from the very Pharisees who have condemnation rifles they shoot at people all the time. So she's totally vulnerable. She's totally undignified.

And I'm gonna hang on that word for a second, undignified, because this was an act of beauty, I think, to Jesus. We tend to think that we're supposed to be dignified, which I get it in that sense, but this woman's on the floor. These women I saw at Bethlehem were kissing the floor, crying, and kind of, I thought, looked a little bit, you know, whatever. But think about Old Testament King David. King David was a dude.

He was a king. He was a warrior. They finally get the Ark of the Covenant out of captivity. He leads the procession back to Jerusalem, and David takes off his outer garment, and he's dancing before the Lord in front of everybody. He's the king.

He's a dude. He's a warrior. He's dancing, and his wife, in contempt, His wife's name was Michal, says to him, "How the king has undignified himself today." Like that's undignified worship, oh God, you shouldn't be doing that. And David answered, I love his answer.

He says, "I'll be more undignified than this if I have to be to worship God." And there's a song with this theme in it and it's, "I will dance, I will sing to be mad for my king." And then the chorus

is, "Oh, become even more undignified than this." Now, I'm not asking you to go dance before the Lord, but I'm asking you maybe in a room by yourself, if you feel God's wanting you to do something that feels undignified, nobody's even watching, maybe he wants you to do that. Maybe he wants you to get on your knees and put your face to the ground and tell Jesus you love him, not out of like, nose in the dirt, but it's an act of devotion and love to him. I can't do that 'cause I would never get up with my bad knees, right? So I have an excuse, not really, but you know what I'm saying. So maybe it's just singing loudly in your car, more loudly than you usually do.

Maybe it's, sometimes I'll put my hand out of the car, raising my hand up like I'm sure people are thinking I'm waving at 'em, but I'm just, it's an expression. I don't, when I'm by myself, I don't care what I do to some degree, but I'm just saying there might be times where God's asking you to be undignified. Maybe even how you respond to somebody, undignified as an act of devotion to Jesus. And there are people throughout the New Testament gospels that were healed because they were willing to be undignified. They go grab Jesus, they go in front of him, they do all kinds of, they're undignified.

There was my, the same pastor that I talked to after the Bethlehem at the manger thing who said, "God's mercy is enormous," told a story once, and this totally endeared me to this pastor. He said he was in Africa one time and he was in a church service and they were doing a dance at the church service. He didn't say, he said it was a little bit of a jig, kind of, I don't know what it was like, something, whatever. But he said in his own mind he was mocking it. And this was a kind of revered Christian leader.

He said, "I just thought this looks a little silly and it looks a little undignified." So he was kind of mocking it. So file that away. 6 months later, he said he's praying, having a really close time with the Lord, and he says to God, "I love you, I'll do anything for you, Jesus." And he said Jesus said to him, "Will you dance for me?" And he said to Jesus, "I don't know any dances." And Jesus said, "You know one, the one you made fun of in Africa." And so, And when he told this story, he was in front of 50,000 pastors, right? He said, "So I danced before," and he demonstrated the dance in front of all of us, 50,000 people, 'cause he said, "I know God wants me to be as undignified as those Africans were 'cause I think it was an act of love toward God." And that was stamped on me. 'Cause sometimes in our religious life we think we gotta look good, we gotta be dignified.

We gotta cross our T's and dot our I's and we need to take care of stuff, yes, but David, King David, I'll become more undignified than this for my king. So this woman's act was undignified but it was, to Jesus, it was beautiful, it was tender, it was liberating. She's probably gonna be one of the Hall of Fame members of heaven, so to speak, and she was a sinful, very sinful woman. So that's, so maybe

you see yourself like Simon. Maybe you see sometimes the condemnation that the woman would have felt.

Maybe you have some conflicting emotions of both. But let's finish with Jesus because he's the, he has the stage, right? He has the spotlight. Jesus is always the center stage spotlight of any biblical story, even Old Testament, it's Jesus. So let's look at Jesus.

So let's slow down a little bit the scene again. He's here leaning against the table, his feet are behind him. The woman walks behind him. He may have seen her, he may have heard her, we don't know. But when she started crying and the tears started hitting his feet, he knew something was going on.

But we don't have any evidence in scripture that he recoiled. Like, ooh. No, don't touch me. He didn't do that. Probably kept eating, we don't know, but then she has to lean over to wipe the tears off his feet.

What's Jesus thinking, feeling now? He doesn't recoil. He's not like, I can't believe she's doing this to me. She needs to clean up her act first and then come back. Then she starts to kiss his feet.

And he doesn't recoil. He doesn't run away from her. He doesn't ask her to leave, come back when she's clean. I'm saying this 'cause maybe that's our story too. And she pours perfume on his feet.

He doesn't stop her. So these Pharisees are kind of getting a little bit heightened emotionally, like this is just, he should be reacting to her. He should be responding to her. He should be shunning her, but he doesn't. He doesn't 'cause he doesn't do that to us.

So they, he has this conversation with Simon after that, tells a story about the forgiveness thing, and then he turns to the woman and says, "Your sins are forgiven." Note, she hadn't even asked for forgiveness yet. She hadn't prayed the sinner's prayer. She hadn't been baptized. But Jesus knew and saw something in her heart that was tender and soft toward Jesus. He knew her faith was genuine, her confidence that Jesus was the way.

And he says, "Your sins are forgiven." And these guys erupt. "Who is this man who thinks he can forgive sins?" When Jesus came into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, commotion. The people say, "Who is this man?" When Jesus healed the paralyzed man that was dropped down, he says, "I forgive your sins. Who is this man?" And even King Herod, when he hears about what's going on with Jesus, he says, "Well, I already killed John the Baptist, so who is this man?" And maybe that's the question— it's a question I think our culture asks. Jesus, who is this man?

Maybe it's a question we ask, or maybe should be asking, who is this man? Who is he? I'll answer it with a few things that come from scriptures. Who is this man Jesus? He's one who teaches with refreshing authority.

He's one who delivers people from Satan's power. He focuses on the mission of freedom. Who is this man? He's the man who touches the untouchables. He offers authoritative forgiveness.

He socializes and eats with sinners and scum. Some translators translate that word scum. He was known as a friend of sinners. So who is this man? He's a friend of sinners, you and me.

He treats brokenness with compassion and deep kindness. He offends the spirit of religiosity. Who is this Jesus? He speaks boldly and courageously to the proud and arrogant. But he remains wildly free, incredibly peaceful, and supernaturally joyful.

Who is this Jesus? He offers himself up to be tortured and killed. Who is this Jesus? He's the one who rose from the dead. And scripture says he intercedes for each one of us today.

Prays for us. He intercedes for us. So who is this Jesus? Why would, question I ask all the time, why would you not follow him? Why would you not give up the things you're hanging on to to give your life when you know it's not and not follow Jesus?

Who is this man? He's, there's no one like him. There's no one that will change your life. There will no one that will bring a fullness of joy and a fullness of peace and a wholeness of your soul before the people. Who is this Jesus?

That's who he is. And he, the last thing he says, the last point to the woman, he says, "Go in peace." It's the last part of this passage. Go in peace. Now he wasn't saying, this is kind of a chaotic dinner conversation, why don't you leave and go outside and go in peace. He wasn't saying that.

When Jesus said, "Go in peace," it was almost like a judge before an accused person saying to them, "Case dismissed. There's no more accusations against you. Go home." Be at peace. It's that kind of peace he's talking about. It's peace of soul, peace where you are ransomed and set free from the power of accusation.

Satan is called the accuser of the brethren. But we're really good at accusing ourselves. We're really good at self-condemnation. But Jesus says to us, be at peace. And he offers a peace, Scripture says, he says, my peace I give to you.

It's not the kind of peace the world gives. This peace I'm giving you,

It can't be taken away. It's deep in your soul. Romans 8 says, "There is now no condemnation for those of us in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life," freedom, forgiveness, "set me free from the law of sin and death," shame, judgment. So this is who Jesus is.

He's inviting all of us, whether you've been a follower of Jesus for 40 years, 4 minutes, or haven't even decided to follow him yet, he's inviting us all into that kind of soul peace, supernatural joy, in spite of our brokenness and in spite of our arrogance, 'cause he wants to heal that and bring wholeness to all of that so you can be the person that Jesus made you to be, full of life, full of joy, full of peace. So let me pray. God, I have no idea, I know a handful of stories here, but I don't know many. But I'm guessing, probably pretty accurately, there are people here who, when I talked about living under condemnation, um, they totally know that role in the movie. They would play that part.

They know how to play that part. They know what it's like to be— many have many sins. And there may be some here who also know the self-righteous judgment of the Pharisee that often kind of takes over their own mind and their own thoughts. So I just pray, Jesus, that you would, by your Spirit, bring healing to both in us, the woman and Simon in us, and bring us to peace, fullness of life and joy before you by the power of your Holy Spirit, and because you eliminated the accusation with your death and resurrection, and we love you for that. We show affection to you.

To you for that. We will be undignified to you for that. I ask this all in the name of Jesus, amen. So we have— this is a response time. Remember I said at the end of the service, call it a response time.

And basically, how do you want to respond to Jesus? How do you respond to the Holy Spirit? We have a couple things we already do. So we have communion. So if you're new here, we don't dismiss by rows.

You just come on up. You grab the self-contained juice and bread and you can eat it on your own discretion, right away when you sit down. There's bread on the bottom, juice on the top. But I want you, Jesus said, "Every time you do this, remember me." Sometimes I think we think he means remember all the horrible things you've done and it's all your fault that I had to go through this miserable situation. That's not at all what Jesus is saying.

Remember my promises. Because of this, remember that you can go in peace. Remember that there's no more accusations against you. You can go in peace. So when you put this juice and your bread down your throat into your body, you're inviting that, you're remembering the promise of Jesus.

There's also gonna be people on the sides with the orange lanyards on.

They're there to pray for you about anything related to the sermon or not. You can talk to them. They're also there if you decide you, maybe today you're like, I wanna follow Jesus. We can even arrange to get baptized today.

But whatever, however you wanna respond. Or maybe you just need to be responding on your own with some things God's been talking to you about and maybe this sermon might've triggered some things for you. So just be responsive to the Holy Spirit this morning and be responsive, yeah, amen.