



# CHRIST'S COMMISSION FELLOWSHIP

## Los Angeles

Dgroup Discussion Guide  
November 2, 2014

### The Ransom

#### Word:

Luke 7:36-50

*When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.<sup>37</sup> A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume.<sup>38</sup> As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."<sup>39</sup> Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said.<sup>40</sup> "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii,<sup>[a]</sup> and the other fifty.<sup>41</sup> Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"<sup>42</sup> Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said.<sup>43</sup> Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.<sup>44</sup> You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet.<sup>45</sup> You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."<sup>47</sup> Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."<sup>48</sup> The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"<sup>49</sup> Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."<sup>50</sup>*

What is a ransom?

A ransom is a sum of money or other payment demanded or paid for the release of a prisoner. Ransom as it translates into the Christian life is the price that was paid for our salvation. This price was the death of Jesus Christ. Why was it done? Jesus died out of love for us . . . and it is by grace that this salvation is offered to us if we accept Jesus Christ to be Lord and Savior of our life.

#### The Law.

In the Old Testament specifically in Exodus 20, we are given the Ten Commandments – God's Law. First given to the Israelites through Moses. This was the way that was given to God's people in order to please God. We grew up memorizing this Ten Commandments – we probably even know it by heart. But the main question is – have we been able to keep it?

Most of us are addicted to a To-do lists. We surround ourselves with list after list thinking that as we check off the list we are getting closer to achieving our goal. This brings us to the realization that perhaps we have relegated the Ten Commandments as a to-do list rather than Laws given to us by God Himself. But then when we commit to live our lives based on our understanding of God's law then we do not fully understand what is being asked of us.

That is why centuries later, Jesus reminded and elaborated on this in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:17-48). Before Jesus came many believed that they were keeping God's laws, but after Jesus explains what is being required of us then we realize that we have not really fulfilled God's laws. Jesus tells us that murder is liable for judgment in the same way that being angry at a brother is. Furthermore, Jesus tells us that lustful thoughts alone are enough to commit adultery. With this understanding, we can easily see that it would be impossible to become worthy to come face to face with God. God demands not just an outward obedience but obedience that springs from the inside.

There is a huge difference between having the desire to do these as compared to feeling obligated to these. We have to realize that the Ten Commandments does not just require us to be good, but more we are required to be perfect. . . because God can only accept perfection. It doesn't matter if you are progressively improving, it only matters that you are in perfection. This only proves to us that we are painfully incapable of fulfilling God's every demand. That no matter what we do, we will never truly measure up.

The Bible itself is filled with stories of people who could never really measure up. None of them could really pull it off on their own. But we can also see that what these men could not pull off, Jesus pulled off perfectly.

*Unless we see how helpless and profoundly sinful we are, the message of Salvation will not be exhilarating and liberating. Unless we know how big our debt is, we cannot have any idea how great Christ's payment was." – Tim Keller*

Let us now misunderstand. . . Jesus did not come to abolish the law. He says this Himself in Matthew 5:17 **Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.**

The Law is not there as a guideline but rather as a checklist by which we can realize just how sinful we are and how desperately we need a Savior. By pointing out how downright sinful we really are—and how hilariously incapable we are of meeting God's perfect standards—the Law points us to a Savior beyond ourselves. It reveals our desperate need for Salvation-by-grace.

In Exodus 20:2 God first reminds us of who He is. To give us a perspective of His holiness, of His power and who we are in respect to His holiness.

If we live our lives based on the law. . . continually trying to fulfill it, then we become slaves to the law. We are enslaved by it. If we are in fact able to fulfill the law, it only means we are a good slave but we will never get to a point where we can say that we have done enough . . . or that we are good enough.

## **Grace.**

What is grace?

Is unmerited favor. It is unconditional love. We can even think of it as an absurd gift – why? As Christians we often use ourselves as a standard, thinking that we are better than others, more deserving than others. It becomes a question of my performance versus everyone else's. This is the amazing thing about grace – it is not dependent on who we are, on what we have done, on what we have.

Grace in reality disrupts our sense of being right or of being deserving. This is best illustrated in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. We often find ourselves in the shoes of the Elder Brother. Or like in the case of the Sinful Woman, we act like Simon, believing we are much better than others. This mentality then makes it easier for us to be more forgiving and understanding of non-believers but harsher and more demanding on our fellow believers. We feel that we are rightly doing so because "we aren't as bad as they are".

But the truth is God meets us where we are and not where we should be. This is God's grace. This is how we are set free.

Our normal mindset is that we should work to earn grace. . . trying to earn back the right to return to God. We look to the law to rescue us – a sin to obedience exchange. But it doesn't work that way. Instead of that mindset, we should set our minds to realizing that everything else in this world is unimportant, non essential compared to the grace of God.

## **The difference of Law and Grace.**

The law exposes unrighteousness but it is powerless to produce righteousness.  
The law can inflict guilt upon us, but it can never really inspire us to obedience.  
The law can reveal our sin, but it cannot redeem us.  
The law makes the demand, but grace fulfills it perfectly.

The law breaks and disarms us into humility.

Grace is a gift that depends solely and entirely on the Giver. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says **He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

Jesus did not become our ransom so that we can just continue to live a “better” life. Jesus became our ransom, bore our punishment so that we can be made righteous.

The Law needs to crush us in order for God’s grace to heal us. The crushing maybe painful because we need to die to ourselves, we need to let go of our pride and self-righteousness. We will continue in the process of dying until there is nothing left in us but Jesus. But it is through the law that we realize how much we have really been forgiven. Jesus paid the price so that we could be free to forgive and ask for forgiveness. So that there is nothing left of us to defend because we are relying totally on the finished work of Christ Jesus.

True spiritual growth is not us needing a whole lot of Grace in the beginning and needing it less and less later on. True spiritual growth (true understanding of the Gospel) is an increasing realization of how much we need God’s Grace more and more each day.

**Works: Journaling task**

1. Have we been living under the Law or under Grace?
2. Is our life reflecting our life under Law? Is it reflecting a life under a Grace?
3. Are we obeying the Law out of obligation or out of love?