

Title: RIGHTEOUS VERSUS UNRIGHTEOUS, LUKE 7:36-8:3
(Chatham, NJ; 06/13/10, AM) [Pc – Point, Counterpoint Outline]

Theme: Although Simon was right about the woman being unrighteous, he misjudged her ability to become a righteous person by seeking forgiveness.

Purpose: To clarify the differences in the ideas about righteousness and unrighteousness, and to resolve the dilemma by injecting forgiveness into the discussion.

Introduction:

1. We begin with Luke 7:36 – 8:3, Jesus at Simon's house is anointed by a sinful woman.
2. The story raises the conflict between the righteous and the unrighteous.
3. On the one hand the righteous are those who behave in righteous ways; on the other hand those who have behaved in unrighteous ways can be the righteous.
4. Let's look at what is happening here by point/counterpoint.

I. Categories of the righteous and the unrighteous are legitimate.

A. Simon was right. (*Point*)

1. She was not one of the righteous.
2. Luke's comment is simply that she was sinner.
3. Simon recoils at what sort of person she was, 39.

B. The righteous refrain from the ways of the unrighteous.

1. Psalm 1 makes this clear.
2. So does Psalm 5: 4-6, 9-10.
3. That the unrighteous sometimes take advantage of the righteous is described in shocking detail in the story of Naboth's Vineyard.

C. The righteous are those who behave in righteous ways.

1. John makes this clear in 1 John 3:7, "Whoever practices righteousness is righteous."
2. The righteous are those who walk according to the way of God.
3. This is true in the Old as well as the New Testament.

II. The unrighteous can behave in righteous ways.

A. Simon was wrong. (*Counterpoint*)

1. He judged the woman incorrectly.
2. Although we know that no one is sinless, those who sin can still turn to God.
3. Psalm 32:1-7 demonstrates the need for grace and illustrates that a righteous man commits unrighteous acts.
4. Repentance brings the unrighteous into the fold of the righteous.
5. In Luke this unrighteous woman acts more righteously than the alleged righteous person: see how Jesus contrasts her behavior with Simon's in vs. 44-47.

B. No one is sinless.

1. Simon makes the mistake of comparing himself to the woman.
2. He doesn't see his sins.
3. He doesn't get the penitential psalms or the notion of atonement in the Law.
4. Paul gets it. Romans 3:13 quotes Ps. 5:9.

5. Whereas this Psalm was applied to the category of the unrighteous, Paul uses it to support his argument that “All have sinned.”
6. The woman recognizes her dependence on the grace of God (like the Publican does in Jesus’ later parable).
7. She doesn’t have to be told that she is a sinner.

III. Righteous and unrighteous come together.

A. We affirm both ideas.

1. Although the righteous are not sinless, they live for God, depend on him, and find their refuge in him.
2. To their credit the Pharisees sought to live a righteous life, however, they failed to recognize their own unrighteousness.
3. Simon should have reached out to the sinful woman like Christ did.
4. If he had seen his own sin he could have shared Christ’s concern for those trapped in sin.
5. He thus could preserve the notion that righteous behavior was God’s demand.

B. Forgiveness brings both ideas together.

1. The woman knew her unrighteousness.
2. She knew God’s righteous demands.
3. She also knew that she needed mercy.
4. When her unrighteous life met up with God’s righteousness, she experienced forgiveness.
5. The depth of her understanding motivates her to love God (47).
6. With forgiveness the unrighteous become the righteous.

Conclusion:

1. Even in Psalm 5 where we see the distinction between the righteous and the unrighteous, the Psalmist recognizes his need for God in verses 7-8.
2. The difference between the two groups is only that the righteous see that need and gravitate to it and to the life of righteousness demanded by it.
3. Resolve today that you will never outgrow your need for the grace of God.