Overflow
From Grace to Gratitude
November 1, 2026

Introduction
Aloha everyone! I'm Mark and I want to welcome you to our service. We're talking about living in the *Overflow*. Last week we discovered that when we keep our hearts saturated in God's grace our lives overflow with gratitude, generosity, and graciousness. But when our hearts become desensitized or calloused to God's grace we become unappreciative, cynical, and withdrawn.

This morning we're going to compare and contrast two composite sketches. We want to identify the kind of person who lives in the overflow of God's grace and one who does not. Our story is found in Luke 7, and in verse 36 it says,

36 "When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, He went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. 37 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. 38 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," (Luke 7:36-38 NIV).

In this story a Pharisee named Simon invites Jesus over to his home for dinner. The Bible isn't explicit about Simon's motive for inviting Jesus but it does give us a few contextual breadcrumbs. First, it is important to note that Jesus is no longer an obscure rabbi from the sticks of Nazareth. Word about Him has spread all throughout the region and large crowds follow Him. He is a renowned teacher and a miracle worker. Simon no-doubt would have heard about Jesus and was likely curious as to who Jesus was and what He was like. He may even have prided himself as someone who could host such a guest as Jesus. There will always be people who draw near to Jesus, not out of worship or admiration but out of curiosity and self-interest. Yet Jesus makes time for Simon.

Biblical scholars and historians tell us that first-century homes in this region often had courtyards where the public were welcomed to gather and spectate without being invited to the dinner itself. This would explain how the unnamed woman in our story learned of Jesus' whereabouts and how she was able to get so close to Him.

The Bible describes her as a woman in that town who lived a sinful life. Again, we're not told explicit details but she was a woman whose reputation preceded her. Needless to say, she was the last person you would expect to see at the home of a religious leader like Simon. Imagine your family had a Pastor over for dinner and the woman with a reputation showed up uninvited. In those days, people did not dine sitting upright at the table but would recline at a low table, propping themselves on an elbow with their feet facing away from them. The Bible tells us she came from behind Jesus as He was reclining at the table and began weeping over His feet, wiping His feet with her hair, kissing them and pouring perfume on them.

In those days people walked everywhere they went. They didn't have close-toed shoes like the ones we wear today. Most people wore sandals. So all day long they walked from place to place and their feet would be caked in the dust from the streets mixed with animal excrement or whatever else happened to be lying about. So it was customary for the host to provide water and fragrant oil for their guests for refreshment but we're told later in the story that Simon neglected to show Jesus this common courtesy.

So this woman is demonstrating a very extravagant act of worship unto Jesus by washing and drying His feet and anointing Him with perfume.

1. GRACE <u>OVERFLOWS</u> IN EXTRAVAGANT <u>WORSHIP</u>.

Last week we saw that gratitude is the recognition of unmerited favor. As we said last week, gratitude is not getting everything I want but remembering what I've already been given. We have already received God's undeserved grace and a heart of gratitude is what flows out of that. We worship God, not to earn His favor but because we've already received it. Our worship is a grateful response to the grace we've already received. We praise God and rejoice in the grace God has given us. But true worship extends far beyond the songs that we sing on Sunday.

The word "Worship" comes from the Old English noun for "Worthship". It is the act of ascribing worth or value to something or someone. All of us were created to worship. If you don't worship God you will worship something else. All of us ascribe worth and value to different things. If you spend enough time with someone and you quickly discover what they worship. What do you ascribe worth to? Where does most of your time and energy go? What do most of your thoughts revolve around? What do you give your money to? What has your affection and your attention? Anything that you ascribe more worth and value to than God is an idol. I say this, not to condemn but because we need to be honest with ourselves. It is easy to say we worship God but our time, money, attention and affection tell the real story. So worship goes far beyond the songs that we sing. Our entire lives are an act of worship.

Francis of Assisi famously said, "Preach the Gospel at all times; if necessary, use words." Meaning our lives and our actions, not merely our words, should demonstrate the gospel to the people around us. But there's a twist on that saying that I love, "Worship at all times; if necessary, use music." I pray that our worship wouldn't be limited to the words that we sing on Sunday but how we live all week long.

The woman in our story had no music and she sang no lyrics but her actions were one of the greatest acts of worship ever recorded. It is clear she must've heard Jesus' message of forgiveness and grace and realized that even she could be saved. And her encounter with grace prompted a H.E.A.R.T. of worship. I recently learned that a H.E.A.R.T. of worship is one that demonstrates,

Humility - She didn't even look Jesus in the face. She came from behind Him and prostrated herself at His feet. Like Jesus' story of the tax collector who goes to the temple to pray but stands at a distance and doesn't even look up to heaven but beats his breast and cries out for God to have mercy on such a sinner as he. Jesus said he went home justified before God because whoever humbles themselves will be exalted. She humbles herself and recognizes her sinfulness and unworthiness in the presence of Jesus.

Emotion - The woman's worship is not merely an intellectual exercise. True worship should engage not just our mind but our heart as well. She is undone in His presence and weeps uncontrollably. This is not to say our worship must always be highly emotional but she abandons all thought or care of what the others in the room think and allows herself to overflow with gratitude to the Lord.

Adoration - Her worship is not mechanical — just going through the motions. She kisses the feet of Jesus and anoints Him with perfume. She demonstrates a deep love and adoration for Jesus.

Repentance - This woman's brokenness reveals a true spirit of contrition for her sins. She knows the weight of what she is being forgiven of.

Thanksgiving - Because she had encountered such radical grace and had been forgiven much, she demonstrated gratitude and thanksgiving for all God had done in her life.

This is what a true H.E.A.R.T. of worship looks like and the kind of worshiper God seeks. Please don't miss the point. We're not talking about being more demonstrative or expressive during Sunday worship. That may be part of it but we're really talking about a lifestyle of worship that overflows through every part of our lives and radiates a heart of thanksgiving in all that we say and do. Worship at all times and when necessary use music. All of us have an alabaster jar called your heart and it is filled with love and affection. What are you pouring your alabaster jar out on? Are you just dabbing Jesus with a little perfume or are you pouring out your heart in worship of Him? Now let's look at the second sketch.

2. MAY YOUR WORSHIP BE A <u>FRAGRANT</u> AROMA, NOT A <u>FOUL</u> ODOR.

Although this woman anointed Jesus with perfume, it was her heart of worship that was the most fragrant of all. As the Psalmist writes,

16 *"You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.* ***17*** *My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart You, God, will not despise," (Psalm 51:16-17 NIV).*

When we come in humility and gratitude for the grace God has given us, He is pleased with our worship and it is a fragrant aroma. But it is also possible to bring worship to the Lord that repulses Him. This brings us to our second composite sketch.

39 *"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."*

40 *Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."*

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

41 *"Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.* ***42*** *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?"*

43 *Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven."*

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

44 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. 45 You did not give Me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing My feet. 46 You did not put oil on My head, but she has poured perfume on My feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”

When Jesus says, “whoever has been forgiven little loves little” He’s not actually implying that anyone has been forgiven little. All of us have been forgiven a debt we could not pay back. What He’s really saying is “whoever believes they have been forgiven little.” When your view of grace shrinks, your love shrinks, your gratitude shrinks, and your worship shrinks. Like the Pharisee in Jesus’ story who stood by himself and prayed, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people —robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get. Jesus said this man was not justified before God because whoever exalts themselves will be humbled.

48 Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

49 The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”

50 Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace,” (Luke 7:39-50 NIV).

So there are two characters in the room with Jesus. One, the most unlikely of people, realizes her need for God’s grace and demonstrates her gratitude through an amazing act of worship. While her eyes are fixated on Jesus, Simon is fixated on everybody else. He’s more concerned with his own image. He’s offended at this woman who has entered his home. He’s thinking about everyone but Jesus. When we come to Church, are we focused on Jesus or on everybody else? Are we wondering how we’re being perceived? Are we comparing ourselves to others in the room? Are we wondering what so-in-so is doing in Church? Fix your eyes on Jesus.

Secondly, while the woman honored Jesus and worshiped Him extravagantly, Simon did little to honor Jesus. The woman’s sins were great and obvious. Even Jesus acknowledged that her sins were many. But the whole point of His parable was that everyone is indebted to God. Whether we owe much or little, none of us can pay for our own sins. Simon’s sins were pride, self-righteousness, and spiritual blindness. He was too blind to see his own need for grace so he loved little, he honored little, he worshiped little. He did not bother to show Jesus the customary hospitality. In the same way, our sins may not be as obvious as others but all of us are indebted to God. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. None of us is able to save ourselves. And when we lose sight of God’s grace our worship shrinks. We no longer ascribe Jesus the honor and worship due His Name.

"who say, ‘Keep away; don’t come near me, for I am too sacred for you!’ Such people are smoke in my nostrils, a fire that keeps burning all day,” (Isaiah 65:5 NIV).

In this passage God rebukes those who offer sacrifices to Him yet walk in disobedience and push others away saying, “I am too sacred for you!” The Bible says their worship is not a fragrant aroma but a smoke in His nostrils. But here’s the important thing to catch. Simon is not a villain. He’s not an evil man. He was a religious leader, he was moral, he was interested in Jesus and even invited Him into his home. But this is what happens when we have a small view of grace and believe we have been forgiven little.

Conclusion
When our Church still met in Wahiawa we partnered with Wahiawa Middle School to create a safe walking program for kids who walked to school in the morning. It was a difficult time for most volunteers who commute to work or drop off their kids in the morning but there were a handful of faithful servants who did it diligently. There was one sister in particular who would faithfully serve to watch over students as they walked to school, pray over them, and welcome them with a warm "Good morning!". She shared about how the students ignored her at first but now they started greeting her from a distance. When I thanked her for sacrificing her mornings she said, "It's no sacrifice! I love being out there." Then she said, "I grew up here and I was a troubled kid. I was the kid who had a reputation in this town but not the good kind. I flunked out of school and people thought I wouldn't amount to anything. Now I love standing out there so everyone in this town who drive by can see what Jesus did for me and how I'm not that same person."

That was her act of extravagant worship unto the Lord. You wouldn't see her singing or playing an instrument on Sunday but you could find her standing out there bright and early, praying for kids, brightening their day, and testifying to the grace of God that transformed her life.

Today's story shows us that two people can be in the same room with Jesus and have a completely different experience. One of the dangers for those of us who have been following Jesus for a long time is that we can become so familiar with the things of God that we lose our wonder at His grace. We've sung the songs, we've heard the stories, we know when to stand, when to sit, and when to raise our hands. The question for us is not, "Do we know how to worship." The question is, "Does the grace of God still transform your worship?" Are we still fixated on Jesus or are we focused on ourselves or everybody else? Are we still wrecked by the grace of God or has His grace become familiar? Do we still hold Jesus in the highest regard or has worshipping Him taken a back seat? Are we ascribing proper worth to God or are we worshiping something else? I read a powerful quote the other day that said,

"The most dangerous alternative to genuine worship isn't always open rebellion against God. Sometimes it's respectable religion that has lost its wonder."

I pray that we would never lose the wonder of His Presence. May we always stand in awe of who He is and what He has done in our lives. May we always approach His throne with humility and recognition of who we are and what He has done. May our lives always be an extravagant act of worship overflowing with God's grace.

Group Discussion Questions
1. If worship is the act of ascribing worth or value to something, what are the things in your life that get the most attention and affection? What are the things you are most tempted to worship in place of God?
2. Are there times when the grace of God becomes familiar or an afterthought in your life? What are ways you keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and His grace for you?
3. How might the grace of God overflow in your life as extravagant worship this week? Is there someone God is calling you to bless? Do you need to set aside time to be with Jesus and worship Him? Ask the Holy Spirit how He would have you worship this week.