

**Mar. 1 - Scripture:** Luke 7: 27-50

Observation: A text of strong contrasts, and strong voices:

The acknowledged and renowned "voice in the wilderness,"- Malachi's messenger- the great John, and yet the lowly, but saved sinner, Jesus says, this man is actually "greater than he."

The forgiven harlot, showering Jesus' feet with her tears and perfume at a social gathering, mindful of her great sin and therefore her great pardon and the self righteous Pharisee host, clueless without a metaphor of forgiven loan debt to explain the harlot's great thanks, and Christ's great grace

A worldly environment that demands a demonstration, or a performance, and failing that, damns the faster- John, and then damns the feaster- Jesus

*Application:* So, how do I respond to other sinners? One stumbled into my office this morning, stubble on his face, a story on his lips. I asked him to leave. He was a bit frightening, and I was alone. It was inconvenient. I didn't let him speak beyond a few mumbled words. He wanted a handout, I knew it. As he left he scolded me for my lack of compassion. "I hope it's not you someday." It chilled me. I resented him. I judged my pain and distress greater than his. Where was Christ in me?

*Prayer:* Forgive me, Lord. This has been a difficult day. I ache with some of my own problems. My justification, I suppose. I've prayed with my son, on the phone. I've prayed with my friends, earlier. There's a lot of hurt out there, and around me, without that vagrant to add to the mix. The business day is over, and it is now dark. I now wish to go find the man, and listen to his story. Perhaps it was just a con. I've heard many, over the years, in this location. The soup kitchen is just down the street. I've parted with more than a few bucks. Offered food to some. This morning I didn't. Forgive me, Lord. He wanted compassion more than cash, I'm sure of it. Forgive me.

*Writer:* Conrad Collins