

Exposed by Grace
Lord's Prayer: Rooted and Grounded in Love

Opening

Read Luke 7:36-50

The story of the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears.

Powerful story. Contrasting two characters...this repentant woman and the Pharisees. The righteous and the sinner.

To help give us a better idea of what went on here I want to read the same story out of the Storybook Bible, the one we gave to Naomi today.

Read "Washed with Tears (page 280).

A cool experience was when I read this story to Kamron a few weeks ago, a few days after we gave the illustration of the False Self, when we wrapped Luke up in Toilet Paper, and I shared how Jesus in His love comes along and pokes, and pulls at our wrappings...

Kamron made this comment.

"Daddy, this is just like your sermon the other day. Where you said Jesus comes along and pokes and pulls at our wrappings. Trying to get to what's underneath.

That's what Jesus was trying to do to these "Important People" – He was trying to expose who they really were. How much they needed Him."

That's the nature of Light isn't it?

Dispel darkness and expose darkness.

In one group darkness was exposed.

In another darkness was dispelled.

A few weeks ago we painted this picture.

Like the little Snoodle, our backpack is full of lies that weigh us down. Like Punchinello we are covered in dots. We've allowed the world to wrongly label us, we've allowed our sin and mistakes to label us and we hang our head in shame.

And we are so ashamed, afraid of bringing that part of us into the light; we cover ourselves in what the church fathers call the False Self.

A few weeks ago we had Luke and Anna and Alexa demonstrate what this false self works. They wrapped Luke in white toilet paper.

Interesting enough, the False Self is also called the **shadow side**.

We all have a **shadow side**, whether we are aware of it or not.

I like how **Simon Tugwell** explains the false self.

“And so, like runaway slaves, we either flee our own reality or manufacture a false self which is mostly admirable, mildly prepossessing, and superficially happy. We hide what we know or feel ourselves to be (which we assume to be unlovable) behind some kind of appearance which we hope will be more pleasing. We hide behind pretty faces, which we put on for the benefit of our public. And in time we may even come to forget that we are hiding, and think that our assumed pretty faces is what we really look like.”

But what we learned from the Snoodle Tale and Punchinello is that our Abba Father loves whom we really are – not the sin and the mask and the fasod – but the true self-hidden with Christ in God. That’s whom He sees, whether we like it or not.

Therefore God calls us, as He did Adam, to come out of hiding.

To step out of the shadow into the Light.

That’s the invitation of Isa. 9.

That’s what this woman did. She stepped out of the shadows into the Light.

In Christ she discovered her true self. Hidden with Christ in God.

I love how the writer interprets this story and calls the Pharisees the “Important People”.

Simon the Pharisee, a religious man, a man of the cloth, knew the Torah, was the top of his class in order for him to have been a Pharisee, wealth position and power. He looked pretty good to all on the outside.

He throws a party and invites Jesus. All open. People on the outside of the home would have known there was a party going on.

Then we have this immoral woman – a prostitute.

We don’t know this woman’s story. We know she’s a prostitute, but we don’t know how she came into that line of work. Did her husband die, and none of his brothers take her as their wife in order to take care of her? Or was her husband the only male in his family? Was she divorced, and left to fend for herself? Was she abused? Abandoned? After a series of wrong choices ended up where she was? We don’t know.

This woman approaches Jesus, likely after watching from outside the home for some time perhaps, she barges in falls at Jesus’ feet. She comes undone and begins to wet Jesus’ feet with her tears, wiping them with her hair, kissing them and anointing them with perfume.

Can you imagine the atmosphere that night? Among some really religious powerhouses in the community – in walks this broken, highly sensual woman, with quite the reputation in the community.

And I love how Jesus responds. No reprimand. No lecture. He does not shut her down in need to protect his own reputation. No he allows her to carry on in spite of the "oohs" and "ahs".

I think Jesus is celebrating the moment. She comes to Jesus as she is. No fasod. No posturing. No wanna-be. She comes as herself. Broken, Needy. Aware of her own need for grace.

What it looks like to embrace your false self, embracing your own sin; your pain, no more hiding but accepting – embracing all of who you are.

Saying "This is who I am. I am coming to Jesus just as I am."

She comes as she is, and is totally loved.

This woman has come out of hiding.

Because of Christ's love, this woman has the courage to come clean. Discard a significant layer of her false self, and come into the light. Here we begin to see someone embrace his or her true self...holy and dearly loved by God.

No longer held in the grip of self-hatred, she has experienced God's love and grace...and realizes she no longer needs to hide.

But not the "Important People".

They're still all wrapped up. Cocooned in their false self. Their shadow side.

Afraid to admit the deep emptiness they felt inside. That all their righteous deeds and good works left their soul a dry barren wasteland.

But they wouldn't dare let anyone see that. So up goes the wall...wrap another layer of the false self so no one sees.

Not everyone is attracted to the Light.

When I was living in the Philippines you'd wake up in the middle of the night, stumble your way to the washroom and turn on the light...what would you see?

You'd hear them...running for cover.

What was it?

Cockroaches!!

This is what the Pharisees were doing. Running for cover. Not wanting to be exposed.

The Light of the World was sitting with them over a meal and they were getting twitchy.

Very nervous.

Sometimes we run from the light because we're afraid of being exposed.

So what about this false self. This shadow side. What is it? Where does it come from?

I like how Basil Pennington puts it.

“The core of the false self is the belief that my value depends on what I have, what I can do, and what others think of me.”

But maybe more than a definition, you need to see how the false self works.

I like Brennan Manning’s description of the false self, as he understands it in himself.

“When I was eight, the false self was born as a defense against pain. The imposter within whispered, ‘Brennan, don’t ever be your real self anymore because nobody likes you as you are. Invent a new self that everybody will admire and nobody will know.’ So I became a good boy – polite, well mannered, unobtrusive and deferential. I studied hard, scored excellent grades, won a scholarship in high school, and was stalked every moment by the terror of abandonment and the sense that nobody was there for me. I learned that my perfect performance brought the recognition and approval I desperately sought.”

False self is what Snoodle and Punchanello were wrapped up in.

They needed their maker, Eli to re-make them. To re-create them. Help them discover who they truly were.

**It’s what this woman discovered didn’t she?
Beautiful picture of what it looks like to invite Jesus into our darkness and pain.**

What the church fathers described as embracing your weakness.

She let her guard down and Christ’s love rushed in.

Story:

My old Youth Pastor Morris Dirks wrote this book I’m into now called [Forming the Leader’s Soul: An invitation to Spiritual Direction.](#)

Page 28.

This is what Jesus, the Light of the world invites all of us into.

Step out of the darkness into His glorious Light.

I came home the other day unpacking some of this with Kenda. Admitting some of my stuff and I shared...

When I am stressed, I can get irritated with people’s incompetence. Frustrated...the littlest of things.

I shared that with Kenda and her comment...You’re a lot better than you first were when we got married. Now it’s only stress that uncovers it!”

Such a true statement...

Tells us something about how discovering our true selves in Christ is a journey of discovery. Little by little. Over time, if

we're willing, more and more of our false self is exposed...and little by little the shadow is diminished.

I'm convinced...the more we allow the Light of Christ to diminish our false self, we discover more and more the experiential love of God.

Personal Story:

I was listening to Cold Play's new album.

Got to the song Up & Up.

Lyrics like...

How can people suffer, how can people part?
How can people struggle how can people break your heart
I wanna know, show me how to feel.
Yes I wanna know, show me how to heal it up, heal it up...

Suddenly I was in God's presence...

As I lay on my bed, hands lifted in worship.

And this childhood memory came to mind when I was 4 years old

And there I was...like this woman wetting Jesus feet with my tears

I remained in that space...

Loving Jesus and allowing myself to be loved.

Eventually I renounced the lie that my heavenly father is angry, abusive and destructive and embraced the truth that my heavenly father is loving, tender, kindhearted and safe.

Closing Words:

Close eyes and receive these words.

Jesus says "Come to Me...Acknowledge and accept who I want to be for you: A Saviour of boundless compassion, infinite patience, unbearable forgiveness and a love that keeps no record of wrongs. Quit projecting onto me your own feelings of self-hatred. At this moment your life is a bruised reed and I will not crush it. A smoldering wick and I will not quench it. You are in a safe place."