

Title: The Testimony of a Transformed Heart

Text: Luke 7:36-50

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Proverbs 4:1 reminds us that we must *"hear our father's instructions, and be attentive, that we may gain insight."* And so, if you have your copy of God's word with you today, and I hope you do, please turn to Luke 7. We're going to be looking at verses 36-50 this morning, which has got to be... I mean, every passage you study as a pastor is your favorite passage in that moment. This passage stood out to me, I remember when I was a teenager, and hopefully you'll see why as we go through it.

And it's just been a passage that has stuck with me ever since and has been a constant encouragement and conviction to my own soul and my own walk with Christ. And so, I hope it is a great encouragement to me as I feel a great burden to communicate more truth than I have the time for this morning. But I pray that this will be a great blessing to your heart and to your soul. As we get to see in this passage the change that happens when someone surrenders their life to Christ's saving sovereignty.

If you remember, this gospel is a thematically organized, historically verified, first-hand eyewitness account of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. It was written in grand historical literary fashion by the highly educated first-century doctor named Luke, who collected and interviewed to all these eyewitness testimonies, likely while he was a companion to the Apostle Paul during his missionary journeys. And Luke writes this account, as he says at the very beginning of chapter 1, so that we might have certainty concerning the things that you and I have been taught concerning Jesus. That we might have certainty that these truths and these admonitions that we teach as Christians are not just mere human inventions, but rather are grounded on the actual, literal, historic person teaching and work of Jesus Christ. That Jesus really is the promised saving sovereign of all. And our obligation is to respond to him in repentant faith and not be offended.

Now, in chapters 1-6, Luke sketches a rough introductory outline for all of us. And now here, starting in chapter 7, we begin this gospel journey in earnest and start seeing this rough outline of Jesus Christ filled in with vibrant detail and glory, as we begin to see who Jesus is, what he taught, and how we ought to respond to him. And those questions really are central to the passage that we're going to look at this morning, just as they are central to the entire Bible and this entire chapter escalating up to this point. Who is Jesus? Well, first we see from his healing of the centurion in verses 1-10 that he's at least a man who is worthy of great honor.

As the centurion says in verse 6, *"I am not worthy to have you come under my roof."* Next, we see from his raising of the widow's son in verses 11-17 that Jesus is at least a prophet of great significance, as the people cry out in verse 16, *"A great prophet has arisen among us!"* And finally, we see from his interactions with John the Baptist's messengers in verses 18-23 that Jesus is at least the Messiah, as Jesus responds to their questioning of *"Are you the one who is to come,"* simply by saying, *"Go and tell John what you have heard and seen."* His miracles themselves answered their questions that he was indeed the Christ.

Now that is an astonishing revelation in and of itself, but Luke's not even finished yet. For the account that Luke's going to record for us today reveals to us that Jesus is more than even just the Messiah. He is someone infinitely greater and knowing that about Jesus should completely transform the way that we listen and respond to him above all. But if we're to be honest this morning, it often doesn't. Sometimes we can know, at least intellectually, who Jesus is and how great and significant he is, and yet it doesn't really change how we listen or respond to him, does it? We can become like those in the previous passage in verses 31-34 who treat Jesus and his word like a game, like a pleasant song. We can have a professional understanding of Jesus, if you will, one that we enjoy and have a cordial appreciation of religiously, but one that never really changes our thoughts, our feelings, or our affections.

Well today's passage is going to show us why that happens. How can there be people who know about Jesus and yet do not appreciate him, do not love him, do not serve him, or obey him above all? And even to a lesser degree, how can even we ourselves who do know Jesus through faith in him begin to not appreciate his person and work for ourselves? Why does our heart grow cold to Christ? Well, we're going to see this morning that a knowledge of Christ does not always correlate with an appreciation for Christ because we either do not know or we have forgotten who we are in terms of our need for Christ. Because it is there and there alone that real change takes place. It is at the intersection of knowing who we are and who Christ is that real transformation always begins. And so that's what we're going to see this morning in Luke 7:36-50.

We're going to see the testimony of a transformed heart, of someone who rightly knows who Christ is in light of who they are and therefore have experienced a complete transformation. A complete transformation that Jesus actually uses to convict a self-righteous Pharisee of his need for transformation as well. And that's what's so powerful about the account that we're about to look at. It's not the dignified man sitting serenely in the spotlight with all of his glorious clothes who was a rebuke to the woman who was sobbing in the shadows. No, it is the woman sobbing in the shadows who's a rebuke to the man who's sitting all aloof in the spotlight. Because if you truly know Jesus, you cannot be aloof about him. You will always be transformed, transformed in your thinking, your feelings, and your affections. And that's what we're going to see today in Luke 7:36-50 as we look at the testimony of a transformed heart.

And since this account is a narrative, we're just going to handle it very simply as such with four simple points. First in verse 36, we're going to orient ourselves to the settings that introduces us to this account. Then in verses 37-40, we're going to observe the situation that shockingly bursts onto the scene that day. Then in verses 41-43, we're going to learn the story that Jesus gives in response to the situation. And finally in verses 44-50, we conclude with the significance of the story and what we should learn from this account here that Jesus gives us today. So, the setting, the situation, the story, and the significance of this simple account showing us the glorious testimony of a transformed heart.

So, with that in mind, if you're able, please stand with me out of honor and attention to the Word of God as I get to read the passage before us today from Luke 7:36-50.

Luke, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes these words for us today, Luke 7:36, *"One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.'* And Jesus answering said to him, *'Simon, I have something to say to you.'* And he answered, *'Say it, Teacher.'"*

"A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he canceled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?' Simon answered, 'The one, I suppose, for whom he canceled the larger debt.' And he said to him, *'You have judged rightly.'* Then turning towards the woman he said to Simon, *'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in, she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven - for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.'* And he said to her, *'Your sins are forgiven.'* Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, *'Who is this who even forgives sins?'* And he said to the woman, *'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'"*

This is the word of God whose law we love and meditate on all the day.

Let us pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for your word. Father, I just pray that you would show us the heart of Christ this morning and show us our heart so that we might love him truly.

I ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

You may be seated.

So, Luke begins this testimony of a transformed heart by giving us first the setting in verse 36. It says, *"One of the Pharisees,"* we know from verse 40 that his name was Simon. So, Simon, *"One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table."* Now, we don't know the reason why Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus over to his house to eat with him that day, but it likely was not for a good reason. And that is because we find out later in verses 44-46 that this Pharisee was very discourteous to Jesus upon his arrival. See, back in that culture, when a host invited a guest over for a meal, in this case Simon the Pharisee inviting over Jesus, it was basic courtesy to show that guest simple expressions of hospitality, love, and due respect.

For example, in those days the guest would have been walking around in sandals on dirt roads all day, and it was a basic hospitality for the host's servants to wash off all that dirt and clean the guest's feet before they entered the house. Around that same time, whether before or after the feet washing, the host would have put his hand on the shoulders of his guests and given him a polite kiss on both cheeks as a symbol of peace and welcoming into his home, similar to how we shake hands in greeting today. And then finally, after the guest had been welcomed and his feet had been washed, the host would often have also made sure that a little bit of oil, usually scented olive oil, would be poured out onto the heads of his guests as fragrance and a deodorizing agent.

Well, we find out later in verses 44-46 that this Pharisee named Simon did not have Jesus' feet cleaned, nor did he give him the greeting kiss, nor did he anoint his head with oil. And so, as this meal begins, everyone has been likely properly greeted and is sitting around the table with clean feet and pleasant fragrance, everyone except for Jesus. He has not been greeted, his feet are still dirty, and the smell of the day's activities still linger on him. I mean, this was a passive aggressive slap in the face, a social disgrace that Jesus had to suffer. You have to wonder why in the world did Simon invite Jesus over if he was going to treat him that way? Was it that Simon was trying to aid the other Pharisees in an attempt to catch Jesus committing some sin or blasphemy like they tried to do back in chapters 5-6? We don't know, but whatever the reason was, we know it wasn't a virtuous one because of the rude discourtesies that Simon gives Jesus as they all lay down around the table to eat that day.

And yet, though Jesus knew that Simon was a hypocrite, I want you to notice something. What does Jesus do? He goes to his house that day, doesn't he? He, nonetheless, notice he comes to Simon's house to minister and to present the gospel to him. He cares, Jesus cares, even for the self-righteous hypocrites. Hallelujah! What a Savior. And he has come to eat and drink with Simon the Pharisee that day for the same reason that he would eat and drink with the tax collectors and the sinners of his day. It was to call Simon to repentance. For all our sinners before a holy God and must repent of their sins to be saved. And so that's the setting.

Next, let's see the situation. That's in verses 37-40. We begin in verse 37 where Luke records, *"And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he,"* Jesus, *"was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment."* Now, Luke highlights the unusual activity of this woman to this specific place by saying, *"behold."* In other words, here's a shocking thing. And this woman's presence at the Pharisee's house that day would have been shockingly unusual for three reasons.

First, she was, as Luke says here, *"a woman of the city."* Now, that does not mean merely that she lived in that city, but it also means that that city knew her very well. And likely for not good reasons, because Luke makes it very clear next when he says that *"she was a woman of the city, who was a sinner."* Now, that is a very polite way of saying back then that she was either an adulterer or a prostitute. In other words, she was well known as someone who had been living a flagrantly sinful life at a public level. When she walked down the street to the marketplace, people of the city would have whispered, there she goes. You know who she is. You know what she did. She had a past, as all of us do, and it was a past of a particularly sordid reputation. That's why Luke says, *"behold."* I mean, it was a shocking scene to see a woman of that

reputation walk into a Pharisee's house. It is not something that that Pharisee would have allowed to have happened. She was a woman of the city. She was a sinner.

And the third thing I want you to know about her right off the bat before we get any further is that she was saved. While that's not immediately apparent, it is made clear later on in this passage in verses 47-48, where Jesus says repeatedly that her *"sins are forgiven."* Now those verbs are in the perfect tense in the Greek, indicating a past event with ongoing results. The ESV in its translation emphasizes the ongoing results, but verse 47 could be translated strictly, *"her sins, which are many, have been and are still forgiven."* And again, in verse 48, *"your sins have been and are still forgiven."* This is not Jesus conveying forgiveness in this moment. This is Jesus confirming forgiveness in this moment for the woman.

Now we don't know when this woman was saved. When she was redeemed and regenerated through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. It must have been very recently. Perhaps we know this because she still has a reputation, a very public reputation as being a sinner. So, her salvation must have been recently. Perhaps it was when Jesus was preaching his sermon about saving faith and repentance in Luke 6. Perhaps it was when he restored to life the widow's son in chapter 7. Perhaps she was one of those who came from Tyre and Sidon or along the coastline. We don't really know, but what we do know is that this woman doesn't come here because she wants to be forgiven. She comes here because she already is. And that is important for our interpretation of this passage.

What we're about to see from this woman are not the actions of someone who is still seeking forgiveness and hoping to earn it through deeds of love. But rather what we're about to see from this woman are actions of someone who has already received forgiveness and is simply eternally grateful. She has not earned anything. She has gone directly from a life to sin, directly before the feet of Jesus. She hasn't changed her life. She hasn't dedicated herself to some moral laws or obedience and that's how Jesus confirms forgiveness. He confirms forgiveness on a completely other reason. Not of works, but as we'll see later, by faith alone. And she's just grateful.

And so, this woman with an ignominal past, after learning that Jesus was eating there, she comes into Simon's courtyard. And she's carrying, as we're told, *"an alabaster flask of ointment."* And all that means is just one thing. It was expensive. Alabaster was a kind of refined marble that was quarried and carved directly out of Egypt. And only the best perfumed ointments were put in flask vials like that. And so, this woman comes into this house in a very bold and desperate attempt to pour out her flask upon the head of Jesus, as the greatest sign of homage and honor and respect that she could possibly give to this person who had preached the good news to her, in whom she had found forgiveness.

And so, she slips into the outskirts of the courtyard unnoticed with a flask in hand, looking for Jesus. And this is what she would have seen. She would have walked into a small crowd, because in that setting, it was customary when a host had a special guest over or a teacher over for observers from the city to wander in and out. And this is how villages and towns would often get their news and entertainment and education. And in the middle of that crowd, there would have been the host with his invited guests reclining at a low

table, with their feet pointed outward kind of like the spokes of a wheel. And they would have been propped up on their left arm, eating and discussing various topics of the day.

Well, this woman moves through the crowd on the perimeter until she at last, as verse 38 says, ends up *"standing behind Jesus at his feet."* Now, no doubt she's waiting for an opportunity to anoint Jesus' head with this costly perfume, to express her undying gratitude and to show him how much she loved him. But for now, she hangs back near Jesus' feet. And then verse 38 says that she begins doing what? *"Weeping."* Why? Well, we don't really know.

Perhaps it is because she is overwhelmed with thankfulness and adoration for Christ. She can't believe that a woman like her should find herself in the presence of a saving sovereign like him. I think that's definitely a part of what's going on here. Sheer love to have met the person of Christ and seen in him a love that didn't take advantage of her, but rather a selfless love that healed her and forgave her and released her from all of her sins. I think we're seeing grateful love here. I think another part of it is, as she's standing there, she probably sees Jesus' dirty feet and dusty smell and realizes that Jesus is silently suffering. He who is worthy of all honor and worship is silently suffering the brunt of social disgrace at the hand of his host. I think it broke her heart to see the Savior that she loved so being treated with such callous indifference and contempt. She was worthy of public disgrace, not him, not Jesus.

And so, look at what she does with her tears. End of verse 38. It says, *"she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment."* She is cut to the heart. He who is worthy of all honor and all glory lays there in dishonor and disgrace. And so, she falls down at the feet of Jesus to do for him what no one else had done. She begins to wet his feet with the flowing of her tears to give him the simplest dignity of simply having his feet washed. But she has no towel, and so she does the unthinkable. She puts down her hair.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the Talmud, a woman who removed her clothing would suffer no greater punishment than a woman who had let down her hair. Every woman after the night of her marriage would put up her hair in the morning following and would never take it down in public ever again. And yet here, in light of all that Jesus had done for her, this woman breaks every social taboo in making sure that Jesus is shown the honor that he is due. She puts down her hair, the picture of a woman's glory, and she uses it as a towel to dry the feet of Jesus. This is self-forgetful, shameless devotion and love, weeping tears of joy for Jesus, weeping tears of love.

And then it says that she *"kissed his feet."* *"Kissed his feet."* That is *kataphileo* in the Greek. It is an intense word. It's only used five times in the New Testament. It means to kiss and tightly embrace with love. She cannot let Jesus go. And as she's holding onto the feet of Jesus swept up in the emotion, she snaps the alabaster flask and pours its perfume out upon his feet. And I want you to know throughout it all, Jesus makes no attempt to stop her, does he? This could have been absolutely disastrous. A known adulterer or prostitute is sprawled at your feet with her hair let down, expressing deep emotional love and honor by embracing your feet with kisses. Most people would expect Jesus to kick her away out of concern for his

reputation and her sinful past. But that's not our God. He is a gracious, condescending Savior who accepts on the merits of Christ the worship and adoration of redeemed sinners like you and like me.

As Hebrews 2:11 says, *"he is not ashamed to call us brothers."* And Jesus saw that woman's heart. If someone would have asked her why she was weeping and worshipping so, she would have said, because my sins, which are many, are gone. When is the last time the simple truth that you have been forgiven of all of your sins just caused you to weep for joy? Verse 39, *"Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.'"* An implication, he would have kicked her away. Because the only people that God lets close to him are the righteous ones, right? That's exactly what Judaism taught, first century of Judaism. The only people that God lets draw near are those who are righteous by their works. He would have never let this woman touch him. Pharisees never understand the grateful tears of sinners because they don't understand their own sin.

Simon thinks to himself, I knew Jesus wasn't a prophet because if he was, he would have known that she was a prostitute. Holiness would never accept the love of a sinner like that. But who's the one who doesn't understand in that room? Is it Jesus? No, it's Simon. He's the one who didn't understand. He didn't know God and he didn't know himself. Because if he did understand, he would know that all men are sinful and are only accepted ever by the undeserved mercy and grace of God anyway. But in his ignorant unbelief, this Pharisee privately concluded that Jesus must not be a prophet.

Well, look at verse 40. It says, and Jesus answering, now wait a minute, think about this, answering what? Yes, answering Simon's own thoughts. How ironic, not a prophet. Jesus knows Simon's own thoughts, showing us that he is indeed more than a prophet of God. He is God himself. As Solomon himself confessed to God in 1 Kings 8:39, *"you and you only know the hearts of all the children of mankind."* And again, Psalms 94:11, *"the Lord knows the thoughts of men."* And so, Jesus, knowing Simon's private thoughts as God in human flesh among them, tabernacling among them, he publicly answers them here by saying, *"Simon, I have something to say to you."* Boy, I would be shivering in my boots at that moment. *"And he answered, 'Say it, Teacher.'"* Wow. I mean, how sanctimonious and insincere can you be saying in your heart he is no teacher while then saying with your lips, teach on, teacher. Behold the patient love of Jesus here, patiently meeting Simon in all of his hypocrisy right where he is in his arrogant self-righteousness. *"I have something to say to you,"* which moves us on to the story.

Verses 41-43, and this will move quickly because it's so straightforward. Jesus says in verse 41, *"A certain money lender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii,"* or 500 days wages, *"and the other fifty."* So, the comparison is between two individuals here. One is in debt for about a year and a half's wages, and the other is in debt for about a month and a half. And neither of them can pay their debt that is due. And Jesus asked Simon a very simple question. *"When they could not pay, he canceled the debt of both. Now which one of them will love him more?"* Right, which one of the two will love the money lender who forgave them more? *"Simon answered, 'The one, I suppose, for whom he canceled the larger debt.'"* I suppose. 500 days wages being forgiven compared to 50 days wages being forgiven. Who is going to be more excited?

If I found out that the bank forgave me of a mortgage payment compared to the mortgage total, which one do you think I would be more excited about? I mean, that's exactly what's being talked about here. Who's going to be more excited? The answer is the man who owed 10 times the amount of the other. There's no suppose about it, Simon. *"And he said to him, 'You have judged rightly.'"* Pretty simple principle that Jesus lays out in this story. The one who's been forgiven the most is going to show the most love towards me. And here's where Jesus brings it all home as he discusses this story's significance in verses 44-50. And it says, *"Then turning towards the woman he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman?'"* Oh, self-righteous Simon, you're not the teacher here. This woman has something to teach you. Everyone turns to look at her. *"I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment."* In other words, she showed me more courtesy, consideration, honor, and attention to me than you did.

You just think I'm another guest in a long line of guests. Just like the Jews think I'm just another prophet in a long line of prophets. This woman's teaching you something. I am something way, way more. Therefore, I have an observation. *"I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven."* And how do I know this? *"For she loved much."* As we saw in the story, great forgiveness is demonstrated by great love. *"But he who is forgiven little,"* as he looks at Simon, *"loves little."* How convicting. Jesus says this woman must have great forgiveness from God because she shows great love towards the one whom God has sent. But you must not have any forgiveness from God, Simon, for you have shown no love towards me at all. What a truth.

Great love for Christ is found where a great understanding of one's sin exists. We have to ask ourselves the question, why is it, if this is you, you need to ask yourself this question, why is it that I show so little love for Jesus? Perhaps it's because I have never really seen and faced up to the fact of how great a sinner I am. That's the answer. You don't have to dive into the depths of depravity to foster a grateful love of Christ and his forgiveness. You just need to look around at the sin and depravity that you're already drowning in. Because when you and I come to a greater understanding of our sin, a greater love for the forgiveness of Christ will take root. It will. I want you to know how essential this truth is in the ministry of our church and the ministry of your own life.

See, one of the first ways a believer might be tempted in his teaching or preaching or witnessing is to adapt his message in the area when it comes to what? Sin. But when you cease to declare the reality of sin, you cease to exalt the love of Jesus. We ought to beg God, help me to better grasp the depths of our depravity. That we might better grasp the heights of your love. That we might glory more in the grace that is greater than all of our sins. Our prayer as God's people ought to be, God, show me more of myself in truth. That I might love more of you in truth. May we never be like the one that's mentioned in 2 Peter 1:8-9, who is *"unfruitful in his knowledge of Christ."* Because he is so nearsighted, being blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

That's why we have these songs that read, Jesus keep me near the cross. For there a precious fountain, free to all, a healing stream flowed from Calvary's mountain. This is why one of my favorite songs goes this way, have I forgotten the cross, my Lord, when I carry not my own? Have I forgotten the crown you bore

upon your sacred head? Have I forgotten your hands were pierced when I hold onto this world? Have I forgotten your love so fierce, gasping for your breath? Have I forgotten my guilt was washed when I cannot lift my face? Have I forgotten my sins are gone as far as the east is from the west? O help me not forget the cross, the cross, my soul remember this. What love, what cost, O help me not forget. We must never forget who we are. And who Christ is.

Which is why we read in verse 48, *"And he said to her, 'Your sins have been and still are forgiven.'"* What a simple phrase, and yet it is so beautiful, *"your sins are forgiven."* Again, my sin, O the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin not in part but the whole is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. What? Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul. *"Your sins are forgiven."* Friends, I want you to know that Jesus can say that of you today. If you would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, then be saved. For whoever comes to me Jesus says I will never cast out, and we see that with this woman. I will never cast out but your sins I will blot out, your sins are forgiven.

Verse 49, *"Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, 'Who is this, who even forgives sins?'"* This is the question you must ask yourself today. *"Who is this, who even forgives sins?"* And we know the answer already do we not? Luke 5:21, *"no one can forgive sins,"* except who, *"God alone."* Only God can forgive sins. And it is obvious that Jesus has forgiven hers, there was no debate about that, everyone agreed. We can see this woman is forgiven. How? By the conduct of her life that she had been living up to that point. Absolutely not. But by the transformation in her life. Joy, gratitude, love, holy affection. She was a new creation. She was born again. Her salvation was evident not by her words or even so much by her actions at this point except that those actions showed what was in her heart. A passionately devoted lavish love for her Savior. *"She who is forgiven much, loves much."*

You know I remember one man telling me in church one time, you know I'm just not a very emotional person. And my response was, you're lying. I've seen you when your football team wins, and I've seen you when you catch a big fish. The reason why you're not excited about Jesus is because you've forgotten who he is. Everyone could see what was in her heart. A passionate devoted lavish love for her Savior. Jesus uses the testimony of this former prostitute's transformed heart to witness to the self-righteous Pharisee.

It says in verse 50, And he said to the woman, thank you for living such a righteous life up to this point. You have surely merited acceptance before God in heaven. I want you to know the peace that comes through being such a righteous individual. Is that what he says? No, but that's what every other religion on the face of the earth would say. Peace comes by your works. That's not the peace that Christ offers. *"He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'"* You see, it was not her love that saved her. It was her faith. Evidenced by her transformed heart full of new affections and desires. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, as we read this morning, *"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not of your own doing; it is a gift of God, not of works, so that no one may boast."* This, it was her faith in Christ that saved her, that forgave her. It was always faith. Faith alone.

"Your faith has saved you; go in peace." Literally, what he says there is go into peace. Go into God's everlasting peace and rest there forevermore. She had found the rest and peace promised through the

ages. Her turmoil was over. She can now go in peace. She has peace with God. Peace within herself can work towards peace with others that she had hurt. How truly does God say, does Christ say, *"come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you,"* what, *"rest."* *"Your faith has saved you; go in peace."* Friends, be not like the Pharisee. Always pridefully striving after your own record of self-righteousness. Jesus knows who you are. You are a sinner. But that does not keep him from you. Lay it all down. Today you can leave this service in peace. All you must do is trust in Jesus for your salvation. He changed her life from a life of perversity into a life of peace. And he can change yours as well. Believe.

The second application I have to give from this passage is love Jesus. Oh, friends, I want the reputation of Grace Chapel to be a people who love Jesus. *"If you have not love, you are nothing."* Love Jesus. He has forgiven you of all your sins. Have you forgotten? Love Jesus. And let that love for Jesus drive you into loving others. I think of 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 where it says, *"For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."* This is the final thought I want to leave you with this morning from this passage.

There's so much more I wish I could say, but do you relate to the lavish love that is shown by this woman? Do you see it all as very foreign and bizarre, very alien to your life right now? If Jesus was here, right in our midst, what would you do? Would you fall at his feet in gratitude? Would you clean his feet with your tears? Would you grab him by the ankles to never let him go? Would this lavish love and gratitude for your forgiveness flow out of you? Some of you might say, no, I would actually think that's a little bit above board. Then you are lost, my friend. You are lost. But for those who have trusted in Christ, I know your answer would be, well, sure. I mean, if Jesus was here with dusty feet, I'd do all of that. I'd show all that love, but I can't. I mean, this is all hypothetical. Jesus isn't here. Where's his dusty feet?

Look around you. Seriously, look around you right now. To borrow the image, this church is the body of Christ. It is the closest thing you'll find, this side of heaven, to the feet of Jesus. And this is where love for Christ ceases to be a concept and becomes concrete. Because in a very real sense, this church is the feet of Jesus. And to be sure, this church might be dusty, a bit grimy from walking through the dirt of this world. But that's the real test, isn't it? You can say you love Jesus all the day long, but the question is, then how do you show love to his body, the church? For did not Jesus himself say, *"when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it unto,"* what, *"me."* See, like the Pharisee, you can invite Jesus over to visit your life all you want. You can superficially come to morning worship and warm the pew. But that doesn't show that you have a transformed heart and have been forgiven.

The testimony of a transformed heart is a life that pours out love and gratitude and service upon the dusty feet of Jesus for all that he has done for you. Did not Jesus say after washing his disciples' feet, *"By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, when you show love to one another."* May God give us the grace this week to use the testimony of our transformed heart, a heart of love and devotion to Christ and to his body, to lead someone else into peace through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, even in the way in which you and I love each other for the glory of God. Believe. Love him. Wash his feet.

This is the word of God from Luke 7:36-50, which I considered it a great privilege to have been able to, with great fault, share with you today. And which I now commit to your further study and your faithful obedience until Jesus, the great lover of our souls and the great object of our love, returns for his own.

And to that end, let us pray.

Father, thank you for Jesus. As we consider of all the different ways in which we have sinned against you, even today, and to think back on this past week, and then to consider the record of wrongs that stands against us as we look to the past. And even as we consider our own hearts, and we know that the failures of our past will be continued even on into the future in many ways. Father, we acknowledge that to us belongs open shame. To you belongs righteousness. We are sinners. And yet, Father, it is because of that very fact that we love Jesus. For he is a friend of sinners. And the reason why he died on the cross is because he knew who we were.

And Father, I pray that we would not be Pharisees in working to establish our own righteousness. And that we would not be Pharisees in terms of looking down on others as Simon does here. Father, we know that what defines those who belong to you is not their past record of wrongs. What defines those who belong to you is their present relationship with Christ. May we be known as people of grace in love with Jesus, rejoicing in forgiveness and pouring out our lives for others in absolute gratitude for what he has done. Oh, may this new way of service be seen in our midst as we love you and obey you and follow you with glad and grateful hearts. Father, help us to share this good news of this good Savior with someone else who needs to hear it. We have something to say to them. May we be faithful in saying it.

We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

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