

Luke 7:36-50 – A sacrificial faith.

- I have really enjoyed spending this time in Luke and being reminded of the power, love, forgiveness and grace of Jesus
 - The gospel is astoundingly simply, yet incredibly powerful.
 - We never graduate from the gospel we just understand it better
 - We have met characters of all different backgrounds and seen them experience the healing power of Jesus.
 - Jesus really is for anyone who will come to Him.
- Today is no different.
 - Today we meet a woman who lived a far from morally upright life until the point she turned to Jesus.
 - We see the transforming power of Jesus and the effects on the life of someone who has been saved.
- This story teaches us two important things that I want to start with before we look at the passage in detail as it will show us that today's message is for everyone.
 - 1. Don't judge who will become a Christian
 - That's what the pharisee did to this woman and how wrong he was.
 - He thought she is so bad there is no way Jesus will accept her.
 - As Christians we can sometimes look around at the people God has put us in contact with and almost subconsciously, we divide them into groups depending on their likeliness to respond to the gospel and then we focus on those who we think are most likely to respond.
 - It's a myth that there is a certain type of person who becomes a believer
 - Don't be like the pharisee – God knows the heart of people we don't
 - So, share the good news of Jesus with everyone because Jesus is for everyone
 - 2. There is nothing you have done or will do that is beyond the forgiveness of Jesus.
 - If you are listening and either you live with constant guilt of your past as a believer or if you are searching and think that God won't accept you because of your past, then let this story be a message to you this morning.
 - There is nothing you have ever or will ever do that is beyond the saving power of Jesus.
 - There is full forgiveness in Jesus.
 - So, with those two thoughts in mind let's look at this passage together
 - From this passage I want to show you three things. The first two are what Jesus does then the last is what we do
 - Jesus forgives sinners
 - Jesus gives assurance of salvation
 - We respond in sacrificial service.

Jesus forgives sinners

- This story sets up two contrasting characters
 - The pharisee, Simon, and the woman of the city. Notice we don't even know her name
 - Simon is the one who had invited Jesus to his home
 - Perhaps he was in two minds about Jesus and wanted to find out more about him.

- He would have heard Jesus teaching and seen His miracles, but Jesus wasn't hanging out with the kind of people the pharisees thought He should mix with.
 - It would seem that although Simon had invited Jesus to his home he doesn't believe in Jesus or love Jesus because he hadn't fulfilled any of the normal expectations and common courtesies of welcoming someone into your house.
 - He hadn't given Jesus water to wash his feet or greeted him with a kiss, or put oil on his head to anoint him.
 - Simon hadn't welcomed Jesus into his life, and so he didn't welcome him into his home
- Back in those days' windows didn't exist and homes were very open.
 - It was usual to have people not invited to a meal show up to watch
 - Especially if someone important was there
 - At this meal we see this woman has come to hear and see Jesus.
 - The woman wouldn't have been invited
- In sharp contrast this woman had welcomed Jesus into her life and shows Jesus an extraordinary welcome
 - She provides the water to wash His feet with her tears and wipes them with her hair
 - She doesn't kiss him on the cheek but on the feet
 - She anoints him not with oil but perfume something far more valuable.
- This woman had certainly lived an immoral life in the past
 - A woman of the city didn't mean simply that she lived in that city, but it means she was, or I should say would have been, a prostitute.
 - But we see from v50 that she had been saved. Its past tense.
 - V48 is also past tense. Her sins have been forgiven.
- This woman is a woman who had lived a life way off from Gods design and plan, but she was now forgiven and saved.
 - Because Jesus forgives sinners.
- Simon would have found this very hard to accept and needed some convincing.
 - The Pharisees didn't speak to women in public let alone eat with them and they certainly wouldn't have spent time with this kind of woman.
 - So what was Jesus doing?
 - Simon doubted Jesus discernment in allowing a sinful woman to anoint his feet.
 - Notice his question in v39. Who is Simon talking to? Himself!
 - But Jesus answers him
 - Simon hasn't spoken out loud, but Jesus knows his heart and answers his question because Jesus wants to show there is forgiveness available for all.
- Simon thinking is this:
 - If Jesus were a prophet, he would know people's character
 - If Jesus knew this woman was a sinner, He would have nothing to do with her
 - If Jesus were who He claimed to be He would not allow her to touch him.
- How wrong Simon was about himself and Jesus

- The pharisees of which Simon was one used people like this woman to make themselves feel good about themselves
 - Look how bad that person is and how good I am
 - I don't live like them, I'm a good person.
 - Simon was blind to the true state of his own heart.
- But they were wrong about Jesus too
 - Jesus just by answering a thought Simon had, proved He is who He claimed to be.
- Jesus used the story of the two debtors to make His point
 - 50 denarii equalled about 2 months' pay – so even the smaller debt was significant.
 - Wages just about covered survival so neither man was able to pay their debt.
 - If one who owes much is cleared of debt and one who owes little is cleared of debt the greater debtor will be more grateful.
 - This is a universally accepted principle that even Simon is happy with.
- Luke uses this story to remind us of how we are forgiven and saved.
 - Forgiveness is not free
 - For the creditor in Jesus parable it cost him 550 denarii.
 - For God to forgive us it cost the life of His son upon the cross.
- The Bible tells us that we are all debtors to God
 - We have all sinned
 - Some of us very openly and publicly like this woman had but for others it is hidden in our heart – pride, envy, lust, etc.
 - Our sin leaves us in debt to God
 - That debt needs to be paid but we can pay it.
 - Thankfully Jesus did on the cross
 - V50 Jesus says to the woman your faith has saved you.
 - It is through faith in Jesus that our sins are forgiven and we are saved
 - There is no other way.
- If Jesus can forgive this woman, He can forgive you.

Jesus gives assurance of salvation

- Jesus whilst still talking to Simon in v 44 turns His back on Simon and faces the woman.
 - A person who everyone else wanted to ignore Jesus acknowledges.
 - Jesus shows His acceptance of this woman through His body language.
- Jesus tells this woman her sins are forgiven.
 - Something she had been feeling and displaying in her actions Jesus confirms with His words.
- We don't have Jesus here to talk to physically, but He has given us His word which tell us;
 - Isaiah 1:18 - "Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.
 - Isaiah 43:25 - "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.

- Acts 13:38-39 - “Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin
 - Romans 4:7-8 - “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”
 - Ephesians 4:32- Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
 - Hebrews 8:12 - For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.
- Jesus in telling her that her sins are forgiven is stating His claim as God
 - He is not a man telling the woman something on Gods behalf, but He is God Himself declaring her sins forgiven.
 - He has the power to do it.

We respond in sacrificial service

- The woman’s faith and response to her forgiveness is evident by her actions
 - She is weeping at Jesus feet and wiping them with her hair
 - An act of true humility
 - She goes beyond what is deemed socially acceptable in letting her hair down because she loves Jesus more than the cultural expectations
 - She pours expensive perfume over his feet
 - She gave up her way of earning money
- As a result of faith in Jesus her whole life had been transformed and forgiveness led to service and sacrifice
- The parable of the debtors helps us to understand this
 - Those who have been forgiven much feel immense love and gratitude towards the creditor who forgave them
 - We all have a great debt.
- Jesus is the one who forgives us so in response we live lives of sacrificial service.
 - The Christian life isn’t one of begrudging duty but one of joyful service.
- When you realise how abhorrent our sin is to God knowing it is forgiven is amazing
 - So, we seek to live a life that pleases God not because we must but because we want to.
 - It comes from a place of freedom not slavery.
- These acts of service do nothing for our salvation they are entirely a response.
 - It’s not faith plus works to be saved
 - But faith alone
 - But faith without works is dead
 - Acts of service are evidence of our salvation not an earning of it.
- The result of all this is Jesus says to her ‘Go in peace’
 - This woman through repentance and faith found peace with God.
 - She had moved from an enemy of God to a faith driven sacrificial servant of God
 - No matter who you are and where you are today you can do the same.
 - Repent and believe
 - That’s all it takes.

Those in the room ask the right question, who is this? Who is Jesus?

- He is the one who died for my sin and your sin.
- He is the one who forgives us of our sin
- Will you come to him in repentance and accept his free offer?
- If you already have will you in joyful response live a life of sacrificial service?
 - Put God first in your life and give Him your best not the dregs left at the end after everything else.
 - This woman gave her best and it was a cost to her, the expensive perfume
 - Will you do the same?