

**Text: Luke 7:38 - 8:3 (NIV)**

<sup>38</sup>and 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. <sup>39</sup>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.” <sup>40</sup>Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to tell you.” “Tell me, teacher,” he said. <sup>41</sup>“Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup>Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” <sup>43</sup>Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said. <sup>44</sup>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. <sup>45</sup>You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. <sup>46</sup>You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. <sup>47</sup>Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.” <sup>48</sup>Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” <sup>49</sup>The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” <sup>50</sup>Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” <sup>1</sup>After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, <sup>2</sup>and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; <sup>3</sup>Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod’s household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

**Theme: What a Scene!**

Put yourself in Jesus’ place. You are a guest at someone’s house. Suddenly a stranger barges in and begins to wash your feet. She is crying, kissing your feet, and putting a perfume on them that fills the whole house with a smell. Who do you think would be angry, the guest or the host? I think that if any of us would have been in Jesus’ place, we would have been annoyed at the very least. We would have wondered, “What is going on here?!” But in this case it is the host that is offended, and the guest who observes that the woman who barged in treated Him much better than the host. It was quite the scene!

I. It is tempting to try not to make a scene with our faith.

That is how Simon was. It is interesting that he even invited Jesus to his home for a meal. Pharisees were very careful whom they invited to their homes. They would not invite people who were not pharisees, and they would never invite someone who was a known sinner. They were even careful about where they accepted an invitation. They would always check the guest list to make sure that there was no one who would be unacceptable to them.

Simon must have looked at Jesus as someone who was acceptable to come into his home and eat a meal with him, but he didn’t give Jesus the common courtesy that you would give to most guests. Generally, a guest was offered water to wash his feet when he came into the home. The host would also give his guest a kiss much like we would shake hands with an important guest who came to our home. They might even give the person some oil to put on their head to freshen up. But Simon didn’t do any of these things for Jesus. He tried to make as little scene as possible when Jesus came into

his home.

Why was Simon so inhospitable to Jesus? It was because he didn't expect anything from Jesus. He invited Jesus so that he could test Jesus. When the sinful woman anointed Jesus' feet, it seemed to him that Jesus failed the test. If Jesus were a prophet, He would know what kind of woman this was. Simon thought that Jesus failed the prophet test, let alone the Savior test. He was not looking to see if Jesus was His Savior. He was not searching the Scriptures to see if Jesus fulfilled them. He was testing Jesus. As a pharisee Simon didn't believe that He had any sin. He would have thought that he had fulfilled the law perfectly Himself. Why would He need a Savior? Why would He need Jesus? Because He saw no need for Jesus as His Savior, He was less than hospitable to our Lord.

It is very tempting for us to try to not make a scene with regard to our faith today. We have many things that we are known for in life. You might be a good athlete. You might be a great student. You might be fast with the jokes. There are parts of our lives that people know about. Sometimes we make a big scene about the things that we are best at. While we often try to make a scene about this or that, we often hide our faith. Are there people who are close to you, who would never know that you are a Christian? Is Jesus a part of your life, that you keep hidden in a closet?

When we have Jesus hidden away, the reason might be the same as Simon's. We don't expect anything from Him. We don't recognize any sins that need to be forgiven. We think that we have everything in life taken care of. We are managing very well ourselves. When we think that we need Jesus, we'll let Him know. When it comes to heaven, we hardly even think about eternity because we think that we have everything that we need right now. If we don't see our need for Jesus and His salvation, we won't make a big deal out of our faith. Our love for Him will be tempered as it was for Simon.

II. Those who have received the Lord's gifts, love Him with all of their hearts.

That's how it was for the woman in our text. She must have led a very sinful life because everyone in town knew her reputation. The woman herself also knew what a wretched life she had led. Then she heard our Lord preach about repentance and forgiveness of sins. He invited her to confess her sins and to trust in God's full and free forgiveness. She repented, and a load was lifted from her heart. She was free of her sin. She was so thankful that she washed our Lord's feet with her tears and dried them with her hair; she kissed His feet; and anointed them with perfume. It was quite the scene, but she was so thankful for what the Lord had done for her, that it didn't matter. She loved the Lord with all her heart for the forgiveness He had given to her. Then the Lord reassured her, "*Your sins are forgiven.. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.*" She could live the rest of her life in the joy and peace of the Lord's forgiveness.

David also lived his life in thankfulness for the Lord's forgiveness. He committed two horrible sins. He committed adultery with another man's wife, and then he had her husband killed. In our Old Testament lesson he pronounced his own death sentence when he said about the man in Nathan's parable, "*As surely as the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die.*" The prophet answered, "*You are the man!*" David confessed, "*I have sinned against the Lord.*" Nathan answered, "*The Lord has taken away your sin.*" David expressed his thankfulness for God's forgiveness in two Psalms, 32 and 51. He begins Psalm 32 with these words, "*Blessed is he whose transgression is*

*forgiven, whose sin is covered.”* He ends the psalm with these words, *“Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy all you upright in heart.”* He had received the Lord’s forgiveness for these great sins, and it increased his joy and love for His God. Psalm 51 is one of the best known psalms. It begins, *“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.”* In verse 13 David writes, *“Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to You.”* David’s repentance and God’s mercy for him has been a powerful example for millions of people throughout the centuries. His repentance assures us, that if God could forgive those great sins of someone who should have known better, He will also forgive us.

This also reminds me of a waitress that I encountered several years ago at a Denny’s in Detroit. My wife and I met a husband and wife in Detroit, who were from my vicarage church in Illinois. We were talking about the church when suddenly the waitress from another table came up to us. She told us that she heard that we were Christian people, and she had to tell us what the Lord had done for her. She had been a drug addict and alcoholic, and God saved her from that lifestyle and forgave her. She would be forever grateful.

When we have received the Lord’s grace and mercy, we cannot help but love Him, and live our lives in thanks to Him. He has forgiven our sins, every single one of them. Think of the peace and joy that God gives you that He doesn’t hold a single one of them against you. His love has never failed us in our lives. That doesn’t mean that we haven’t had hard times. We can remember many of them. At the same time, we remember how God was with us in every time of trouble. He has also filled our lives with more blessings that any of us have deserved. As we get older, we can see more and more that this life is slowly fading away. The new things that we bought are old and worn out. Even a lot of the parts on our bodies are wearing out. We lose loved ones. Yet, in Christ, we have a sure hope of everlasting life. When you think of the Lord’s forgiveness, His love, and the eternal inheritance that He has won for us, it almost makes us want to make a scene. You are making a scene today as we gather to remember our Lord’s salvation, but also to thank and praise Him for all that He has done for us.

As I looked at this morning’s bulletin cover, it made me feel a little uncomfortable. You almost think that Simon the Pharisee is correct in his anger toward that woman. But it was she who was commended by our Lord because of her faith. Simon was skeptical about Jesus and even offended by this woman’s affection toward our Lord. On the other hand her love for the Lord was simply in response to the forgiveness of her sins. May God enable us to recognize how much the Lord has done for us, that we may receive our Lord in faith rather than skepticism, and that we may love Him and thank Him for His grace and mercy to us.

Amen

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