

Luke 7

by David Ravenhill

David Ravenhill's sermon on Luke 7 emphasizes the transformative power of Jesus' love for sinners and the importance of humility in approaching Him.

Duration: 48:46

Scripture: Psalm 34:8, Matthew 11:28, Luke 7:36-50, Ephesians 2:8-9, James 4:10

Topics: "Faith And Worship", "Salvation And Humility"

Description

This sermon delves into the story of a woman who encounters Jesus at a Pharisee's house. She comes as a sinner, pursues Jesus, weeps at His feet, and expresses her faith and worship. The sermon emphasizes the importance of meditating on God's Word, recognizing our need for a Savior, coming to Jesus in humility, surrendering everything to Him, serving others, having faith in His saving grace, and worshipping Him wholeheartedly.

Transcript

I want to look at a portion of Scripture that I'm sure is familiar to many of you. Let me just give you the setting here. Jesus has been invited by one of the Pharisees to go to his house for a meal.

And while he is in the house, all of a sudden there is the entrance of a woman that comes in. And I want us to pick up the story there in verse 37. Behold, there was a woman in the city who was a sinner.

I don't know about you, but I like to meditate on the Word of God. Somebody said that when you read the Word of God, you should read it inch by inch. And then after you've read it inch by inch, you should read it half inch by half inch.

And after you read it half inch by half inch, you should read it quarter inch by quarter inch. What they meant by that was that sometimes we can gulp down vast quantities of Scripture and yet not really know what we've read. Meditation, somebody said, is like a cow chewing its cut.

It goes out there and gulps down vast quantities of grass and then it lays down and out of one of its three or four stomachs, whatever, it regurgitates that grass and it begins to masticate on it and chew it over and over and over and get out of it the very essence of all the nutrients and everything else. I'm sure there's farmers here that could explain that far better than I could. But we need to do that with the Word of God.

We need to take it and sort of chew on it. And I like to chew on the Word of God. And this is one little phrase here.

There was a woman in the city who was a sinner. He could have read there were women in the cities who were sinners. In other words, I'm sure there were more than one sinner in the city.

But this woman is singled out. There was a woman in the city who was a sinner. She was well-known.

She was the one that sort of stood out in the crowd. Everybody knew her name. She was the one that always stood out in the street corner or whatever.

The word sinner there, according to most expositors, means an immoral woman. Tradition has it, history has it, that she was a prostitute. And she comes into the Pharisees' house.

How many of you know that prostitutes and Pharisees don't mix very well? They're like oil and water. You know, that would really, really sort of irk the Pharisee. But it says here that when she learned that he was reclining a table in the Pharisees' house.

When she learned. Again, one of those other little phrases there that you need to chew on. How did she learn that he was in the Pharisees' house? You know, was she sort of randomly knocking on doors? Who do you have as your guest today? I'm not interested.

Who do you have? You know, I don't think any of us would do that. Go around the neighborhood just sort of knocking on doors. You know, being a sort of nosy parker, sort of individual of, you know.

But she learned. In other words, she was inquiring about him. She was pursuing him.

Here was a woman pursuing Jesus. And I can only speculate, based on the word of God, that maybe what happened. And I share this obviously as speculation.

But I can imagine that maybe one morning she was coming home from a night of activity, selling a body on the street or whatever. And as she comes through the marketplace, here is Jesus addressing the scribes and the Pharisees. And she hears him say, prostitutes and harlots will make it into the kingdom of God before you guys.

That's not exactly the way you open a pastor's conference. Right? You know, Jesus knew nothing about being supersensitive. I mean, here they were with their whitewashed robes and their, you know, phylacteries.

And all the, you know, memorized scriptures that they had. And very pious looking. And he has the audacity to say to these clergy, prostitutes and harlots have a better chance of being a part of my kingdom than you ever will.

And maybe her ears pricked up and she thought, you know, is he just sort of saying that in jest? Or does he, he sounds like he actually means it? Is it possible that somebody like me, that is so defiled, could be part of the kingdom of God? Maybe she listened for a while and he said, you know, anybody that comes to me, I will not reject. Either come to me, I will have no lies cast out. She heard for the first time about the love of God instead of the law of God.

She heard about acceptance instead of rejection. There was something about this man. He spoke unlike any other person she'd ever heard, any other minister of the gospel, if you like.

He was a man that spoke with authority and yet with compassion. And something within her said, you know, I've got to get along with this man. Somehow I've got to meet this man.

What if what he says is really true? Yet she was clad in her attire. And so she thought, you know, I need to go home and change or maybe come back and see if I can meet with this man. By the time she gets back after changing her clothes, she discovers that he's gone.

The crowd is dispersed and so she makes some inquiries. That man that was here in the marketplace about 30 minutes ago, do you know where he went? Oh, that man. Oh, yeah, the Nazarene, Jesus.

Yeah, you're talking about him. Oh, that's his name, Jesus. Where is he? Well, he was invited to the Pharisee's house.

And so she makes her way to the house of this man. She learned that he was in the house. She didn't just stumble across him.

She was pursuing him. She wanted to find him. Or maybe it wasn't that way at all.

Maybe she came home again after a night of activity, came into the little apartment that she shared with another prostitute. When she walks in, there is a radiance about this girl, a glow about her that she's never seen before. Normally, she's downcast and depressed, but now she's radiant.

And before she has an opportunity to say what happened to you, the girl says, Oh, I'm so glad you're home. I thought I may miss you. I didn't know when you were coming home.

I'm out of here. I'm off. And she's packing her belongings.

Where are you going? What's happened? She said, Well, let me tell you, this was a day that could have ended in absolute tragedy for me. In fact, this could be a day where, you know, I was convinced I wouldn't see the end of the day. Well, I was with one of our clients.

It was in the hours of the morning, early hours. We were making love, and all of a sudden, there was a pounding on the door. Pharisees burst in, grabbed me.

I was basically naked. I just grabbed a blanket or a sheet, wrapped it around myself. They dragged me down the street and said, We've got her this time.

We've got her this time. They started shouting, There's going to be a storming. There's going to be a storming.

People crowded around. People gathered around. I was so ashamed.

I just pulled that sheet over myself. They finally dragged me and dropped me at the feet of a man that they referred to as, I think the Nazarene, something like that. They called him Master Rabbi.

Jesus, I think they said his name was. And they said, Master, we caught this woman right in the very act of adultery. And Moses says that a woman like this should be stoned.

What do you say? You're going to agree with Moses or disagree with Moses? Where do you stand? Jesus paused for a moment. He said, I heard him say, The one that is without sin casts the first stone. So then all of a sudden, he got very quiet.

He said, I could hear the shuffling of feet. I didn't even look up. I was so ashamed of what was going on.

And she said, pretty soon, there was absolute silence. And then I heard him speak to me. And she said, I lifted up that sheet.

And I looked. And I looked into the face of somebody I can't even describe, really. It was the best way I can describe it is it was pure love.

It wasn't that he was handsome because the Bible says there's no beauty that we should desire. But there was something about him. There was something that was coming forth from him.

There was life. And she said, the moment I looked at him, somehow it was just like taking a shower on the inside. Suddenly, I felt my chains fell.

My heart was free. I was transformed. I was free.

I can't fully explain it. I just know that I've had an encounter with God himself. And he told me, go and sit no more.

I'm leaving. I'm through. I've found what I've been looking for all of my life.

I've found the joy, the peace that I've wanted. She said, you know, if he can do that for you, he can do that for me, can't he? She said, oh, I hope he can. I'm so glad you're here.

Where is he? Well, I heard that one of the Pharisees invited him to go to his house for a meal. Remember who it was? Yes, I do. Oh, sir, I know where he lives.

And so she comes. Now, again, that's speculation. But it says here she learned.

She found out. She was pursuing him. There was something prior to this that we don't know.

Something that wet her appetite in some of his eyes. She'd heard about him or something. I've got to meet him.

And so she comes into the house of a Pharisee. She's not wanted. She's certainly not on the guest list.

And yet she comes in and begins to minister in such a beautiful way. There's three separate accounts in the Gospels of this same story. Or should I put it this way? There are three separate stories that many times we assume is the same story.

Matthew and Mark share one incident. John shares another incident. And Luke shares another incident.

So there's three separate encounters. I was corrected many years ago by an old lady up in the Rays. I get to know myself now.

But she wrote me a letter. I ministered at the Bible school in Dallas, Christ of the Nations. And I was ministering along this sort of same line.

And she corrected me very nicely in the letter. She said, I've been teaching the Word of God for many, many years. And I've been a missionary, I think, for 40 years, something like that.

And she said, you're misinformed. These stories are three separate accounts. They're not all one account.

And in a very gracious way, she humbled me and put me in my place. So let me just say that there are three separate stories. But if I could borrow from one of them and sort of weld it together, Jesus said, wherever the Gospel is proclaimed in all the nations, whatever this woman has done, I want you to tell it as a memorial to her.

That's the impact, if you like, that this type of act had on the Lord Jesus Christ, what we're going to look at. Imagine that. Wherever the Gospel is proclaimed, along with the Gospel, tell about this particular incident.

He could have said, tell about my mother. He didn't. He could have said, tell them about Peter, James, and John.

You know, they were the best of the bunch. No. No.

Wherever the Gospel is proclaimed in all the kingdoms of the world, do this particular, tell them about this particular story as a memorial. I remember being convicted when I read that. I thought, you know, I've never done that.

I've never included that with the Gospel. I think there's a reason why, and I'm about to share at least my understanding, is that the story really represents the Gospel in so many ways. And I want to break it down for you because the first thing is that she came as a sinner.

The Gospel, of course, begins when you and I recognize that we have need of a Savior, when we recognize that we're sinners. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, with whom my chief Paul said. And it's only when we acknowledge that we're a sinner that we can avail ourselves, again, of the blood of the Lamb and the cleansing.

It's when we come piously and tarry safely, if you like, and say, you know, I really don't need Jesus Christ. I'm a self-made man. And, you know, that's what the Pharisees did.

They trusted in their own self-righteousness. I remember the Pharisee that came into the house of God knelt beside the sinner and began to say, thank God I'm not like this guy. You know, I tithe, I do this.

No, it's all I, I, I. Look what I've done. Look what I've achieved. We will never experience the Gospel message of forgiveness and cleansing until we recognize that we're sinners for all who have sinned, every single one of us, regardless of whether you were raised in church or whatever your spiritual pedigree may be, we all stand in need of a Savior.

And she comes, again, as a sinner. Billy Graham has sort of immortalized almost a song, Just As I Am. She comes just as she is.

Everybody in town knew her. There was a woman in the city who was a sinner. So she didn't have anything to hide.

She comes in openness and transparency and honesty, and she comes as a sinner. Jesus said it's the sick that heal a physician. So when we acknowledge our sickness, the sin of it, or the sickness of sin, I

should say, that Jesus Christ can heal us and cleanse us and set us free.

The second thing is she came to the only one that could help her. She doesn't go to a preach. She doesn't go to a synagogue.

She doesn't go to some other temple. She comes to the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, nothing else can change you.

Nothing else can transform you. There's salvation in no other name. You can go to the priest.

He can't help you. You can go to some religious person. Only Christ himself can change us, set us free.

And I'm sure this woman had experienced maybe rejection by the religious community. She was sick and tired of religion. In fact, some of the harshest words that Jesus ever gave were about the religious community.

Isn't that right? The older brother who, when his brother came back from a far country, he refused to refer to him as my brother. He says, this is the son of yours when he talked to his father. Not this brother of mine, but the son of yours.

And then he began to brag about, you know, Father, I've never done this and I've never done that. I've never broken your commandments. You know, I, I, I. There's nothing that perturbed Jesus more than the religious community.

Nothing that got under his skin more than the religious community. And time after time, he would expose them because they failed to really represent the true heart of the Father. Tell the story of the man on the Jericho road that was dying there, bludgeoned almost to death and crying out for help.

And the Levite comes by and the priest goes by and they both ignore him. And he takes the Samaritan to go, pouring the oil in the wine and so on. Again, the religious community.

Jesus had to say to them, go and learn what this means. I desire compassion, not sacrifice. They were meticulous when it came to certain elements of their religious life.

You know, they'd make a salad and they'd tie every mint and cum, you know, every little tenth leaf they'd set aside. They were, you know, bound by those things. And yet when it came to compassion, they had absolutely no compassion.

And no doubt this woman had experienced all of that sort of thing, the harsh treatment of the religious community. She didn't want to go back to church because of the way they treated her. But she comes now to the only one that can help.

Aren't you glad that Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, came to see them and say, regardless of our state, regardless of our condition. I got an email a number of years ago now. It was the story.

I understand it was a true story, but that was Stuart. And he reached into his pocket and he took out a nice, crisp \$20 bill. And he held it up and he said, I'm going to give this \$20 bill away.

It's brand new, nice and crisp. And so on. Anybody want it? A number of hands went up.

You know, finally he convinced the people. I really need it. I'm going to give this away.

Anybody want it? Of course, more hands went up. And he said, well, just a minute. He took that \$20 bill and he crumpled it all up and put it into a little ball and held it up.

He says, who wants it now? Sure enough, a number of hands went up. And he said, well, hold on a minute. He took it and opened it up.

It was all crumpled and span on it. Held it up again. Anybody wants it now? A few hands.

Then he put it on the ground and he put it under his foot. So he worked all that dirt from his shoe into that thing. That was all torn and tattered and spat upon, crushed, held it up again.

Anybody want this \$20 bill? A couple of hands. And he said, you know, it's still worth \$20. Even though it's in this sort of condition, it hasn't lost its value.

And he said, that's the way God sees sinners. Even though we've been trampled underfoot, even though the world has messed us up with whatever drugs and alcohol and all the other things, all the abuses that we go through, in the eyes of God, we still have incredible value. God so loved the woman.

He was willing to give his only begotten son. This woman somehow sensed that she was in the presence of almighty God. She could feel the love of God and so on.

And so she comes again to the only one who can help her. The next thing here is number three. If you're taking notes here, she came in humility.

Verse 38 says, it's standing behind him at his feet. I love that little phrase again, standing behind him. My Bible says, God resists the proud.

He gives grace to the humble. This woman needs the grace of God as you and I need the grace of God. One of the things that, if you like, thwarts the grace of God from operating in our lives is pride.

God resists the proud. And this woman comes in and she stands behind him at his feet. She's not there to eclipse him.

She's not there to be in the limelight or the spotlight. She doesn't want to be the center of attention. You know, these days, even in Christendom, unfortunately, everybody wants titles.

Everybody wants positions. Everybody wants to be known for their great whatever it is. Singing ability, acting ability, prophetic ability, you know, preaching ability and so on.

Everybody wants the title of apostle these days. You know, we all want that sort of limelight. We want to be recognized.

And yet John said, I must decrease and he might increase. And this woman seems to understand, again, what it takes to truly be born again in the Spirit of God. First, again, a recognition that I'm a sinner.

Second, a willingness to come to the Lord Jesus Christ himself. And thirdly, to come in humility. Not with any proud, not with any sort of boasting, because we have nothing to boast about.

So she comes again in this place of absolute humility, standing behind him at his feet. The fourth thing, she comes prepared to give everything that she has. And if I can borrow from one of the other stories that are similar, this woman brings with her an alabaster box of very precious perfume.

It was one of the ways in which people saved in those days. And they invested, rather than invest in the Wall Street, there wasn't such a thing. They would invest in these various commodities.

And it was a means of, you know, being able to retire. And this was precious. And one of the other accounts, again, not necessarily the identical account, but a similar account, says that this alabaster box was worth 300 denarii.

You remember that the disciples got a little upset. They said, why, this is being wasted. 300 denarii, what a waste.

A denarii was a day's wage. It was a little copper coin that was the equivalent of one day's wage. It was 365 days in the year.

You remove 52 Sabbaths. You remove all the other Sabbaths and feast days in Israel. And you end up with about 300 days in which a man or a woman would work.

You recall that back in the day, it was six days' actual labor. We've whittled it down a little bit and trying to turn it to five. But it was six days' actual labor.

In other words, this woman brought a year's salary. One year's salary. That's an extravagant gift by anybody's stretch of their imagination.

One year's salary. When's the last time you brought an entire year's salary to the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ? Quite something, isn't it? The psalm writer says, we're the whole realm of nature, mind, that we're an offering far too small. Love so amazing, so divine, immense, my soul, my life, I love you.

And she brings the very best that she has. You see, really, in order to be truly born again, we have to give God everything. Isn't that right? Everything.

The precious as well as the worthless. Many times, and I may be mispronouncing this tonight, I'm not sure exactly the direction I'm going, but many times we give God our sin, we reserve all the good things for ourselves. That's what happened when Samuel was telling Saul to go and destroy the Amalekites.

Remember, he said, you know, we've destroyed all the worthless things, but all the best of the things we brought to sacrifice to God. And many times in our salvation experience, we think, you know, God has needed my talent, he has needed my ability, you know, I'll get rid of my sin, and then I'll, you know, give God my ability, my talent. No, everything has to initially go to the cross.

Take up your cross, you're going to die. It's going to cost you everything to follow Christ. And she's prepared to give everything she has, even the most precious thing that she has, she doesn't cling to it.

She's willing to surrender it, willing to lay it down at his feet, as it were. I heard many years ago, a lady was ministering, and she said, salvation is free, but after that, everything will cost you something. I think there's a measure of truth to that.

Salvation is free, we don't have to earn it, we don't have to attain it. But once we accept Christ, it's going to cost us everything. If we really, truly mean business with God and moving on with God, it will cost everything.

Willingness to lay down my life, take up my cross, and follow him. Willingness to leave a country, willing to leave family, friends, whatever it may be, there's a cost involved. And she is prepared to pay that supreme price if you will.

That's what it means to be born again in the spirit of God. So she comes again, willing to give this incredible gift, breaks it and begins to minister and fill the air with that perfume. The next thing, she came and broken us.

It says there again, verse 38, if you go back to it, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, weeping. She wept, I believe, because she was in the presence of the Son of God, God himself. And I can only imagine the contrast between her own life and the life of Christ was so great that she was immediately convicted.

Remember Isaiah when he went into the house of God and he saw the Lord and suddenly he said, I am a man of unclean lips. Remember Peter who cried out on one occasion, Lord depart from me, I am an unclean man. In other words, the purity in comparison to the vileness of his own heart was so strong that he couldn't stand it.

I try to describe it this way of maybe stumbling into a wedding or something. You've come in and somehow you didn't know what was going on in the room and you're making your way through maybe the sanctuary and thinking there's nothing going on. You come bursting through a door and here is a wedding reception of some sort.

Everybody's dressed immaculately and you've just been changing the oil in your car and you're coming up from the farm or something and you're absolutely filthy. And all of a sudden everybody else is immaculate. The feeling, I've got to get out of here, I just can't fit into this sort of situation.

I can imagine that being magnified a million times as she was in the presence of the one who is pure love, pure light. The feeling that she got, suddenly she begins to weep as she sees her condition. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

But mourning over sin. She begins to wash his feet with her tears. I don't know about you, but it takes an awful lot of tears to wash somebody's feet.

Gals may be better at this than the guys. It's hard to get a guy to even shed a couple of tears, let alone, you know, it's a sign of weakness, the girls are a little more transparent. But to have enough tears to wash somebody's feet is quite an exercise, isn't it? And all I can surmise here is that there is a great possibility that this woman brought with her some extra tears.

That sounds strange, doesn't it? How could she bring tears? Well, in our culture, obviously we don't have a framework for that, but in the New Testament, they would have tear bottles. And, in fact, archaeologists have unearthed these things, and there's even a website now where you can find these tear bottles, whether they're accurate or not, I don't know, but you can find them. But back in the day, 2,000 years ago, it was a form of journaling.

You didn't have pen and paper, you didn't have a little notebook that you could write down the events of the day and so on, but you had a tear bottle. And this tear bottle would collect all the highs and lows of your life, if you like. I can imagine maybe this girl, maybe at the age of 12, maybe you received the tear bottle as a gift.

Maybe it sat there for a couple of years at the age of 14, because in those days they would marry much younger than they do today, but maybe at the age of 14 she falls in love and she comes home after being out with her boyfriend, if you like, and he's told her how wonderful she is, how beautiful she is, and she's just so overcut with joy that she takes that empty bottle and for the first time sheds a couple of tears of joy, excitement about being in love for the first time. Maybe as their relationship progresses, he announces that he wants her to be his wife and takes her out and whatever the custom was in those days, but anyway, he asks if he can marry her, and she comes home that night, again, just over the moon with joy, and then the tears well up and she collects a couple more tears in that bottle. A few months later, the wedding takes place, and sure enough, he provides her with a beautiful little place to live, and she is so content, so happy, and one day after he goes to work, she's sitting there, and again, joy just wells up within her, and she takes those tears and collects them.

Every time she looks at that bottle, she thinks how wonderful life is. This is such a wonderful life. God has been so good to me.

All the blessings I've received and so on. My husband is such a wonderful, sensitive man, good provider and so on. The months go by, and one day she realizes that she's missed her monthly cycle, and she's going to have a baby, and she's so excited about the fact she can't wait until her husband gets home to let him know the news, and again, she's sitting there, and she's just overcome with joy.

The tears well up, and she collects a few more tears in that bottle. He comes home. She announces they're going to have a baby.

Again, the weeks go by and months go by, and she feels that baby kicking within her, and again, she's excited. It's real. It's actually going to happen, as every woman can experience.

Again, a few more tears in that bottle. Eventually, the baby is born, and here she is now, cradling that little baby, taking that baby to her breast, and again, sitting there one day so content, wonderful husband, wonderful provision, this beautiful little home, gorgeous little child. Tears well up again, collecting those tears.

And then maybe a couple weeks go by, and one day she comes in, wakes the baby up from the nap, and the baby's got a fever. She feels that baby's head, and it's just blistering hard, and she does everything she can to try and reduce that fever. Nothing seems to work.

She goes to the doctor. The doctor checks that baby and says, Listen, there's nothing we can do. If that temperature doesn't break in the next few hours, I'm afraid you may lose that baby.

She's devastated. She can't believe what she's hearing. She goes home again.

She does everything she can to get that temperature down. Finally, the baby falls asleep, and she thinks, Thank God, maybe the thing, the temperature's broken, the fever's broken. Comes in maybe an hour later, picks that baby up.

The fever's gone, no temperature, but she realizes the baby's listless. The baby's dead. And now, for the first time, she experiences some pain, some agony, as the funeral tradition would be that they would have it the same day.

And after that, she is just overcome with sorrow and sadness. One day, she takes that little bottle again, and the tears just flow very, very freely now. And mingled with all those wonderful tears of joy and tears now of sadness, she goes into a state of depression.

Nobody can reach her. Her husband can't reach her. She comes home.

She's lethargic. Housework is not done. The meals are not on the table.

Nobody can sort of reach her again. She's in this deep, deep state of despondency. He finally, after the months of trying to get her to be normal again, if you like, he's had enough.

One day, he announces he wants a divorce. Sure enough, the letter of divorce comes, the bill of divorce. She's given that.

He takes off. She never sees him again. All of a sudden now, her life is in tatters.

Her life is a ruin. She's lost the man of her dreams. She's lost this beautiful little child.

She doesn't know how she's going to make ends meet. And again, she sobs and sobs and sobs and there's more tears in her heart. One day, a neighbor comes to console her, maybe a friend of her husband.

She has not been held for months, and he puts his arm around her and says, Listen, I'm so sorry. One thing leads to another, and before you know it, they're involved sexually. He says to her, Listen, if we can do this again, I'll pay you next time.

In fact, I've got some friends that will pay you. After all, your husband's gone. How are you going to make ends meet? And one thing leads to another, and she becomes, again, the woman in the city who was a sinner.

I don't know if that's factual, but I've worked with girls and guys long enough to know those things happen like that. Never intended to go that path. Never intended to take that particular way, and yet circumstances, sorrow, and so on, dictate it.

And she brings that Bible because it represents her life. You see, the psalmist says in the Psalms, I think it's Psalm 58, I'll need to check it, but he said, All my tears were stored up in your love. You know, as God, you know everything about my life.

All the ups and all of the downs, all the emotional highs, all the emotional lows. And while we don't have tear bottles today, everybody in this room does have a tear bottle. Or it may not be a physical bottle sitting on your piano or sitting on your mantle place, but there's a tear bottle in every single one of our lives.

Sorrow, things that we regret doing, things that didn't turn out the way we thought they would turn out. If only I'd gone left instead of going right, so to speak. If only I hadn't done this instead of doing that.

If only I'd have got a better education. If only I'd have, you know, and yet there are tremendous joys, but our life is filled with all those emotions. And the wonderful thing about the Gospel is that we can bring all of our cares and cast them upon Him as He does.

He knows everything. He knows all the woundedness. You see, the wonder again of the Gospel is it's not just a preaching of the Gospel.

Jesus said, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He's anointed me not only to preach the Gospel, but to bind up the broken heart. In other words, there is a whole Gospel message. It's not just a matter of getting saved, but God comes to put Humpty Dumpty back together again, so to speak.

And all the King's forces and all the psychiatrists and so on can't do it, but Jesus can. And all things can pass away, and all things can become different. And so she comes again, and she breaks, if you like, brings her entire past and pours it out at Him, and begins washing His feet with her tears.

The next thing is that she comes willing to serve. The custom, of course, in those days is that when you entered a person's home, there would be somebody, the lowest-ranking employee, if you like, servant in those days, would greet you at the door, and it was their job to wash your feet. Now, it was a necessity in those days, to day visit.

We'd get in our cars, we'd drive down Ashdod roads, the concrete roads, and, you know, come into a room. But this was a farming community. These roads were the same roads that, they didn't have Chevys and Toyotas and so on going down them.

They had horses and mules and camels and all sorts of animals. Horses, cows, sheep. And it was impossible to step on those roads without stepping into something.

And you didn't want to bring into somebody's house what you happened to step in as you made your way to that house. And so there was somebody stationed at the door, and it was their job to wash your feet so that you didn't bring in that foul romper, if you like. And somehow Simon had forgotten to put somebody in embarrassment, especially in that culture, and especially when he was dealing with somebody like Jesus.

And this woman saw a need, and she met that need. That's the gospel, isn't it? Where we take and we see needs that are necessary, things that need to be done, and we say, listen, I'll do that job, even though it may be the most, even if it's the greatest among you, let him become a servant of all. The disciples were embarrassed when Jesus came and started washing their feet.

We recall Peter says, no way, Joseph, I'm not going to wash my feet. This is embarrassing. You know, you're the master.

You should be washing your feet, not vice versa. But Jesus said, listen, if I, your Lord and master, can wash your feet, you should be able to wash my mother's feet. And yet we don't want to take the lowest place, many of us.

We want a position, we want rank, we want to, you know, be recognized as an elder, a deacon, or whatever, but I'm a Sunday school, I teach Sunday school, I don't need that. That's the role my deacon teaches me. I teach five year olds.

Very easy, isn't it, to have that sort of attitude. Yet here is a woman that's willing to do anything that needs to be done. She sees a need.

She's willing to wash feet. That should be our attitude. I worked with wonderful men of God for many years in New Zealand.

They used to say, often, David, if you want to know how much of a servant you are, watch your reaction when somebody treats you like that. That was always his response. Somebody asks you to do something that you think is below, you know, your pay level, so to speak, how do you respond? Then you know how much of a servant you are.

Didn't we? Let the young people pick up the chair, too. I know that, oh, it's so easy sort of to, you know, think that somehow we are immune from these things. No.

Jesus set an example. A true servanthood. We should be those that are willing to minister in that same way.

The next thing, down in verse 50, it says, she came in faith. Jesus said to her, your faith has saved you. Go in peace.

We're saved again by faith. We're not saved by works. We're not saved by self-effort.

We're saved by putting our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why I say everything about this story to me is the gospel, what the gospel is all about. We're saved by faith.

And as a result of our salvation, there is peace. Not only peace in the natural, but peace with God and peace of God. Those two pieces, if you like.

The Bible says there's no peace for wicked. And so, obviously, she came wicked. She came without peace because there's nothing the world can give that can equal the peace of God.

But she left again with peace. She came as a sinner. She left as a saint.

She came, if you like, again filthy and left pure. So she comes again not only willing to serve, but she comes in faith believing that this man truly is who he says he is. He is the Son of God.

He is the Savior of the world. And she leaves again transformed by the power of God. And the last thing is that she came in worship.

It says that she came not only to wash his feet with her tears, but also she anointed his feet that she was kissing his feet. You see, I think it was a process, if you like. First of all, the tears, the tears of remorse, tears of sadness for all the things that she's done.

This body that was created as a temple of the Holy Spirit has been used and abused. Every sexual fantasy of every man in town, so to speak. And she comes and realizes there's a sinfulness and a tears flow, but as the tears flow and she begins to wash his feet, he begins to wash her heart.

And somehow it's like again having a shower on the inside and all of a sudden those tears then become tears of joy. And she realizes I'm being set free. I'm being cleansed of something happening to me.

I can't understand it. I can't necessarily put it into words, but there is a transformation that is taking place. She begins now to show her appreciation, her affection by kissing his feet.

Oh, it's not a sexual sort of thing at all. She's overwhelmed again with gratitude. In fact, Jesus stood and defended her there in verse 47.

Because the Pharisee, of course, bristled when he found out that this woman was in the house. And Jesus had to go in her defense. He says, For this reason I say to you, her sins which are many have been forgiven.

Now let me go back to verse 44 and turning towards the woman he said to Simon, Do you see this woman? I entered your house and you gave me no water for my feet. But she has wet my feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but she since the time I came in has not ceased to kiss my feet.

For this reason I say to you, her sins which are many have been forgiven. For she loved much, but he who has forgiven little loves little. She has been forgiven much.

And now she begins to express that forgiveness, the magnitude of that forgiveness. The Bible says, Kiss the son of this to be angry. When's the last time you kissed him? When's the last time you got along with him? When's the last time you just took time to kiss him? Say, Lord, I thank you for all that you've done in my life.

Thank you, Lord, for that great salvation. Thank you, Lord, for coming down, for redeeming me. Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul.

Thank you, Lord, for making me whole. Thank you, Lord, for giving to me thy great salvation. So rich, so free.

Here she is now, just absolutely lost in one beloved grace. Kissing his feet, kissing his feet. She has not ceased to kiss me.

Boy, it wasn't one little pet. I mean, she is just lost in it. It's like a baby dancing with all his life.

Michael, you know, despising what he's doing. Here is this moment she's become all of a sudden sort of fanatical. Kissing his feet, kissing his feet, kissing his feet.

She's so full of joy and appreciation. Jesus said, your faith has saved you. Again, go in peace.

When I was a little boy in England, we lived just outside the city of Manchester. Those of you who are soccer fans know that Manchester had one of the world's best teams for many, many years. Manchester United.

But the Manchester Guardian, I believe was the name of the newspaper, they had a contest. The contest was for the person who could best depict the word peace. They had all sorts of applications.

It was a contest that was for artists, photographers, from what I recall. I don't think it was just about writers. And so people would take pictures of a very placid lake with the sun rising, the setting, the reflection of the mountains making the water and the trees in the water.

You know, all sorts of peaceful sort of scenes to try and win the contest. The contest, if I remember, was 100 or 500 pounds, which was a considerable amount of money back in those days. But the person that won the contest had a very unique presentation.

It was a photograph. It was a photograph of a raging waterfall and the rains were coming down. The lightning was in the background.

Here, the thunder of the waterfall, you could almost feel it, just a torrential, you know, millions of gallons coming down. Here were some craggy sort of rocks in the middle of this waterfall. And in one of those rocks, there was a little sprig that had grown up.

And in that little sprig of a tree, there was a bird's nest. And in the bird's nest, there was another bird. And you could just see underneath the wings of that bird, those little birds was it, absolutely peaceful in the midst of all the threatening waterfall and the weather, the storm that was raging around it.

That's the peace that God gives us. It isn't the absence of problems. It's in the midst of the problems that we can have peace.

Because we're under the shadow of the Almighty and everything around about us may be coming out of the woods, so to speak. And yet in the midst of it, here is a woman that knows, knowing the peace of God. There's a peace of God I'm sick of using.

There's a joy that God wants to give us. He wants you to come. And this woman learned to truly worship.

You see, she took her hair. And a woman's hair is her glory. But she was willing to lay aside her glory and use it as a towel to wipe the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the wonderful thing is that once she wiped his feet and she'd anointed his feet with perfume, that she took with her that aroma. When she left that house, she could smell again the fragrance. There's something about worship, isn't there? That when somebody is a true worshiper, there's something that you sense in them.

There's an aroma, if you like, a spiritual aroma that they carry. Because you know, that person, that man, that woman has been in the presence of God. That's the place that God wants to bring us to.

And she wasn't in it for what she could get out of it in that sentence. She wasn't there again to be in the limelight. It was all about him.

It was all about Jesus. When we get to that place where all we want to do is minister to him, then I believe we've discovered what it really is to be born again by the Spirit of God. Let's just close with prayer.

Father, we thank you for this word this morning. Lord, you said the entrance of your word brings the light. Father, I pray that, Lord, you'd close us once again, Lord, to be overwhelmed with just that love.

Lord, the love of God. The reach down lifted every single one of us out of that darkness.

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