

# When Something's Not Right

by Thaddeus Barnum

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing our spiritual restlessness and coming to Jesus in humility and faith for healing and forgiveness.*

**Duration:** 24:32

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 55:1, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 18:20, Luke 7:36-38, Luke 7:48-50, Hebrews 4:16

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher contrasts the actions of Simon, a Pharisee, with those of a woman who is known as a sinner. The woman demonstrates deep sorrow and humility as she weeps, kisses, and anoints Jesus, pouring out her soul before Him. The preacher emphasizes the importance of knowing what to do when our souls are hurting or broken, and how to come to Jesus in those moments. He also highlights the need for genuine repentance and seeking forgiveness, rather than simply seeking temporary comfort or companionship.

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## Transcript

I would like to, this morning, attend to this gospel reading in Luke chapter 7. So if you could grab a Bible and if you brought your own or one that's in the chairs, the pews. I only want to look briefly at verses 36, 36 to 38, and verses 48 to 50, the whole piece about Simon, I'm afraid we will not have time with this morning, but rather I would like to take a look at this wonderful, this extraordinary, this remarkable woman. When something isn't right, when something isn't right, you know it, it weighs upon you.

And sometimes when you look somebody in the eye and say, how are you? It's the last question you want somebody to ask, because you're afraid if you actually go that direction, the weight of what's going on inside of you might collapse you. This woman, she's known. She knows the condition of her soul.

She knows what's going on. And she knows what to do, she knows where to go, she knows who to go to, she knows what to bring. Do you? When things are not right, when something isn't right, do you know what to do? See, our bodies tell us, we get symptoms that something's wrong.

Our bodies tell us, and generally we know what to do. And if it's unmanageable, we tend to go to a doctor. We tend to take a look at something that's going on inside of our bodies.

But when it comes to the heart, when something's not right, the symptoms begin to appear. Do we know what to do? Can we say, like this woman, oh yes, I know exactly what's going on. I know what to do, where to go, who to go to.

I know what to bring. I think sometimes we're a little less when it comes to the matters of the soul. Let me just paint some symptoms for you, just some things that are odd, that can just appear.

Suddenly we're finding that we're not sleeping well. There's a sense of a loss of joy, a loss of peace inside of us. We get the sense of being more frustrated, maybe more critical, more defensive.

At least that's what people tell us. Perhaps more anxious. Perhaps we find this sort of anger, this kind of explosion, or just being more emotional than we're usually.

Sometimes it's just that we find a hardness towards those that we love. We find ourselves more isolated. We find ourselves even depressed sometimes, downcast, don't know why.

Sometimes easier to be tempted. We find often that we respond by eating too much, or drinking too much, or shopping too much, or hanging out at the TV, or the internet, or just reclusive, and finding that we're doing things we ought not to do. And that's the state of this dear woman.

She knows. The city knows her as a sinner. The city, she's got a reputation.

The town knows it. The Pharisee knows it. The Bible says it.

Jesus says it. She's known as a sinner. But that's not the reputation.

It's not why she's coming. She knows the condition of her soul. She knows the restlessness that's inside of her.

And she knows inside what to do. She's heard that Jesus is at Simon's house having lunch. Simon the brilliant.

Simon the Pharisee. Simon that great man. It's fascinating to me that the Bible assigns a name to him and not to her.

A man came up to me at the nine o'clock service. He says, I know exactly why. He said, because the Lord always knows the name of the nameless.

Yeah. And here she comes. And Jesus tells us in verse 50 that she's been given a gift.

She's got a gift from heaven. Not something welling up inside of her. She's got a gift from heaven.

He's given her eyes of faith. She knows Jesus. She knows this glimpse of him.

This wonder of him. She knows he can do what nobody else can do. She knows something about him which is fascinating.

Because in verse 49, Simon the brilliant and all his brilliant, brilliant colleagues and friends end up saying about Jesus, who is this? Who is this who forgives sins? Who is this fascinating the brilliant don't know, but she does. But she does. Why? Because God has opened her heart to give her eyes of faith.

She knows exactly what to do, exactly where to go. Her soul is hurting. Is yours.

Is there a restlessness inside that you've been covering over? That you think you're in control of? You know what to do with it before it breaks over you. See, what happens sometimes, the old analogy is this. We put a coat on and we're messed up.

We're just all messed up. We just get all messed up. So we try to, we just try to just figure it out.

So somebody brilliant comes along and says, start over. You started in the wrong place. Unbutton.

Button it right back. Everything's fine. Is that counsel too simple for you? But that's what we do.

We've got to go back, start over and go back to the beginning. Go back to God. God who gave us life and breath.

God who made us in his image. God who gave us time. My friends, you're here today.

Some of those who are your age are not here. They've already gone. Their time is already up.

Your time is still here. God has given you a gift. He's given you character and personality.

He's given you talents and gifts. Our lives are always messed up until we recognize God. Erland and I met a couple this past weekend.

They said, we don't know what to do. We have very dear friends. He's an atheist.

And he keeps bothering me with the fact that I believe in God and he doesn't. What am I supposed to say to the atheist? And I said, this is brilliant. This is wonderful.

The reason he keeps mentioning him is because he's bothering him. Oh, he knows there's a God. He's just fighting against him.

Atheism, atheism, fighting against. That's all that's happening. Why? Because his heart is restless.

His soul is restless. Is that not what's happening in our country today? Protests and riots in the streets. There's a restlessness.

Is there not? Of course there is. It hasn't to do with the elections, my dear friends. Not really.

It has to do with the people that have turned from God to turn back to God. Saint Augustine taught us this in the fourth century. The great bishop of Hippo.

He said these words, thou hast made us for thyself. Thou hast made us for thyself. Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee.

That will always be the case. We'll always find our restlessness unless we go back and let the woman, this notorious sinner, this remarkable woman, my hero, look at her. She's teaching us the way to get our souls right with God.

It might sound too simplistic for you, but it's not simplistic. She's got faith to see. She knows what to do because she knows her heart, the restlessness, the sin.

She knows all of it. She knows all of it. And what she does is she bursts into the house.

Oh, dear friends, one doesn't do that. I mean, when you've got a diplomat, a Pharisee, a man of great distinction, and you're a notorious sinner, you don't come uninvited, unwanted, unclean. And she does.

It reminds me of the men who brought the layman down through the roof upon Jesus. I love that image. Jesus teaching, and all of a sudden the roof is coming down on him.

This is like the bursting, the bursting into the room, and she comes to Jesus. That's what he said, isn't it? Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Come to me.

Come to me. That's what she does, but she does not do it with arrogance. She does it with utter humility.

She goes to his feet. I wish we had time to go through the records of the Gospels of all the people we find who see Jesus and find themselves at his feet in worship as a lowly servant. Like the women coming out of the tomb on the day of resurrection, they behold Jesus, and what it says in Matthew, Matthew the 28th chapter, verse 9, they clutched onto his feet and worshipped him.

There she is worshipping. Simon, the Pharisee, did not have the decency to wash our Lord's feet, basic hospitable custom of the time, but she begins to weep. She knows her soul.

She knows she's not right. Tears beginning to fall upon our saviors. His feet are dirty.

They were not washed. Here her tears come. The sound of that wonderful Psalm 51, verse 17, the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken heart, a broken spirit.

Oh God, thou wilt not despise. And there she is. She's weeping.

Her tears covering our Savior's feet, undoing her hair, taking her hair to wipe them. Some have said, and commentarians have said, that the act of just taking the hair down in public is an act of shame, but the woman already knows her shame. She's already knowing who she is.

She takes her hair and begins to clean, to wipe in her tears before the Lord, and then she kisses. It's an act of honor, an act of worship, like a mother who gently kisses the cut upon her child's arm or head. She just puts the balm of kiss, of worship, of grace, of healing, of life on those bruised and scarred feet, and she's always known what to bring.

She has brought this alabaster flack of ointment. This is expensive. This might be the most expensive thing she owns, but she's in the presence of one who is worth more.

She's bringing her best. She's bringing her all. This is the whole point of what the offering is.

She knows what to bring. It's what we say when we're married. We take the ring and say, this ring is a symbol of my vow that all that I am, all that I have, I honor you.

So this offering, this offering comes, it's a symbol, it's a vow of all that I am, of all that I have, I honor you. And there comes the ointment, the cleansing, the balm down upon his feet, down upon his feet, the waft of the fragrance, the smell, almost as an incense of prayer. She says nothing in this text.

Her words, she doesn't say anything except those acts of love and of mercy and of honor and the smell of the incense rising as sweet fragrance to our Lord, and he utters his words. His words, his words simply

cover. He's speaking to Simon, but his words are present.

He's contrasting Simon with this woman, which seems so stark and yet so striking in its comparisons, and he speaks those words from verse 39 to verse 47. We don't have time to unpack them, but what I know is that these words are, as she's weeping, as she's wiping, as she's kissing, as she's anointing, as she's honoring, as her soul is being poured out before the Lord. She is presenting herself to God.

My friends, I need this woman. I can't do the work I do without what she's taught us. She knows what to do when the soul hurts, the soul is broken, the soul is restless.

She knows how to come to Jesus. Our church family here at All Saints, the kindness of Rob, the kindness of the vestry, the kindness of our Bishop Steve Wood, I have an office on this campus with you where I've been given to have an opportunity to pastor the pastors who don't know what to do when their soul hurts. They don't know where to go because they're so responsible for everybody, and I've had the unique opportunity in these days, and what do I do with them? Do I think I'm somebody? I'm not somebody.

I follow somebody who's nobody, who teaches us how to come to Jesus. When our life is messed up, when sins flare, when the devil attacks, when fears rise, when the old lies of our past come back to us, haunt us, torment us, deceive us, there's a place to go. When we know the condition of our soul, when faith has come, there's a place to go.

Let her teach us. She knows how to come to Jesus. She knows how to come in reverence and honor, in dignity, respect.

She knows how to come, not with empty hands, but with her offering, with her tithing. And this is why, as Rob asked me to speak on stewardship season, this is her, she already knows stewardship season. She doesn't need a sermon.

Tell her about these things. Why? Because she knows it. The Bible's always told us we always come with our best, always, as a symbol of all that we have.

She knows these things. See, this is where I get some, I think I get a bit arrogant. I don't mean to be.

But our forefathers gave us the worship service you're now in. It came from the Old Testament way of worship. And after the resurrection, the cross and resurrection of our Savior, the apostles taught us what the Old Testament had taught us, how to worship.

And it's exactly what this woman is teaching. The motion of the woman is the motion of this service. Same thing.

We've all come into the house of the Lord together. We're two or three gathered. There He is in the midst.

What have we done? Are we coming with arrogance? Are we coming with pride? Are we coming self-sufficient? Are we coming all in control of our life? Or are we coming broken, bruised, hurt from this world? Not exactly right. We've come to honor Him. We've come to worship Him.

I was raised on the traditions that were passed down from our forefathers. We sing the praises of God. We come.

We pray together. We hear God's Word opened up to us that might feed our souls. And what does it lead to? It leads to confession.

It leads to godly repentance. It leads to the tears and the washing, the wiping of the soul. We come to our Savior's feet.

Do we not? To love Him, to honor Him. He's the only one that can bring peace to us. This is the only place at His feet that it works.

To honor and bless and kiss and adore with a broken and contrite heart, that we might hear words that just are unimaginable. I know we do them by tradition and by rote, but when the words are actually given to us by the Holy Spirit, the words this woman heard, your sins are forgiven. And the burden of the unrestlessness, the restlessness, the peace of Jesus.

Oh, the blood of Jesus. Oh, the wonder-working power of the blood of Jesus that washes, that cleanses, that forgives, that heals, that makes right. Nobody can do this but Him.

And part of my angst, the reason I don't want to sound arrogant is that somehow in our generations, I would say to you even back 500 years ago when we broke and the Catholic church had sort of gone a different direction and we broke, we sort of did away with some, we became more free. There were denominations that just said, we don't want that kind of worship. And they did new things.

And you fast forward it today and there are times I go into church and I'm not trying to be critical. It's just that they've taken what our fathers taught us and they've done away with it. And it gets me nervous.

Because what can happen if we're not taught these things well, we'll not know how to come into His presence rightly. Please don't hear me arrogant. What do I mean by that? I mean that if we just come and have a wonderful time and have a lovely and go home, we can miss the process that this woman teaches, that the service teaches.

Why is that? Because I don't want people coming in and bursting into the room. Forgive me for this. Just forgive me.

This is my own little skit. Forgive me. Hey, dude.

So like, you know, kind of like things aren't going well for me. Pull up a chair, sit next to Jesus, my buddy, friend, need some help. Thank you very much.

High five. Leave a couple of bucks on the table. It doesn't heal the soul.

I'm not saying he's not friend. I'm not saying he's not brother. He is condescended to us to dine a table.

I'm not saying any of that. But I am saying when faith has come to you and you know the condition of your soul, you come to His feet. Oh, yeah.

In worship, in adoration, in thanksgiving, in praise. That's what I do. That's what people do for me.

When I'm all messed up and don't want to admit it. And somebody has the kindness to bring me to Jesus. And sometimes the work there at His feet takes a while to unpack as the Spirit of God knows how to do.

Sometimes the forensics of why we're sinning, why we're messing up, why the devil's attacking, why things of the past have come to visit us in the present. Sometimes that takes time. It does, doesn't it? Sometimes.

Sometimes that process, that healing process takes time. And those who walk with us, go with us, know how to do that with us. Praise God for that.

But there comes a time of the end of the process where we know, we know, we know the words come to us. Thank you, Jesus. As we present ourselves to God, I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to Him.

We bring our tithe, we bring our offering, we bring our ointment, our tithes. Yes, we care for the poor. We give to charities.

We give, we give, we give, but there's a portion of our tithe. No, no, it belongs here in our family. It belongs here where we come before the Lord, that part of our tithe, which is an act of worship.

Lord, all that I am, all that I have, this is a symbol of my vow to you. Here I am in worship to you. We hear the words, the unbelievable, unforgettable words.

My dear son, my dear daughter, your sins are forgiven. Your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and that peace permeates.

The blood of Jesus cleanses. The resurrected power of the Lord comes into us, and that which is a burden is laid at the cross, and we are home again in his presence, restored, forgiven, ransomed, healed. And Simon couldn't do it, but you know what Jesus does at that moment when our offering is made, and when he declares the forgiveness of our sins? Do you know what Jesus does? Oh, thank you, Lord.

He brings us to his table where we get to eat and dine. He lifts us up from his feet and sets us at table, and says, I will dine with you and you with me. I love that.

Sweet communion of our Savior. But we come first presenting ourself to God. Oh, dear friend, if you're not right, if something is restless inside of you, come, let us watch that woman and do what she does.

Come, let's do what our forebears have taught us all these years. Let us come to Jesus. Let us come to his feet.

Let us worship him. Let us confess. Let us repent.

And let us wait for the gift of God to come and cleanse us. Oh, the power, the wonder-working power of the blood, of the lamb. We know where to go.

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