

Luke 7:36-50

We are confronted this morning in our text with the most important thing: Love for Christ.

1. Mark 12:28-30 *One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; 30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'"*

2. This is of first importance!

3. Revelation 2:2-5 *I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place--unless you repent.*

As we consider Luke 7:36-50 let us ask, "what keeps me from loving Jesus more?" Since this is the most important thing..how can we cultivate a deeper love for Christ? We get insight from our story today.

v36 Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. 37 And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, 38 and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears,

She began to wet.

1. The Greek literally means rain.
2. She rained tears on His feet.

and kept wiping them with the hair of her head,

1. She promptly wiped them with her hair, a significant action
2. Letting down one's hair in public was shameful and even a ground for divorce.
3. Jewish ladies did not unbind their hair in public...but she was insensitive to cultural rules and expectations and took it down.

and kissing His feet

1. Once she did all of this, it says she was kissing His feet, *kataphileo*,
2. That's an intense word.
3. It's used of the father's kisses when the prodigal came home and he fell on his neck and kept embracing and embracing and embracing, kissing.

and anointing them with the perfume.

Many Jewish women had around their neck a vial of perfume on a cord which they kept with them all the time.

1. It was a sort of deodorant.
2. It was not uncommon for women to spend a lot of money on perfume.
 - a. I read one account of a woman who was allowed by her husband four hundred gold coins annually for perfume.
 - b. I don't know what he was trying to cover up, but 400 gold coins of perfume is a lot of

perfume.

3. She didn't take the lid off of the flask; she broke it.
4. She didn't pour the contents out, she spilled them out.

39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner." 40 And Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher." 41 "A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly."

Jesus shared a parable to illustrate the truth he is trying to convey

1. A denarius was a days pay for a laborer
 - a. 500 denarii was 20 months pay
 - b. 50 denarii was 2 months pay
2. Any time somebody forgives a debt, they themselves incur that debt in full.
3. If I lend you 500 denarii and you can't pay and I say, "I forgive that," then now I've incurred that debt completely.

44 Turning toward 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. 45 You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. 46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. 47 For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."

What distinguished them was ultimately the depth of their love for Christ.

1. Simon's love for Christ climaxed with an invitation to come to his home.
2. This woman so loved Christ she could not contain herself and she expresses it powerfully.

Jesus said, love for Him is what made the difference... and is what makes the difference

1. If love for Christ is of first and foremost importance, don't we need to ask why we so often are like the church at Ephesus: guilty of leaving our first love?
2. Don't we need to ask ourselves why we have such little love for Christ?

The simplest answer is, because we have a little forgiveness.

1. This revelation leads us to another question, with a more complicated answer
2. Why would we have a little forgiveness?

3 major reasons.

1. **We Underestimate our Sinfulness**

- a. Every meal ever had with Pharisees ended up in rebellious unbelief.
 1. Self-righteousness is such a terrible, terrible kind of blindness.
 2. Luke 18:9-14 *And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray,*

one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' 13 But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

3. The most unredeemable of all is the one who thinks he's not a sinner and doesn't need redemption, who thinks that God is pleased with him the way he is.
 - b. We underestimate our sinfulness because we measure ourselves by ourselves
 - c. I am better than most people out there.
 1. Have you watched the news? Have you seen what is going on in our nation? In our state? In our own community?
 2. Every time I look around I feel way better about myself!
 - d. As long as we measure ourselves by ourselves, we will underestimate our sinfulness.
 - e. 2 Corinthians 10:12 *For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.*
 - f. We must measure ourselves by the perfect standard of God who cannot look upon sin!

2. We Underestimate His Holiness

- a. Almost every time I talk to people about their salvation, people think they are ok.
- b. They make a case for their spiritual condition: baptism, church membership, goodness etc.
- c. You, like the debtors in the parable, are unable to pay! You cannot settle your sin debt no matter what or how much you do!
- d. We have underestimated the holiness of God.
 1. Ezekiel 1:4-14, 22-28 *As I looked, behold, a storm wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like glowing metal in the midst of the fire. 5 Within it there were figures resembling four living beings. And this was their appearance: they had human form. 6 Each of them had four faces and four wings. 7 Their legs were straight and their feet were like a calf's hoof, and they gleamed like burnished bronze. 8 Under their wings on their four sides were human hands. As for the faces and wings of the four of them, 9 their wings touched one another; their faces did not turn when they moved, each went straight forward. 10 As for the form of their faces, each had the face of a man; all four had the face of a lion on the right and the face of a bull on the left, and all four had the face of an eagle. 11 Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out above; each had two touching another being, and two covering their bodies. 12 And each went straight forward; wherever the spirit was about to go, they would go, without turning as they went. 13 In the midst of the living beings there was something that looked like burning coals of fire, like torches darting back and forth among the living beings. The fire was bright, and lightning was flashing from the fire. 14 And the living beings ran to and fro like bolts of lightning.....Now over the heads of the living beings there was something like an expanse, like the awesome gleam of crystal, spread out over their heads. 23 Under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward the other; each one also had two wings covering its body on the one side and on the other. 24 I also heard the sound of their wings like the sound of abundant waters as they went, like the voice of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army camp; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings. 25 And there came a voice from above the expanse that was over their heads; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings. 26 Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. 27 Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. 28 As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking.*

2. If we catch a glimpse of this God we will see our sinfulness much more clearly
3. We may be tempted to despair...if not for one more thing!

3. We Underestimate God's Forgiveness

- a. My sin is too big. God could never forgive me.
- b. Cliff analogy

Imagine the ocean...the tide is going out. On the beach is a high cliff overlooking the ocean. ON the high cliff stands Christ with his back to the edge of the cliff with his back to the ocean as the tide goes out. You meet him there and present to Him your sin.

1. Micah 7:19 *he will tread our iniquities underfoot*
2. Isaiah 38:17 *you have cast all my sins behind your back*
3. Micah 7:19 *You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea*
4. Psalm 103:12 *as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.*
5. Jeremiah 31:34 *I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more*

Conclusion:

48 Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." 49 Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" 50 And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

- a. It was not her tears from a broken heart that saved her.
- b. It was not her humble ministry as she let down her hair and wiped his feet
- c. It wasn't her sacrificial service as she anointed his feet with oil
- d. It was her faith in the work of Jesus Christ that saved her and gave her peace.

Ephesians 2:8-9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

You can have a big forgiveness this morning which will result in a big love for Christ today if you will just believe. If you will receive.