

Simon and the *Sinful* Woman

Luke 7:36-50, Trinity Sunday V

June 30, 2013

Beloved of the Lord.....Blindness is one of the worst parts of our own sinful nature. When we are afflicted with pride, we will search and examine and happily condemn our neighbor for even the smallest transgression, yet when the cross-examination occurs, we are blind as a bat to our own sin. Consider how Simon actually looked down upon Christ for allowing a sinful woman to touch him, yet Simon did not look down upon Christ for sitting and eating with *sinful* Simon. So the Bible says, "All the ways of a man *are* clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits." While our ability not to see our own sin is one kind of blindness, there is a much greater blindness: the blindness of unbelief concerning God's Son, the Savior of all the world. Jesus said in John three, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Let us therefore thank God daily, that though we are so often blind to our own sins, Christ has nevertheless opened our eyes so we see Jesus is our Savior. "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

I. The similarities between Simon and the woman. Before we get much further, let us give a little background information. Regarding the nameless woman, many have speculated her to be Mary Magdalene, or perhaps Mary the sister of Lazarus. Kretzmann, for example, believes she had formerly been a prostitute because of the expensive perfume. Yet if she had been a prostitute is not likely Simon would have allowed her into his home. The question then to her identity must really remain unanswered. What is important however, is the term given her, namely "sinner". In this context that term "sinner" has particular meaning. For example, immediately earlier in the same chapter, Jesus was mocking the Pharisees who rejected both John the Baptist and Jesus Himself. Jesus exclaimed, "The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" Whereas the Pharisees rejected the austere and self-denying manner of John the Baptist, Jesus lived quite differently. Jesus was not afraid to eat with sinners, and He also drank wine with them, though not in excess. As for that term sinners, these were such whose wicked life was well known. Though it matters not if she was an adulteress or fornicator, a drunkard or prostitute, the simple fact is Simon gives her the title *sinner*. He judged her different from himself.

But were they really different? Weren't there similarities? Romans three (for example) says, "there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Likewise "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." While there might have been a little difference outwardly in the sins of Simon and the woman,

they were still equally sinners in the sight of God. By their sins they both merited God's wrath and eternal damnation. There was also no difference regarding their birth, namely they were born in sin. Job 14:4 says, "Who can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean? not one." Every mother in this world who has given birth to a child is sinful, and a holy child cannot come from a sinful mother (Christ being the glorious exception). Both this sinful woman and sinful Simon had sinful mothers, and "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"

When we thus find ourselves looking down upon our Muslim neighbor, or the whores of Hollywood, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves in prison, certain presidents or judges who err, and we inwardly think we are different because we have not committed the same sins, we ought to remember in the sight of God all sins are vile, an abomination in His sight. God hates the sins of pride just as much as God hates the sin of drunkenness, fornication or adultery, and "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." When we Christians inwardly loathe someone because of this or that sin which we have not committed, and we take comfort in the thought "I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican" we are the sinful Simon of our lesson and there is need for repentance. Rather than loathing our neighbor we ought to remind ourselves, "In the sight of God, there is no difference between me and him. My sins are just as vile and offensive." Then we ought to earnestly pray "God be merciful to me a sinner." In Luke 18 Jesus said of that penitent man who confessed his sins and would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Concerning the sins of other people, what really should matter to us (then) is the knowledge that Jesus has taken their debt and our own upon Himself, and paid the price. Second Corinthians five says, "He hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Though the cross of Christ both this sinful woman and sinful Simon were counted righteous, namely forgiven by God. They had that in common. God is that merciful creditor in verse 42 that "frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love Him most?"

II. The differences between Simon and the woman. Here then was the great difference between sinful Simon and the sinful woman, hence "Simon I have something to say to you." After revealing the greater love of the one whose greater debt is forgiven, Jesus said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered into your house and you gave me no water for my feet: but she has washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head." Simon did not even show true hospitality to Jesus, neither at the head of feet. "My head with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment." The head and the feet are important. Simon essentially viewed Christ

as an equal, not God or Savior. Even worse, Simon made the assumption Jesus was no prophet, because He allowed a sinful woman to touch Him.

The differences between Simon and the woman are everywhere. Simon didn't know the sins of his own pride, but this woman knew the sins of her heart. Simon thought his sins were few, but she knew her sins were many. Simon was not sorry for his sins. She was. Though Simon said "Master say on", Simon didn't honor the head or feet of Christ. She did, and she did so with all her heart. Also she was a confessing sinner and Simon was not. Proverbs 28:13 says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy."

But the greatest difference of all between the two, was her love for Jesus in her heart, and don't miss the point this love was the fruit of the Gospel. It should be more than clear to us, not only had she heard previously the sweet and forgiving Gospel of Jesus Christ, but she believed it. Though her sins were great she really knew that in Jesus there was more than enough grace to cover all her sins, yet these sins still grieved her heart. Whatever she had done, however great her sin, she knew she could come to Jesus with all her sins and Jesus would not turn her away. By the washing of His feet with tears, by the wiping of His feet with her hair, by the kissing of His feet and the anointing, she place herself far below Jesus..... unworthy to touch Him, yet she touches Him, kisses and anoints His feet. His first love for her causes and creates her returning love for Him....and a kiss (by the way) is a very personal and intimate way of showing and revealing love. What can be more personal and close than a kiss? With a tender love a wife may kiss her husband or a child. She can't help herself when she loves them. Consider then what an honor it is, that God who is holy, namely Jesus allows these unclean woman to kiss Him. Though her love for Him is not as strong as His love for her, Jesus accepts her worship and adoration. Jesus accepts this sinner and does not turn her away. How true it is, "This man receives sinners" and Jesus is a "friend of publicans and sinners."

III. How faith saves us. Dear Christian friends, I know when we read this lesson we often feel guilty within because we have not loved Jesus as this woman so deeply did. When have we cried such penitential tears? When have we kissed His feet? And its not very hard to see our own pride in sinful Simon. The law of God in this lesson uncovers our sins, but God does so only so He can then reveal His grace. So "Where sin abounds grace does much more abound." Whether our sins be 50 or 500, or 500,000 God frankly forgives both and all our debts, "not with gold or silver by with the precious blood of Christ." Though we had no ability to pay, as a willing and obedient Son Jesus paid back to God the Father all we owed. Your pride (and mine), sinful Simon, is all forgiven. Though you indeed a *sinful* woman with open and obvious sins that all the world can see, "Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven". We are not forgive because we love much, but because we have been forgiven "we love much.

God then indeed through Christ is very much a creditor. We are deep in debt up to our eyeballs, "but the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. In, by, and through the holy blood of Jesus Christ God has put into your own personal account, ALL the credit, ALL the merit of His Son. By doing so our Father who are in heaven gave us a kiss, a kiss of grace, the kiss of His Son who said, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." His first love for us does indeed draw us to Him. Those who desire God's mercy will always find God's mercy in Jesus Christ our Lord. _

Since God then through Christ has indeed forgiven you all your debts of sin, even imputing unto you all the righteousness of Christ, what then is there left to do but believe? Stop then trying to earn your way into heaven with the vanity of good works, and rejoice in the one good work of Jesus Christ your Lord who died that you might live, who lives that you will never die! Hence Jesus said to this penitent believing woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Faith then does indeed save us not because we are doing something, but because of the object faith rests in, namely Christ. When faith believes in Him, it trusts, rests, and puts its confidence in Him. It is He who saves us and not we ourselves. Just as the air around you will do you no good except you breathe, faith breathes and believes in Christ alone, hence "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Eat the Bread of Life and thou shalt be saved. Drink His blood and thou shalt be saved. And finally "go in peace". Your sins are forgiven dear sinful woman. Your sins are forgiven dear sinful Simon. Go and live in that peace God gives to your heart by forgiving you all your sins. Amen.

...and now may the PEACE of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen."