

Salvation - Find Salvation at Jesus' Feet

Luke 7:36-50

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

"At Jesus' feet..." That is a phrase we hear a number of times in the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) Can you think of some of the times that people fell down at Jesus' feet? Can you recall why various people placed themselves at the feet of Jesus and what they did there?

There were those who threw themselves at Jesus' feet in prayer. A man named Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet to plead with him to heal his daughter who was dying. There was an unnamed woman who did the same thing as she begged Jesus to heal her daughter who was demon-possessed. Luke's gospel tells us about a demon-possessed man on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Gerasenes who fell at Jesus' feet in submission to his power and authority. After Jesus drove the demon out of that man he sat down at Jesus' feet out of love and respect and to show his readiness to serve his Savior.

Perhaps you recall the time that Jesus healed ten men of leprosy. One of them, a Samaritan, returned and threw himself down at Jesus' feet to give him thanks. Mary, from Bethany, sat at Jesus' feet to listen to him teach (remember that was the time that her sister Martha complained about her not helping with the housework) and she also fell at Jesus' feet in sadness when he arrived after her brother Lazarus had died. One woman who had been healed of her internal bleeding when she touched Jesus' cloak fell at his feet in fear and love and thanksgiving as Jesus scanned the crowd for her. If we are considering those who fell at Jesus' feet we must also include those two Mary's (Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James) who hugged Jesus' feet when they saw him alive on Easter Sunday morning and worshiped him.

So many people placed themselves at Jesus' feet for so many reasons. There were those who fell at his feet to ask him for something. Others threw themselves at his feet in love, or in thanksgiving, or in excitement, or in worship, or to honor him. There were people who placed themselves at Jesus' feet to submit to him and to turn over their lives in service to him.

In our gospel lesson for this morning we hear about a woman who had lived a sinful life who placed herself at Jesus' feet. She put herself there in repentance, and submission, and faith. At Jesus' feet she offered her love to him in service. This woman also found salvation at Jesus' feet. Like her let's place ourselves at Jesus' feet this morning. Like so many others let's humble ourselves and fall before our Lord. Then like this woman we will:

FIND SALVATION AT JESUS' FEET

I. At Jesus' feet lay your sins in repentance

II. At Jesus' feet receive words of forgiveness

III. At Jesus' feet place yourself in his service

In the first half of this chapter Luke reported two miracles. We heard how Jesus healed a centurion's servant and how he raised a widow's son from the dead. There doesn't appear to be any connection between those two miracles and the events in our gospel lesson for this morning. We are simply told, "Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table."

I. At Jesus' feet lay your sins in repentance

Although we are focusing on this woman who placed herself at Jesus' feet we can also learn from the man who refused to do such a thing. Simon the Pharisee had invited Jesus to a banquet. Like most of the others in his group he was filled with himself. He didn't see his need for a Savior because he thought he lived a good life. He hadn't committed the kinds of sins that the woman who crashed his party had committed. As a churchgoing, taxpaying, upstanding member of the community, he thought everything was fine between him and God.

Simon the Pharisee thought he had no reason to place himself at Jesus' feet in repentance. He had a warped view of his own goodness and an incorrect view of God's holiness. Simon might have said to himself, "I have never engaged in the kinds of sexual sins done by this woman who is sitting at Jesus' feet." But as Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount, **"anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."** (Matthew 5:28) He didn't understand that God demands perfection in thoughts, words, and actions. Or maybe Simon the Pharisee refused to fall at Jesus' feet because he thought he had made up for his sins by doing many of the things God commanded in his Word. I am sure Simon also played the comparison game. "I am not as bad as this woman at Jesus' feet and I am not as bad as 90% of the people in my town. So God will love me."

Do you see all the traps and tricks Satan attempts to use to prevent us from falling at Jesus' feet in repentance? He wants to make us into Simon the Pharisee. Like him we are churchgoing, taxpaying, upstanding members of the community. We may not have broken God's laws as openly and as often as the woman at this banquet. When we compare ourselves to others we may look pretty good. But we will not find eternal life if our hearts are filled with such pride. This kind of thinking will prevent us from falling at Jesus' feet and throwing ourselves completely and totally on his mercy.

Let's take notice of the attitude of this woman who had lived a sinful life. **"When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, 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."** This woman isn't

hindered by what others think of her. She is focused on her Savior from sin. The wasted years, the low self-esteem, the guilt and shame poured out of her. There was only one person who could set things right. Perhaps she hadn't intended to make such a scene but the realization of what she had done in her life and what Jesus would do for her caused her to collapse in repentance at Jesus' feet.

Does our pride prevent us from this kind of repentance?

Is our inflated ego or our self-image keeping us from throwing ourselves down at the foot of the cross in humility?

Are we too proud to plead for forgiveness?

Today let's find salvation at Jesus' feet. Let the demands of God's law crush each of us. Have you lived a good life? It's not good enough to get you into heaven. Have you lived a better life than 90% of the people in this county? It's not worth a hill of beans before God. Maybe you claim to love God. But is He the first priority in your life? Have you used His holy name to curse or swear falsely? Are you honoring His Word through regular Bible study and attendance at worship services?

If we need to we can go through the rest of God's commandments and see why we need to fall at Jesus' feet. Whether we have been fully aware of our sinfulness or we are now realizing it let's throw ourselves down at Jesus' feet in repentance.

Although it was the realization of her sinfulness that humbled the woman in our gospel lesson to give up on making things right with God on her own it was the promise of forgiveness that moved her to throw herself at Jesus' feet. While this sinful woman was at Jesus' feet she heard words of forgiveness. Even though they weren't spoken directly to her they applied to her, "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.' Jesus answered him, 'Simon, I have something to tell you.' 'Tell me, teacher,' he said. 'Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 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?' Simon replied, 'I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled.' 'You have judged correctly,' Jesus said." In a short parable Jesus described the situation of every sinner and His love for every sinner.

II. At Jesus' feet receive words of forgiveness

When it came to sin and salvation Simon the Pharisee was miles from the truth. Yes, some may break more of God's commandments more frequently than others. In this parable Jesus used a multiple of ten. One man owed the banker five hundred denarii and the other owed fifty. The sinful woman may have committed ten times as many sins as Simon. The whole town could have testified to that fact.

But whether a person has sinned a few times or many times, publicly or privately, they have accumulated a debt that they cannot pay! As Jesus said of the two debtors, "Neither of them had the money to pay him back."

Simon's outwardly good life was not enough to set things right with God. He had a lot more in common with the sinful woman than he wanted to admit. He was born with sinfulness that he inherited from his parents just like she did. At whatever point in his life that he sinned in anger, or in jealousy, or envy, or lust he was placed in the same class as the sinful woman. He was condemned to eternal separation from God.

But there was hope for Simon the Pharisee as there was hope for the sinful woman and as there is hope for you and me. Remember what Jesus said of the moneylender in the parable, "**Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both.**" That is a beautiful picture of God's undeserved love. He canceled the debt of the sinful woman. He canceled the debt of Simon the Pharisee. He has canceled your debt and mine.

We can see how God canceled our debt when we fall down at Jesus' feet. When we look at his feet we will see that they have scars on them. His feet were nailed to a Roman cross. In fulfillment of the first gospel promise Satan bruised Jesus' feet. God didn't ignore all the times we have broken his laws. No, if a law is going to be a law there must be some kind of punishment for breaking it. The just punishment for breaking God's commandments is death. Jesus' feet are evidence of that. Jesus' feet are also proof that our sins have been forgiven since they remain a part of his glorified body that has risen from the dead in victory.

People who place themselves at Jesus' feet heard words **of encouragement, comfort, hope, and healing**. But the sinful woman who snuck into the dinner party at Simon the Pharisee's house heard the best words at Jesus' feet. She hears words of forgiveness. Like her let's place ourselves at Jesus' feet. There we too will hear words of forgiveness. Jesus will tell us that our debt of sin has been canceled and his feet will show us the proof.

Because of what the woman found at Jesus' feet she had placed herself at his feet in service. Jesus pointed this out to Simon the Pharisee, "**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. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.**" Simon the Pharisee refused to fall at Jesus' feet because he didn't see his sinfulness and so he didn't receive forgiveness. As a result he had no reason to show any love toward Jesus and he didn't.

III. At Jesus' feet, place yourself in his service

Because Simon was stubbornly stuck on himself he didn't even provide the common courtesies of his day for Jesus. He offered no water to wash Jesus' feet. When Jesus arrived Simon didn't greet him as he had all the other guests. He didn't let Jesus "freshen up" before dinner in the manner of that time.

But the woman who had lived a sinful life, who was an uninvited guest at the banquet,

did all of these things for Jesus. She took on the job of the lowliest slave. She washed Jesus feet with her tears. Without a towel she used her hair to dry them. Instead of just one kiss on each cheek she repeatedly kissed Jesus' feet. Instead of putting some oil on Jesus she poured expensive perfume on his feet. **Why did this woman do these things?** She was like the man in the parable who had a huge debt canceled. Her many sins were forgiven and so she placed herself at Jesus' feet to serve him. In that culture she could do these things for Jesus to show her love for him, her thankfulness to him, and her attitude toward him.

To avoid any confusion about the relationship between forgiveness and service to God we need to look closely at **verse 47 (Luke 7:47)**. How do we understand what Jesus said to Simon, **"Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."** Were the woman's sins forgiven because she loved Jesus? No. The rest of the Bible doesn't support that explanation. The word "for" can be used in a variety of ways. We might say, "It is raining--for the window is wet." Obviously the rain is the cause of the window being wet and not the other way around. We also need to look at this verse in light of the parable that Jesus just told. He said that the moneylender simply canceled the debt of both creditors. It was because of the grace and mercy the woman had been shown that she put herself at Jesus feet to serve him.

The same situation can be applied to each of us. When we place ourselves at Jesus' feet he frees us from our sins and enables us to serve him. **We receive the opportunity to return his love for us in total submission and service to him.** The Apostle Paul wrote about this in **2 Corinthians**, **"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."** (**2 Corinthians 5:14-15**) Why do we fall at Jesus' feet ready and willing to serve him? Because of his love for us.

But Jesus' feet are in heaven. How can we serve him? Remember what Jesus said on the night he washed his disciples' feet? **"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."** (**John 13:14-15**) Although we place ourselves at Jesus' feet to serve him we get up and serve each other out of that love for Jesus. Are we willing to wash one another's feet in love as we forgive each other, encourage one another, and offer service to each other?

"At Jesus feet..." Many different people fell down at Jesus' feet. Some landed there in a fall of desperation. Some placed themselves at his feet to worship him or give him thanks. Whether it was in submission or sorrow, in prayer or praise, service or sacrifice all were welcomed by Jesus. This woman who had lived a sinful life placed herself at Jesus' feet for several reasons. At Jesus' feet she laid her sins in repentance, she heard words of forgiveness, and she offered herself for service. At those precious feet she found salvation. This sinful woman heard Jesus say, "Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

At Jesus' feet. There is no better place for us to be. May we fall at his feet today.

At Jesus' feet let us lay our sins in repentance.

At Jesus' feet we will receive words of forgiveness.

At Jesus' feet let us place ourselves in his service. Amen.

Matthew 15:30

And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them:

Matthew 28:9

And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

Mark 5:22

And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,

Mark 7:25

For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:

Luke 7:38

And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Luke 7:44-46

And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. [45] Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. [46] My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

Luke 8:35

Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

Luke 8:41

And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

Luke 10:39

And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

Luke 17:16

And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

John 11:2

(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

John 11:32

Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

John 12:3

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

John 13:12

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

John 13:14

If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.