

RELEASED TO WORSHIP

Luke 7:36-38

36 Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him.

And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat.

37 And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil,

38 and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.

Introduction: Worshipping God is supposed to be a normal activity for all believers. Worshipping God should be the most relaxed and natural thing we do.

If worship is supposed to be natural, then why do some have such a difficulty entering into worship? Why is it that you cannot seem to let go and let God's love permeate your life?

Let's look at this incident of worship, and see if we can glean anything that might help someone reach a point of release that worship may flow unhindered from their life.

I. Approaching Jesus.

A. A woman enters the house.

Luke 7:36 Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat.

37 And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil,

1. She is probably a prostitute.
2. She is indeed a sinner.
3. This is stated in verse 37 and verse 39.

Luke 7:39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

B. She is weeping.

38 and stood at His feet behind Him weeping..."

1. His presence magnifies her sin.
2. His closeness intensifies her need for forgiveness.

C. She begins to offer worship to Jesus.

Luke 7:38 and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.

1. The Greek word for worship means both:
2. "To be in awe of."
3. "To kiss toward."
4. She is guilty of both.

D. Her worship began to flow.

38c ...and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil."

1. Jesus did not rebuke her for her act of worship
2. Notice His openness to her expression.

E. Did you observe Jesus' attitude towards this "sinner woman's" touch?

1. The Pharisee did.
2. The scripture records his thoughts.

Luke 7:39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

F. Simon, the Pharisee attends every church and lets his feelings be known about who should or should not be worshipping so intimately.

II. Setting Boundaries for Worship.

A. Limiting access to Jesus.

1. Jesus wants to teach Simon about worship.

Luke 7:40 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he said, "Teacher, say it."

2. The lesson of the debtors.

41 There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

3. The creditor forgave each man his debt.

42 And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"

4. Who will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged."

5. Simon's answer is correct—the one he forgave the most.

B. The lesson of the woman.

1. Simon had not even offered water to wash Jesus feet.

2. This woman had done it with her tears.

44 Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head.

3. No familiar kiss of greeting yet she has kissed His feet over and over.

45 You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in.

3. No refreshing anointing yet this woman had anointed Jesus' feet with fragrant oil.

46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil.

- C. What the woman had believed for was now being pronounced.

1. Her many sins were proclaimed.

Luke 7:47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

2. But they were also forgiven.

48 And He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

3. She leaves Jesus' presence with peace.

50 Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

- D. Worship of God sets "NO" boundaries.

"If Jesus allowed a prostitute to kiss His feet and wipe them with the hair of her head, He will not stop our displays of affection for Him no matter what we have done."

- E. Do you understand?

1. The shame of abuse, especially sexual abuse.

2. The remorse of past sins.

3. Feelings of failure at pleasing God.

III. Instructing the Seeker.

A. Simons' instructions about how to "Properly" approach God.

1. You should have approached Jesus privately.
2. You should not have interrupted His meal.
3. Your actions were inappropriate with your past so obvious to those present.
4. You made a fool of yourself didn't you!
5. You went way overboard with the oil thing!

C. Why people find it difficult to receive God's love.

1. We fear being vulnerable.
 - a. You believe with your mind that God is love.
 - b. You see His love as a rigid doctrine, not an experience.
 - c. Emotionally you are a fortress.
 - d. You have made a promise to your self that you will be careful before you let yourself love again.
 - e. You have a longstanding habit of protecting yourself!
 - f. In order to take the first step toward intimacy with God, you need to decide to stop protecting yourself.
 - g. You need to commit to seek God while He may be found, while He is pouring out His love.

2. We wear a mask of shame.
 - a. The predominant emotion that a wounded person feels in the presence of God is shame.
 - b. Sin has happened and you cannot forgive yourself.
 - c. You feel that you are not where you used to be.
 - d. Satan seeks to make you feel ashamed over past sins and failures that are not even in God's sight anymore.
 - e. Jesus died on the cross to open the door to intimacy with God.
 - f. His blood that was shed there removed our sin, not just covered it.
 - g. "Removed" in both Greek and Hebrew means "removed."
 - h. Take off your mask and be yourself!
 - i. Allowing yourself to be real around God opens you up to God's love and affections.
3. We make vows and resolutions!
 - a. In times of deep emotional hurts, repetitive disappointment or grief, you make an inner resolution.
 - b. Someone deeply wounded might make this resolve: "I will never allow myself to be hurt again. I will never let anyone close enough to do that to me."

- c. We are afraid to make a commitment to God because we feel we will not be able to live up to it.
- d. We have too much faith in our shortcomings.
- e. We think, “How could God ever love me? He knows what I’ll do when temptation comes along.”
- f. Or to put it another way, we fear that one day we will have to face a trail that we cannot endure and we will wind up walking away from God.
- g. We have become like Peter when God told him to “Arise, kill and eat.”
- h. We put two words that should never be in the same phrase together – “No, Lord.”
- i. Repent of every vow that you have made that limits the joy of God’s presence.

Conclusion: A wrong example – the older brother.

1. The younger brother has been received home safely.

A. Forgiveness has been extended.

Luke 15:21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22 But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.'

B. The father releases everyone to make merry.

23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry;

24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

2. The older brother returns from the fields.

A. The older brother wants to know the reason for the celebrating.

Luke 15:25 Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.

26 So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.

B. Your brother has arrived home safely.

27 And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.'

C. The elder brother is unhappy about this welcome. Luke 15:28 But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.

D. "Dad," he explains, "I have been a good son and you have never thrown a party for me!

Luke 15:29 So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends.

E. "Look how my brother has done you and you throw him a coming home celebration!"

30 But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'

3. This is what every one of us needs to hear.
- A. The only reason that this fatted calf was in the barn was because the older son had not asked.
- 31 And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.
- B. When a sinner comes home, we should be rejoicing.

32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.' "

What are you saying to us pastor? Let go and let God! Realize that your Heavenly Father wants to bless you! Deal with those things that keep you from being intimate with God! God made a way for you to be in complete fellowship with Him.

Let me remind you of a word he spoke that is often applied to sinners but should be a word we will respond to today.

Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Answer His knock NOW and let the party begin!