

True Love for Jesus.

Text: Luke 7:36-50

1) Its Characteristics And Source

Suggested Hymns:

2) Its Expression

500, 447, 165, 358, 259

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 7:36–50, 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.*

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.”*

⁴⁰ *And Jesus answered and said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” So he said, “Teacher, say it.” ⁴¹ “There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 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?” ⁴³ Simon answered and said, “I suppose the one whom he forgave more.” And He said to him, “You have rightly judged.”*

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. ⁴⁵ You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil.*

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.” ⁴⁸ Then He*

said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” ⁴⁹ *And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”* ⁵⁰ *Then He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

The most detailed and delightful description of a waterfall at sunrise will not begin to approximate the glory and the grandeur displayed when one sees the real thing.

Many times the Bible gives us a look at the real thing rather than a long descriptive account of it. So in today’s text. Here we are given a look at *True Love for Jesus*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. True Love For Jesus Its Characteristics And Source

We may take for granted that everyone present at this Worship Service would answer, “*I do,*” to the question: “*Who here loves Jesus?*” Before being too positive about extending this to “*I truly love Jesus,*” let us compare our love for Jesus with the real article, as represented in our text.

The best Judge as to what constitutes real love for Jesus is Jesus Himself. He tells us that the woman of our text had that love. He says: “*She loved much.*”

That love was, first of all, unashamed. She made no attempt to hide it. By every act it showed itself, even in the face of great difficulties. Her whole attitude shows a feeling of personal unworthiness. Besides, she was on display before people who thought that they were better than her. The Pharisees were the “Upper 400,” but she was a woman of the streets. She would have to face her acquaintances again after she left Simon’s house. She realised the fact that her past needed forgiving and that there would be grave future consequences because of her immorality.

Nevertheless, she shows her love for Jesus in the house of the Pharisee. At first glance this might be put down as the brazen lack of modesty to be expected from a woman of the streets. But such brazen, bold love would not have caused

the shedding of tears. Only a humble, repentant love would cause such weeping as is described in our text.

How humbly she stands at Jesus' feet! Such humble love is never demanding. She does not insist that she be seated at the table with Jesus. She does not ask Him to spare her feelings, to leave, even for a short time, the company of the scornful Pharisee and his friends, so that she may confess her sins in private. Simply to stand at the feet of Jesus, to be near Him, to show her love for Him — that is enough for her.

The very fact that she was there shows us another characteristic of her love. For surely hers was a courageous act of love. Not only does she stand afar off, letting her beaming face and brimming eyes testify of her humility, but she deliberately goes into the house of Simon, the Pharisee.

The best she might expect, as she entered, was to remain unnoticed. The greater probability was that she would be unceremoniously expelled, or even punished. And when Jesus singles her out, actually calls Simon's attention to her presence, she does not run away, but steadfastly holds her ground. In the face of everything, her love gives her courage that puts all "ifs" and "buts" aside and simply, fearlessly, resolutely she does what her heart demands.

It is natural to ask: "*From which source springs such a great love?*" Our speculations in such a case as this, would be futile, if we were to seek the answer in ordinary human relations and everyday experiences.

So Jesus very simply shows us the real article again and says: "*to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.*" Since this woman had a great love, much was forgiven to her.

Out of the fertile soil of God's eternally loving forgiveness in Christ Jesus, our Saviour, a true love for Jesus grows, flowers, and brings forth fruit. The deep consciousness of sin and its dire results, the pressing need for a Saviour from that sin, the recognition of Jesus as the One who alone can save from sin, His loving voice of forgiveness, "*her sins, which are many, are forgiven*" — that is the source of real love for Jesus. That love will permit even a Mary Magdalene to stand in happiness and joy at the open grave on Easter morning!

2. True Love For Jesus Its Expression

Such unashamed, humble, courageous, and rightly directed love does not remain unexpressed. Our text tells us that it was expressed in three ways: by tears; by kisses; by sacrifice.

Tears — the pearls of repentance — the signs of sorrow for the past, and hope for the future. Tears — the witnesses of the conviction of many sins of the past and of the passionate plea for help to do better in the future.

The person who has learned this basic relation to Jesus will also find opportunities for the kisses, for the outward manifestation by the lips of the love within the heart, for psalms and hymns and prayers and praises.

Such a person will also find his hands busy in service to Jesus, even if it be but the drying and the anointing of the feet. Yes, he will find that sacrifice will truly and constantly be an essential part of the expression of his love for the dear Lord, sacrifice in its truest sense: to give up something for Jesus.

And now, having had a look at the real article, real, true love for Jesus, let us leave that scene in Simon's house and examine our own hearts!

Remember, we said: "*We love Jesus!*" How does our love measure up, since we have had a look at the real thing? Is our love unashamed? We need not make too detailed an examination to arrive at a fair appraisal! Do we at all times, in all places, and before all people, gladly, joyously, and openly admit that we love Jesus? Are you always quite unashamed when you admit that you go to Sunday school or to church?

Are you ashamed to carry a Bible through the streets to go to Bible class? Some even take the Bible off the centre table in the living room and lay it on a back shelf when certain people come calling! Why the widespread practice of omitting family devotions when so and so comes to dinner? We feel sure each of us may very easily extend this list to fit his personal life.

How humble is our love for Jesus? Church work is work done for Jesus. Yet, pride so often makes us unwilling to do that work. How quickly we become offended if we do not get the "high places"! How often do we not hear: "*If that person is at the head of it, count me out!*" Need we go on with this list? Note how often our actions are swayed by prideful self-love instead of love for Jesus!

Does our love make us brave, courageous? You would call a bridegroom a coward who would permit someone in his presence to repeat a smutty slander about his bride. Think back over last week! Did you feel that Jesus was being honoured every time you heard His name? Would you have permitted the same thing to pass unnoticed if the remark had been directed against your wife, husband, parent, sweetheart? Are we equally courageous in our love for our Saviour?

And why do we love Jesus? Because He gave us such a beautiful home? A grand country to live in? A lovely family? Protection for self and loved ones, etc.? Surely, these and many others are great and glorious gifts from our dear Lord!

But do you really love Jesus as much when you are standing beneath His cross, where His blood flowed to cleanse us from all sin, as you do when you are sitting on the mountainside, eating the bread and fish of His miraculous providence? Look at your heart closely! Do you really love Jesus because He forgave you so much?

And how do you express your love to Him?

By tears? By remembering your sins and His forgiveness? By pleading with Him to help you to amend a sinful life?

By kisses? Do you really find joy in your worship or do you merely go through a routine? Do you really love a hymn for what it says or merely because it has a catchy tune?

By sacrifice? The woman did not bring bread or a blanket or sandals. That would have been sharing the giving of her gift with others, who then would have been relieved to that extent of making a sacrifice. She gave something that made the sacrifice a matter between herself and Jesus, something that would make the gift peculiarly her own, something she would never be able to replace or to use again.

Are your sacrifices in the same spirit? For instance, your time. Much of that is peculiarly your own. Have you never said when asked to do something for Jesus: *“Sorry, but I just have no time to spare.”* You were not making excuses. You really believed that you were too busy.

But, as an expression of love to Jesus, we must not only give, but give up! Not what we have to spare is a sacrifice. Only what we give up! How often does your love for Jesus make you do that?

If our love for Jesus does not measure up to the real thing, what can we do about it? Surely, we would have spent this morning unprofitably unless we also learned some answers to that. Looking at our text once more, we find four answers:

Firstly, honestly, humbly recognise and admit our deficiencies.

Secondly, go where Jesus is, that being with Him, we may learn to love Him more and more.

Thirdly, use the means He has given, the Word and the Sacraments, to assure ourselves of His forgiveness, the soil in which the flower of love will blossom.

And Fourthly, ask Jesus for a new heart, filled with love, and a new life to express that love.

Let us close with the words of the hymnist,¹

Grant that I only Thee may love,
And seek those things which are above,
Till I behold Thee face to face,
O Light eternal, through Thy grace. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Hymn 358 v 4