

Leonard Ravenhill:

Luke 7:36 - 47 "...whom little is forgiven... loveth little."

I might suggest that this was the most exciting day in the life of this man, Simon the Pharisee. He had managed to get the most amazing man in history into his home.

I am quite sure Simon thought to filter the number of people he would have come into the place to eat.

So his first problem was the folk. Of course he got the VIP's there, that's the thing you do... It's the thing the Scripture says you shouldn't do, but we do it. You should have a banquet where nobody can invite you back. But you see, we don't do it that way anymore. So he had a problem getting the right amount of folk. I'm sure he got the millionaire, and the mayor, and the magistrate, and the marvelous people. I think he woke up at night and said, "No, I'll cross that man out and I'll put this name in." Eventually he had the right folk.

Secondly he had to have the right food. If you are inviting the president of the United States I think you'd prepared something very special; you wouldn't have hamburgers and potato chips.

Finally he decided on the folk and he decided on the food and then I think he decided on the flowers; he wanted the right kind of aesthetic atmosphere.

Everything was lovely, the garden, the table... he had worked out every detail.

He said to himself, "This is going to be a day that I shall never, never, never want to forget."

It became a day that he never, never, never wanted to remember!

He said, "This is going to be the day of my exhalation."

It became the day of his humiliation!

He said, "People are going to leave this banquet talking about my liberality."

They left it talking about his stupidity!

He was so intent, he was so sure that everything was right.

It became one of those days where everything goes beautifully wrong.

I can imagine that he just got down and conditioned all the servants there and said, "Now, alert me when so and so comes."

And the first thing, the millionaire is coming; not in a Cadillac, but coming with a beautiful carriage and his horses.

And he runs out.

And, as they still do in the orient, he kisses the man on either cheek.

And escorts him to the place where his feet can be washed,
as it was the custom.

And shows him in to his assigned seat at the table.

This man got excited about this business. Everybody at the banquet and everything was in the right place.

And I think in the middle, somewhere after a few of his guests had come, one of the servant signals and says, "Master, I want you. You know that certain woman in town...?"

"Oh, don't mention that abominable woman. If she comes near turn the dogs on her." "Well master, I'm sorry but she's..." "She's where?"

"Well, she's here. She's sitting at the feet of Jesus."

"Well, how did He get in?!"

Jesus has an awful habit of coming in at the back door.

That's how He came in the world, with a suspicion of illegitimacy on Him. "He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." I wish some ministers would remember that. We are to be the love slaves of Jesus Christ. We are not here to carry prestige, or power, or personality, or show off. We're the least of all men; we're servants.

And I can see Jesus coming in at the back door. At the back door He wasn't concerned about the welcome.

And Simon comes and says, "I've missed it. He's no prophet. If He were a prophet He'd know what kind of a woman this is. She is a sinner."

Jesus then goes on with the beautiful story:

"A certain man had two creditors. One of them owed him five hundred pence, the other fifty. He forgave them both. Who will love him most?" "The man with the biggest debt."

"That's right, she loves much...she is forgiven much."

I can imagine that woman trembling outside of the door and saying, "I'm not invited."
Isn't it an amazing thing? We don't know who went to the banquet except the woman that wasn't invited!

It's going to be like that in the great day. The first are going to be last. Some of the greatest preachers you know will be right at the end of the line and some little widow that gave her life to prayer is going to be there right at the head. You see God's values are not our values. He isn't going to give me a reward because I preached so many sermons, or you singers because you sold so many records. You see, we put the accent where God never put it. We put an accent on working for Jesus. And there is no such thing. That's not the first thing that God requires. "The Father seeketh such to work for Him." No, no, no. I believe God is getting less worship today than ever He's gotten, despite the crowds we are getting. We want to work ourselves to death, give out tracts, run here, run there, come home exhausted and we've a plane to catch tomorrow and everybody is waiting for us.

This little woman stood outside the door with a trembling heart. You could have seen it pounding under her dress. "I shouldn't go in," but she said, "I am going to go in."

Charles Wesley has a wonderful hymn. I don't know whether he got the inspiration here, I think he might have.

It says this: "Oh, let me kiss Thy bleeding feet."

Could I ask you, how long it is since you were at His feet?

This woman is only found at the feet of Jesus. Each time she's seen in the New Testament she is there, at His feet.

She was there to learn. When her sister was making a big banquet Jesus says that Mary had chosen the better part. You say, "It isn't my personality." That's not what it says. I hear people say, "I've got a Mary personality," or "I am a Martha." That's not what it says - "She Chose." And

you've to choose to be spiritual,

you've to choose the calendar of your life,

you've to choose to put people on one side that He may get what He wants out of your life. Not in eternity, but even now. And this dear woman is found at His feet to learn.

She is found at His feet in grief, when her brother dies.

She is found at His feet when she gives the best that she has, her costly ointment.

Will you remember this, that this precious ointment was given to Jesus three times.

The first time it was given to Him in His birth - when He couldn't recognize it.

The second time was given to Him by this woman, and she had more intuition than even His disciples, for she gives Him this anointing at His feet just six days before He hung on a cross.

The third gift was when He had died and laid in the tomb.

You see, details are very important in Scripture. It says this box of Spikenard was very precious though it only weighed a pound. (The man who came at Jesus burial with His gift brought a hundred pounds of Spikenard.) This box is worth three hundred pence, which means she must have saved up for fifteen years to get it. And if her brother was Lazarus she didn't love her brother enough to embalm him when he died. She was saving it for her own funeral.

But, you see, this woman brings her gift. It is only a pound, but it is very precious. The man brought a hundred pounds of ointment, but now Jesus was dead! -- A smart American said this, "Do your giving when you're living, then you're knowing where it's going." That's better than anything Shakespeare ever said. If you leave ten million dollars to Jesus Christ or to His Kingdom when you die He won't give you ten cents for it at the Judgment Seat. You say, "How do you know?" Well my old English Bible says, "The Lord loveth," the what? All right, you've got a casket here with a millionaire. He left ten million dollars to the church and before I shove the lid down I want you to come up here and have a look. Does he look too cheerful? He should do, he's given ten million to missions. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver..." He didn't give the ten million! Death put the pistol to his head and killed him. He'd still have the ten million if he was alive; he gave it reluctantly.

This woman brings her precious gift of ointment. Now, notice what she did. According to custom she should've washed His feet, kissed His cheeks. But those feet...she is going to see them in a few days with the nails driven through.

And she doesn't anoint His head,

she anoints His feet.

She doesn't stand in front of Him,

she is behind Him.

She says, "Wash those feet with water? Never."

And so she washes them with tears.

"Dry those feet with a towel? Never."

And so she takes her beautiful tresses down and she takes His feet and she dries those blessed feet with the hair of her head.

I've often thought of those feet that were weary upon that dusty road. Those feet that sometimes had the thorns in them and got the gravel between the toes and it was awfully uncomfortable. And a precious woman one day said,

"I won't wash His feet with water. I'll wash His feet with my tears, if I get the chance.

I won't dry His feet with a beautiful towel. I'll take the hair of my head," - which is the crowning glory of a woman - and she dried His feet with the hair of her head.

She should've anointed His head, but she anointed His feet.

She should've kissed His cheek, but she kissed His feet.

She says, "I am not worthy to stand in Your presence, I can only bow in lowliness and humility."

But listen, did you get the point? She not only washed His feet with tears. She took that ointment and put it on His head and put it on His feet.

And then she took the hair of her head and she wiped the feet where she'd put her tears and her ointment. So, obviously,

The Fragrance That She Poured Out On Him Came Back On Her!

You see, we think that if we read a lot of books about the deeper life, as good as they are, they will make us a saint. I've got news for you. Even reading the Bible won't make you a saint! You've got to get it in your blood stream.

I believe I could line the altar, indeed I've seen the altar lined with hundreds, night after night in mass meetings, and yet I believe, at the end of the day, Jesus Christ could say to me,

"Thou gavest Me no kiss." Why?

Because I was so busy serving Him, I forgot to worship Him.

The priority that God wants in our life is that we worship Him in spirit.

You can be a cantankerous, bitter, rough, edgy, stiff, resentful, almost cruel kind of Christian, work yourself to death, say, "I guess I give out more tracts than anybody around here. I labor harder than anybody else" ...and miss the bus!

Friend I've been round the world a few times, it doesn't give me any standing with God. I happen to write a best seller or two, it doesn't give me any prestige with God.

God seeks those who worship Him. And I say again, I like what Wesley said, "Let me kiss Thy bleeding feet and bath and wash them with my tears."

When did you last seize Him by His feet and say,

"Master, I can't go another inch without meeting You this morning."

Dr. Tozer told me as a mature man in his sixties that there were times when he lay on the rug for an hour, two hours, three hours, four hours and never uttered a word of prayer, and never uttered a word of praise. He said, "I'm lost in adoration, I see Him in His glory, in His majesty, in His beauty. I can hear those holy beings crying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord.'" And he said, "I'm silent in adoration before Him. I had no language, it is beggared." And he had a vocabulary as good as any man I know, and he had read more of the mystics, I think, than any man I know, and he had some of the closest encounters to God of any man I know.

When you came in this morning God Almighty didn't see if you had a ring on your finger worth ten thousand dollars, or if you had a hairdo or not. God never saw you this morning externally. The Bible makes it clear, "God looketh not on the outward appearance, but on the heart." But most churches I go to today I would imagine that, that is reversed, that God looks on the outside and not on the heart. Some of us are beautifully dressed this morning and we've got rags on the inside. We've got expensive cars or jewelry and we are poverty stricken within for the simple reason that we've never developed this wonderful area of worship. Worshipping Him in Spirit and in Truth and in the very beauty of holiness.

If you leave this sanctuary saying, "Well, I enjoyed the choir." Or just the singers, or just the preacher... we've missed it entirely! If you remember us then we're failure number one!

You should remember something God communicated to you through us. You shouldn't remember the chalice whether it's made of gold or clay, you should remember what came out of that chalice.

This is a very beautiful story; I wish I had time to develop it. But I like to see this poor man, he is standing there and Jesus says, "You missed it."

Did you ever try to get God to understand things your way? I confess I have.

I can see this man saying, "Well, Lord, you don't understand what it cost me to lay this banquet." "Well, Lord, I had to raise a loan in order to, to ... Well, I rented these precious things, these golden vessels and... and all this food is out of season, and You know, You know what it really costs!"

And the Lord says, "Son, I am not wanting that."

Well, my time's nearly up. But let me suggest to you that the story in the Matthew 26 is the same. One little word is injected in this account of the story, but a very illuminating word. As far as I'm concerned it turns the whole story round. It says He went into the house of Simon the leper. Well, how could a leper be in the house? Only one reason he could be there, he got healed of his leprosy. Who healed him? Jesus.

And the man that Jesus healed forgot to worship Him.

You took time to get ready for church this morning, but listen, did you get down and worship Him this morning? Because the greatest thing you could do is not bring your tithe and your offering and sit and look pretty and smell nice. Did you get alone with Him this morning? Not in a crowd of people, but did you say alone, "My Jesus I love Thee I know Thou art mine." It's a bit late to say, "I'll say when the death dew lies cold on my brow, My Jesus if ever I loved Thee 'tis now." Did you get alone and worship Him this morning?

He came to the house of Simon the leper, and the healed leper forgot to kiss Him.

You see there had been a day when this man went to the temple and they pronounced him a leper.

And he kissed his wife good-bye,

And he went to the gate of the city and they excommunicated him from all his privileges, socially.

And he stood on the road and banging a little tin can he had he said, "Leper, leper, help the leper."

And one day Jesus passed that way. He must have done, because there was no other way to be healed. And Jesus touched him and made him whole.

And he went to the gate and they said,
" Don't come in here Simon." He said, "My
flesh is like a little child." "What
happened?" "Jesus did it."

He went to the temple and the priest said, "You
can't come in here, you'll defile the sanctuary."
And he said, "Why? I am as pure and clean
as you are. Look at my flesh!" "Who did it?" - "Jesus
did it."

He came home and the wife said, "Oh, don't touch
the children, please. Don't touch the children." He
said, "Darling it doesn't matter if I touch them. My
hands are soft and pure as yours are." - "Jesus did
it."

And it was the man who got that cleansing who forgot to kiss Jesus.

And if you say, "Well, brother Ravenhill, I was never a drug addict or a prostitute." Wait a minute, wait a minute. Are you saying, "He didn't lift me up of a horrible pit?" But you were going to a horrible pit.

Ah, we have the idea that just doing this or that make us spiritual... No, no. A lot of it makes us happy! A lot of it isn't even spiritual, it's soulish! It touches the emotions and stirs us.

But there's nothing really exciting unless you get to know the wonder of pure, divine, holy love, and get down on your face and say, "Lord, I can't even go to a meeting maybe this morning. I am overwhelmed with Your

Glory... Your Majesty... Your Beauty."

**God is seeking that we worship Him.
Worship in spirit,
Worship Him in truth,
Worship Him in the very beauty of holiness.**

**You know, at the end of this day, however much I preach, however much you sing, however much you serve,
the Lord is going to get a record.**

And I try to do this: I try to say at the end of the day,

**"Lord, it's not what I preached over TV, or radio, to millions. Or two, or three,
or one person I visited who was sick...But, Lord, did I kiss You today?**

Or did You look down and say,

**'Son, you were very busy, very active, you made some new friends, people
said you preached well, but listen son,**

Thou Gavest Me No Water, Thou Gavest Me No Oil, Thou Gavest Me No Kiss."

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