

Loving Like Jesus 5 – Peaceful Love

Luke 7:36-50

People are looking for peace in a lot of places...

- Bar
- In a pill bottle
- Through a syringe
- Gym
- Therapy
- On Vacation
- Partying
- Getting involved in causes
- In food
- Through a credit card
- In corner office
- In Animals

We may find momentary relief from these pursuits, a brief distraction, a pause in our existential angst, but we don't find true lasting peace. This morning we meet a woman who has never known peace. Men saw her as just a piece, but she's never had peace. She's known many lovers, but she's never known love...until Jesus.

Now as we begin our journey this morning, I need to show you our destination. In Luke 7:50 Jesus tells this woman, "Go in peace." When she came she had no peace, but when she goes she has peace. What we want to know is how she found it.

36 One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. 37 And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, 38 and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." 40 And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."

41 "A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." 44 Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to 3 49 Then those

who were at table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?” 50 And he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

The wording of this text suggests this woman was a prostitute. She was “*A woman of the city, who was a sinner.*” The Pharisees talk about her as though Jesus should obviously know just what sort of woman she was. She had been looking for peace in the beds of strangers. However, it didn’t matter who she made love to. It didn’t matter how much money she made, peace always eluded her, until she found Jesus. Jesus gave her something nothing else could.

As Christians and as a church we are called to be peacemakers. Being a peacemaker is so much more than breaking up a fight, or getting your sister and you mother to talk to each other again. It’s about introducing the presence of Jesus into the human heart and into the human condition to do what he can do.

If you’re looking for peace today, I want you to know Jesus is still the Prince of Peace. If you’re looking for peace, I know where you can find it. Peace is found in...

I. Being Seen and in Seeing.

Let me see how perceptive you are. Watch this video and tell me how many times the ball is passed by people wearing white shirts.

(Show Video – Monkey Business Illustration)

Let me address the 500lb gorilla in most of our “rooms”: We often don’t see as much as we think we are seeing. Simon, the Pharisee, wasn’t seeing this woman. Jesus made that clear when he asked, “*Do you see this woman?*” No, Jesus wasn’t suggesting he get his eyesight checked. He wasn’t talking about his eyes. He was talking about his heart.

Simon was blinded by at least 2 things that can also blind us: 1) First, he didn’t see Jesus for who he was. Simon said to himself, “*If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him,*” He is really saying, “If Jesus was a true prophet of God, he would have known this woman was ‘dirty,’ ‘evil,’ ‘sinful,’ and that He has no business allowing her in His presence.”

Jesus wasn’t just a prophet. He is the Son of God. He’s the Messiah, but Simon completely misses it, because he completely misses the heart of God. His assumption is that God hates “sinners” like this woman, and would rather them live and die without

peace. The fact is Jesus knew exactly what sort of woman was touching him, and he received her love and loved her anyway.

When we don't see Jesus for who he really is, we won't see lost people the way He does. In Luke 19:10, Jesus says, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

2) Second, he didn't see this woman for who she was. Simon saw her sin. He saw her reputation. He saw her failure. He saw all the men she'd slept with, but he didn't see her. But Jesus sees people, and so he asks Simon a crucially important question, "*Do you see this woman?*" That's such a great question, and a question we all need to ask ourselves whenever we see someone who needs Jesus.

Jesus saw her. Jesus saw her heart. He saw her need. He saw her desperate longing for peace. For reasons that are probably obvious, this woman was not at peace. She was experiencing inner turmoil that released at the sight of Jesus and poured out all over him. Simon could only see this woman's past, but Jesus could see her future, so he showed her grace, love, and acceptance.

What the Pharisee saw and what Jesus saw were two totally different scenes. The Pharisee saw a dirty woman touching a holy man. Jesus saw a lost woman honoring Jesus. Something Simon should have done but didn't.

Our prayer this morning should be that we see Jesus for who He is and people for who they really are, because in being seen and seeing we find peace.

II. Being Loved and in Loving

Secondly, peace is found in being loved and in loving in return. The love we see here is so dramatic because it comes from a most unlikely source: a sinful woman. She had given sex many times. Maybe she gave passion, but had she ever given love? One thing is for sure, she'd never found love from any of her Johns. Our world is so confused about sex and love, and gets them backwards all the time.

She'd gotten them confused all her life, but in Jesus she found what she'd never found in a stranger's bed, true love from a man. Jesus loved her for her. He didn't love her for what she could give. He didn't love her for what she could do. He didn't love her because of how she made him feel. He loved her.

We don't have the whole backstory of how Jesus had reached out and loved this woman, but in verse 34 immediately preceding this passage Jesus is accused of being a friend of tax collectors and sinners. So, somehow, some way, Jesus was a friend to this

sinner, and now she shows up, crashes the Pharisee's party, and loves Jesus back in the most extravagant way.

Here's an observation: we can't touch the lives of lost people unless we are willing to be touched by lost people. Jesus, unlike many church people, wasn't insulated and isolated from sinners. He loved them.

We can do this in our personal lives. Are you doing anything to connect with lost people? Are you doing anything to help lost people connect with Jesus? Join a club. Ask someone to coffee? Make spaghetti for your neighbors. Do something to put yourself in the place where you can build an intentional relationship with someone through which you can introduce them to Jesus Christ.

We can also do this as a church. Is our church really a safe place for lost people to be found? We must be a place where lost people are drawn to the love of Jesus because our love for them has drawn them. Son-Rise needs to be a place where it's okay for sinners—like us— to passionately worship Jesus without being judged. I love that Jesus doesn't reject this woman's worship. If she showed up here on Sunday morning, we shouldn't reject her worship either.

And think about what she's using to worship— an alabaster flask of ointment. This was an extravagant gift. This would have been a jar of perfume such as myrrh. Such a jar of ointment was worth 300 denarii. In modern numbers, it was worth about \$54,307. She just dumped an entire year's household income all over his feet and head.

Think about this— where did this woman get the money to buy such an expensive bottle of perfume? She likely earned it on her back! Moreover, she probably used this perfume as she plied her trade. Perfume would have been essential in her line of work. And now, the very thing she earned from her sin, and the very thing she used to sin, she uses to worship Jesus.

We sometimes act like people need to "clean up" their acts before coming to Jesus. Nonsense! He loves you, so give Him your best. And give him your worst. Other scholars say such jars of ointment were saved for a woman's wedding day. A part of her dowry if you will. She would have used the ointment as a way to prepare herself for the wedding night.

What if this outpouring was her saying that, because of her sin, she's never going to be able to get married? What if that alabaster flask sat on the mantle mocking her for

her choices? What if that alabaster flask had become a source of pain? If so, there's nothing better to do with our pain than to pour it out at the feet of Jesus. You do know that Jesus can transform...

Pain into Praise

Brokenness into Blessing and

Alabaster Ointment into Allelujahs!

God stands ready to receive your praise, even if it comes from a broken place. We love Him, so give Him our best. This is the best this woman had to offer Jesus and she gave it all.

Are you holding back your best from Jesus? I hope not, because—if you are—you are missing an opportunity to let Jesus know how much you love Him. Simon was, so he missed an opportunity that most of us would die for and most of us are living for: To worship in the very presence of Jesus! Jesus receives her actions for what they really are: love. Verse 47 says, *“Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much.”*

Peace is found in being loved and in loving.

III. Being Forgiven and in Forgiving

Peace is also found in being Forgiven and in Forgiving. Do you have a hard time forgiving people? I know I can.

Seriously, if we truly understood how much we've been forgiven, we'd be a lot more forgiving and a lot more grateful to God. This is the point of the parable Jesus tells in this passage. Luke 7:41-43

41 “A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?” 43 Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.” And he said to him, “You have judged rightly.”

500 denarii is about 20 months wages—50 denarii is about 2 months wages. What's Jesus' point? We've all been forgiven. Some of us have been forgiven 500 denarii and some of us have been forgiven at 50 denarii, but we've all been forgiven. We have all sinned. We have all fallen short. Not one of us has measured up to the standard of God's holiness, so what's the point of us debating and deciding whose sin is worse?

Jesus' point is the more you've been forgiven, the more you want to love him. When I think about the cross, when I think about my sin, when I think about His grace, and when I think about how much I've been forgiven for I refuse to play it safe, tone it down, or hold on to my alabaster flask. I want to pour out my praise!

What level is your praise? Our praise should be in proportion to the amount of grace we've been shown. That's exactly why Jesus praises this woman. Luke 7:47

47 Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.”

My many sins have been forgiven and I love Him much, so I will praise Him big time! Let's resolve to pour out our praise at the feet of Jesus today and every time we gather to worship.

Of course, the more we've been forgiven, the more we're willing to forgive others. Tragically, it's good church people who can be the most unforgiving. Simon, like all of us, had much for which he could be forgiven, yet he has not one bit of forgiveness for this woman. How dare he? How dare we?

Can any of us stand at the foot of the cross and see what Jesus did for us and not offer the same for others? Some of you don't have peace because you're choosing to carry pain, bitterness, and anger at another human being. Release them and you'll find release.

Embrace Jesus' forgiveness for you and then pay it forward—it will help all of us to go in peace.

Let me close this message with this: Brothers and Sisters, we are about to go into a time of communion where we will eat the bread and cup that represent the body and blood of Jesus. If you are not a Christian, we'd like to extend to you the right hand of Christian fellowship and invite you to give your life to Jesus today and be washed in the blood of Jesus. We want you to know the peace that comes by being seen by Jesus and seeing, being loved by Jesus and loving, and being forgiven by Jesus and forgiving. Yes, since we've all experienced the love of Jesus, we should share that love with ALL people as we...go in peace. Can I get a, “Hallelujah”? :)