

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran
Church
Sermon by Pastor
Anthony E. Schultz
Lenten Vesper #5.
March 29, 2017
Luke 7:44-50 HCSB**



⁴⁴ Turning to 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, with her tears, has washed My feet and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave Me no kiss, but she hasn’t stopped kissing My feet since I came in. ⁴⁶ You didn’t anoint My head with olive oil, but she has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. ⁴⁷ Therefore I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; that’s why she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little.” ⁴⁸ Then He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” ⁴⁹ Those who were at the table with Him began to say among themselves, “Who is this man who even forgives sins?” ⁵⁰ And He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

People of God—rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

If by the grace of God—you every go to the Czech Republic—if by the grace of God—you go to the city of Prague—they call it Praha—you will find beggars. You will find homeless people literally wearing rags. Their hair is all greasy and messed up. Their faces are covered with whiskers—a beard that is literally snarled. Their teeth are literally brown and green where there are teeth. They wear gloves with the fingers missing—their fingernails literally black wherever there is a crack. You smell

them before you see them. Their breath smells of wine or whiskey or vodka – or all of the above! They are too ashamed to look you in the face – so they kneel on the brick streets – their face literally pressed on the bricks – their hands folded in supplication – just past their hands – their hat like an offering plate – they hope against hope that you will have pity on them. Sometimes there is a puppy beside them – stretched out too – their head between their paws on the bricks. The puppy looks up at you, too, with sadness and supplication! Have you seen these people? They are on the median by East-gate Mall in Madison. Sometimes it says Veteran. A filthy grease stained piece of cardboard – asking for change – for anything you can spare! Have you seen them? Spiritually speaking – that’s who we are! That’s who I am! Nothing in our hands we bring – simply to Jesus’ $\frac{\text{||}}{\text{||}}$ we cling! Today – the 5th Lenten Vesper – we are yet again called to repent!

Repent! Return to Jesus who changes your life!

Two Wednesdays we saw Jesus on the $\frac{\text{||}}{\text{||}}$! The theme remains constant – repent! People born dead in trespasses and sins-turned around by the power of the Holy Spirit – through the means of grace – the Gospel in Scripture and baptism and Lord’s Supper! Repent! That’s the theme again and again this Lenten Season! Luke chapter 7 – Jesus and his disciples are in Galilee. Luke chapter 7 – one that would be good to remember – Luke chapter 7 is where you look for two exceedingly powerful miracles. If I visit you in the hospital or in hospice care – there is a very good chance I will read to you from Luke chapter 7 – the healing of the Roman Centurion’s servant. When I don’t feel well – I call Mattea who schedules an appointment with Dr. Turke’s PA. Come to Turke Family Medicine where they will have you step on the scale – take your blood pressure – listen to your lungs and sample some juices. Once they have an educated opinion what’s wrong –

they will ask where do you get your pills? They will send over a prescription and you take the medication – and with Jesus’ permission in about 24 hours you should feel much better. If after two or three days I’m not feeling much better – come and see us again! By the grace of God – the Roman Centurion said he was man under authority with soldiers under him. He tells this soldier go and he goes – come here and he comes here – do this and he does it! All Jesus had to do was say the word and his servant on the brink of death would be cured. Jesus hadn’t found faith like that in all Israel! Luke chapter 7 also the place where the Lord Jesus – leading a parade of life – walks into the city of Nain – where he meets a funeral procession. There was a funeral procession – a parade of death on the way out of the city. A widow had one son – and now he was dead. She was all alone! Jesus tells the Mom, “Don’t cry!” Then he says to the dead guy, “Young man I say to you, ‘Get up!’” And he does! Wow! Only Jesus who has literally the power of life and death could do that!

The next part – doesn’t seem to be connected to those two miracles. That’s God’s Word and God’s will – nothing for us to find fault with! A Pharisee named Simon invited Jesus to dinner – and Jesus accepted! While they were having supper God’s Word says, **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.** Some people like to think this woman was Mary Magdalene. There is nothing in God’s Word that says that! It’s bad hermeneutics – bad principles of Bible understanding to simply take something out of the air and say that’s what God’s Word means.. You can run far off the tracks – if

you start to say this is what God's Word means – simply as the result of clever human imagination. God's Word deserves better than that! As Prof. Jeske liked to say, "If God wanted us to know who this woman was – He would have told us very clearly! What God's Word doesn't tell us – *we should be glad not to know!*" This woman had lived a sinful life. She had a bad reputation in the entire town where she lived! That's like on the Andy Griffith Show – Otis the town drunk and so? There is terrible spiritual danger if we ever start to think – I'm not perfect – no one is – but at least I'm better than that person! That's never ever right!

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." *he said to himself... Simon didn't say this out loud... he said to himself!* **He said to himself – this woman is a sinner!** Simon had no respect for this Jesus of Nazareth! Look who he was associating with – a terrible sinner! This woman who had an alabaster jar of perfume – a transparent stone much like soapstone. Craftsmen used to make small containers for oils or perfume. In this stone jar very costly perfume. This woman had a plan. Standing behind Jesus she cried. She literally wet the feet of Jesus with her tears – wiped His feet with her hair and kissed Jesus' feet. Finally she poured the precious perfume on Jesus' feet to show honor, worship, praise and thanks! Jesus very quietly accepted her act of worship and praise!

Then Jesus told Simon **"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him 500 days' pay – ballpark 2 years wages – in round numbers \$100,000! The other man owed ballpark 2 months' pay--\$8,000. Neither one could pay his debt – so the moneylender forgave them both. Who was the most thankful? "I supposes the one who had the bigger debt**

canceled.” Obviously! What else could Simon say? Jesus forgave all the sins of the sinful woman! She understood and appreciated that and thanked Jesus for His grace. Her thankfulness – did not cause her forgiveness – it celebrated her forgiveness! It gave thanks to Jesus for His unconditional love that never fails!

⁴⁸ Then He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” ⁴⁹ Those who were at the table with Him began to say among themselves, “Who is this man who even forgives sins?” Who is this Jesus? How you answer this question makes all the difference in the world! It makes all the difference for eternity! That’s why it’s so important for us to hear and read and study God’s Word! That’s why it’s so important to bring our children to Sunday School and our Trinity St. Luke’s Lutheran Grade School and our Lakeside Lutheran High School and our Luther Preparatory School and Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran College and our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Do we appreciate what is happening when Pastors stand in front of us on Sunday morning and Wednesday afternoons and Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and say, “In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ – I forgive you all your sins?” Pastors are saying – “If Jesus Christ himself were standing before you right here – right now – this is what He would say – all your sins are forgiven!” All of them! I was reminded again the other day how many people come home from war with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder! They say 22 people with PTSD despair on average every 24 hours. That’s just about one per hour morning, noon, and night. That means almost one per hour – Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and on and on and on and on! I was watching the news a while ago – a reporter was interviewing a homeless man in NY a few steps into an alley – when there was a loud bang. I don’t know. Maybe somebody slamming the lid on a

dumpster. And the man wearing a green Army jacket – a man with a long tangled black and grey beard heard it. And in a moment he was trembling and afraid and immediately the reporter said, “It’s ok! It’s ok!” And the soldier said, “I’m sorry!” And the reporter said, “It isn’t your fault!” And I thought how terrible is that?! Who forgives sins? Jesus does! And because Jesus does – we can, too! We can and will forgive husbands when they try to help – and only cause us more work and frustration. We can and will forgive our children when you work hard to make them a nourishing and tasteful supper and all they do is complain. We will forgive our mother-in-law when it sometimes seems all they do is criticize and find fault. We will forgive our co-workers when they say what is hurtful and rude and unkind. We will forgive bad drivers on the road that cut us off and then add insult to injury with obscene gestures. We will forgive ourself when we realize we have failed again and again!

⁵⁰ And He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you.” This is what the Bible teaches about salvation – about eternal rescue. We are saved by grace – through faith – found in Scripture! We are not saved by being good. We are not saved because when on the day we die – our good deeds outweigh our sins, failures and mistakes – if even by the weight of a feather! We are not saved because we helped the poor and needy or didn’t drink alcohol or didn’t say dirty words – or didn’t watch bad movies! We are saved because Jesus didn’t ever sin – then died on the cross – in my place – to wash away all my failures. The good and helpful things we do are fruits of faith – ways we show our appreciation for Jesus’ forgiveness. We reflect Jesus by how we treat our neighbor! This is always exceedingly practical. Husbands love your wife like Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her! Children obey your parents for Jesus’ sake.

That means do what they ask you – the first time – without grumbling or complaining or rolling your eyes! It means be a reflection of Jesus in everything you say and especially what you do! It means read and study and learn and memorize God’s Word – so your faith will be stronger and stronger!

⁵⁰ **And He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.” Go in peace!** Peace is a pretty rare commodity these days. It happened just the other day up by Wausau – what the police call a domestic disturbance. There was trouble at the bank. Then trouble at a Law Firm. Then trouble at an apartment building. Three people are dead. A police officer is murdered in the line of duty and a suspect is in custody. What does that mean? Somebody killed 4 people because there was trouble in their marriage – their family? The only real and lasting peace this world will ever know – comes from Jesus’ \dagger and empty tomb. Peace us ours because Jesus died on the \dagger to pay for the sins of the world! Peace that means don’t be anxious about anything – but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your requests to God. And the peace of God – which surpasses all understanding – will keep your ♥s and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. **Go in peace! Amen!**

To God alone all glory!



Pastor Tony Schultz