

Sunday July 24, 2022

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

Welcome to Church. Today we have another chance to come to our great and mighty God and worship the king of Kings and the Lord of Lords. As we prepare to do so let us turn to Psalm 91 and remind us ourselves why this is such a good thing to do.

Psalm 91. *"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. ² I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' ³ Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴ He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. ⁵ You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, ⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. ⁷ A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. ⁸ You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. ⁹ If you say, 'The LORD is my refuge,' and you make the Most High your dwelling, ¹⁰ no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. ¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; ¹² they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone ¹³ You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. ¹⁴ 'Because he loves me,' says the LORD, 'I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. ¹⁵ He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him. ¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.'"*

Let us pray. *Father, we thank you for church this morning. Whether we are seated at home or in the building together, we thank you for the salvation we enjoy. Forgive us for the times this week when we have forgotten your goodness and greatness. We are sinful. We are selfish. We deserve to face the storm of your justice and wrath. Lord, we ask for your mercy and grace. We thank you that Christ bore the judgement we deserve, in his body, on the tree, but then three days later, rose from death, victorious, the risen, conquering king. We thank you for our forgiveness. We thank you for our assurance of salvation. We thank you that heaven is our home. Who else could rescue me from my failing? Who else would offer His only Son? Who else invites me to call Him Father Only a Holy God. Amen*

Song –How great thou art [Home Free - How Great Thou Art - YouTube](#)

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| <p>1. Oh Lord, my God
When I, in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder
Thy power throughout the universe displayed</p> | <p>Chorus
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art</p> |
| <p>2. & when I think that God, His Son not sparing
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin</p> | <p>3. When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration
And then proclaim, my God, how great Thou art</p> |

Bible Reading – Luke 7:36-50 (ESV)

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 kiss my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷ Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." ⁴⁸ And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 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."

Announcements

New school term. With the NSW public schools being back this week, all our regular activities of the Church have started back this week with the exception of IMPACT.

COVID. This week three of our paid staff – Liz, Jon and Stephen have all contracted COVID. Many thanks to all those who have stepped in and helped out during the week.

Funerals. Over the last two week two of our more senior saints at Swansea, Elizabeth Devereux and Maureen Bench have both passed away. Please pray for their families as they cope with their unexpected losses.

Recharge conference, A conference for men in the Hunter Valley. Saturday, 10th September, 2022. 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. Location: Grace Evangelical Church, 344- 348 Lake Rd., Glendale. Speaker, Simon Manchester, John 14, 15 &16, for "on ocean of encouragement". Link for more details and to register: <https://www.hgm.org.au/recharge>.

Any enquiries, Martin, 0421749751. Early bird tickets available until 31st July.

Focus for July – Hospitality. The writer to the Hebrews says, "Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. (Heb. 13:1-2). One of the ways we love as believers is through generous hospitality. Let's continue to open our homes to one another (unless we're in iso of course!). You could host someone for a meal or a cuppa, or host your Bible study. You never know, you just might end up entertaining an angel! But as Jesus said, when we welcome strangers we receive not only angels, but Christ himself (Matt. 25:31-40).

Impact Youth. We are in for an epic Term 3 of Impact Youth! Our first Friday back is July 29th.

Small Group Leaders Meeting. Has been cancelled due to Covid

Kids Spot: Term 3 for Kids Church starts off with a 12 year old Jesus lost from his parents and found in the temple from Luke 2:41-52. We will learn that people were shocked by what he knew and by the questions he asked. Question of the week: What parts of this story point to Jesus being God's Son?

Finances

Budgeted Offerings for June	\$26,667
Actual Offerings for June	\$26,103
Deficit for June	\$564
Deficit for Jan- June	\$677

Prayer Points for 24th July 2022

Psalm 23:1: “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.”

Pray for Israel: Pray for the Body of Christ in Israel to be strong and unwavering amid persecution and hardship. Pray for the Jewish people to call on the name of Jesus the Messiah.

Prayer for the unreached: Pray for the many thousands of unreached people groups with no access to the gospel.

Pray for strength: Pray for strength in our seasons of trials and temptations. For guidance through all the difficulties into which we stumble. Pray that all the events and circumstances we face in this life would prepare us for the last day and the life of the world to come. O Lord, be the strength of our hearts and our portions forever.

Pray for Josh Montzka (Power to Change, Melbourne) Praise God that He has given Josh a situation where he can share the gospel within his interests. Pray for gentleness, grace, civil conversation and open hearts for the gospel.

Bible Reading – Acts 2:42-47 (ESV)

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Song – By Faith [By Faith - Keith & Kristyn Getty - YouTube](#)

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| 1. By faith we see the hand of God
In the light of creation's grand design
In the lives of those who prove His faithfulness
Who walk by faith and not by sight | 3. By faith the prophets saw a day
When the longed-for Messiah would appear
With the power to break the chains of sin & death
And rise triumphant from the grave |
| 2. By faith our fathers roamed the earth
With the power of His promise in their hearts
Of a holy city built by God's own hand
A place where peace and justice reign | 4. By faith the church was called to go
In the power of the Spirit to the lost
To deliver captives and to preach good news
In every corner of the earth |

Chorus

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| We will stand as children of the promise
We will fix our eyes on Him our soul's reward
Till the race is finished and the work is done
We'll walk by faith and not by sight | 5. By faith this mountain shall be moved
And the power of the gospel shall prevail
For we know in Christ all things are possible
For all who call upon His name |
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Sermon – Devotion to Jesus (John H)

A few years after I became a Christian, which was over forty years ago, my Pastor asked me a question, which of course is a perfectly normal thing for a Pastor to do, but he asked me the same question three times. The question he asked me was, “do you really know what it means to be forgiven from your sins by God?”

The first two times he asked me that question I answered along the lines that I did know what it means to be forgiven from my sins. I knew and believed what the Bible says about this and I had accepted Jesus as

my Saviour. So, of course I knew! But when he asked the question the third time, I started to doubt that I really did know and appreciate what being forgiven by God really meant.

It got me thinking about how much I really appreciated and valued what Jesus has done for me and the price he paid so that I could be forgiven from my sins. I got me thinking how important God's forgiveness is to me and how or even whether it had changed my life, my thinking, my attitudes, my actions, my behaviour, my giving, my service, my worship, my love.

In the story from Luke 7:36-50 we meet a woman whose life was radically changed by her encounter with Jesus and by the forgiveness that she received and experienced from him.

Slide 1 Luke 7:36 *"One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table."*

We read that Jesus was invited for dinner, he was a guest of a Pharisee, whose name was Simon. Jesus accepted the invitation and went to Simon's home for the meal. We should note that it was customary for a leader of a Jewish community to invite a travelling Rabbi or Teacher to his home, so Simon the Pharisee was doing what he was expected to do. But we note that Simon doesn't do everything that was customary and expected of a host for his invited guest. As Jesus pointed out later in the passage [verses 44-46], Simon failed to provide the normal hospitality that he should.

Firstly, he failed to provide water for the washing of Jesus' feet. This was a normal custom to observe. Feet clad in sandals would get quite dirty from the dusty roads and it wasn't proper for a guest to come in and walk through another person's house without having the dust washed from their feet. But this wasn't done for Jesus. Jesus also pointed out that Simon failed to greet him with a kiss and anoint his head with oil, which were also customs of the day.

The omissions by Simon in our passage would have not only been obvious to Jesus, but would have been obvious to all the other people there as well. Rather than honour Jesus — Simon, by his omissions, offended Jesus. But Jesus did not react to this offence, instead — he was gracious and took his place at Simon's 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, ..."*

You might ask, how did this uninvited woman enter Simon's house? Well Simon's house may have been open to the public for a dinner such as this, one with a visiting itinerant preacher. Simon's household and invited guests would probably be the only ones at the table but other people may have come into the house to stand around and listen to the conversation. And some of the people standing around may have been Jesus' own disciples and this is maybe how they witnessed these events and teachings of Jesus and were able to write about them later.

It's also important to note how people reclined at a table for a meal in those days. They didn't sit on chairs as we do, they laid on cushions on the floor or on a raised platform, leaning on one arm and eating with the other, and with their feet pointing away from the table. This is how the woman was able to approach Jesus' feet, from behind him and away from the table.

38-39 ... *"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. 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."

Simon reacted to the woman and what she was doing to Jesus and he classified her on some sort of "sin scale". He referred to the woman as a certain type or "sort of woman". She may have been a prostitute. But here Simon was assuming that her sin — which in his eyes made her this "sort of woman" — was worse than any sin he had committed. He assumed he was different, a better kind of person than the woman because he thought that whatever his sin might be was less sinful in God's eyes. But he was wrong. All sin is the same in God's eyes and "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" [Romans 3:23]. And knowing what Simon was thinking, Jesus decided to tell him a parable.

Slide 2 40-46 And Jesus ... said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he [Simon] answered, "Say it, Teacher." "A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly."

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. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment."

Jesus asked Simon a question, "Do you see this woman?" Now obviously Simon could see her with his eyes, and that was his problem. He didn't want to see her, he didn't want to see her in his house, and he didn't want to see her touching Jesus.

But Jesus' question is deeper than just about whether Simon could see the woman with his eyes. Jesus was asking Simon whether he could see the woman the way Jesus saw her. And how did Jesus see her?

Slide 3 47 "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little."

The woman in Simon's house had been a very sinful woman, but the words in the passage indicate that whatever that sin was, is in her past.

In verse 47 Jesus says that "her many sins have been forgiven" and we know that Jesus doesn't forgive sins because of what people do; not by their good works and deeds; and he didn't forgive the woman because she washed his feet. He forgives sins when people repent of their sins and put their faith in him as their Lord and Saviour.

And it appears that this woman may have had a previous encounter with Jesus and had repented of her sins and put her faith in Jesus. Her sinful ways are in the past tense. She used to be a sinful woman, but she has had a life changing experience. That's why Jesus could say later in verse 50 that her faith had saved her.

And what is the result of the forgiveness she has received from Jesus? She shows great love. Remember, she doesn't wash Jesus' feet with her tears to gain forgiveness, or dry them with her hair, or kiss and pour perfume over his feet to gain forgiveness. She does these things out of love for Jesus because she has already been forgiven.

So when Jesus refers to “her great love” he is saying that her actions in this story are a result of her being forgiven. She loves Jesus greatly, because she knows that she has been greatly forgiven.

48-50 “And he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?” And he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

Note that Jesus was more interested in his relationship with this woman, in affirming her, than he was in addressing and appeasing the concerns of the other people at the table with him.

By Jesus actions towards the woman and away from Simon and the others, he is pointing us to the heart of the story, to the real message that lies within it.

The message of this passage is that we must not only be unlike Simon the Pharisee. It’s not just about what not to do.

The message of this passage is that we must be like the woman. The woman knew what it meant to be forgiven from her sins and her response was one of love and devotion. She risked everything to be with Jesus that night. She risked verbal and possibly physical abuse; human criticism, rejection, isolation, persecution.

But she didn’t care, because her sins had been forgiven and she had been accepted by Jesus. And that was enough for her, that was the most important thing for her, she could go on in her life knowing the love and peace of Jesus. She could live a life of devotion to Jesus because of her relationship with him through her faith and his forgiveness.

So how can we be like this woman? How can we respond to Jesus and his forgiveness like this woman did? How can we be devoted to Jesus like this woman was? Well, obviously we can’t do what she did. We can’t go to Jesus and pour perfume on his feet. We can’t do the same things she did, but we can be as devoted as she was.

An example of what our devotion could look like is provided by Jesus’ followers soon after he had died on the cross and risen again, and after he had ascended into heaven and the Holy Spirit had come and filled them.

In Acts 2:42 we read that, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

What did they do? They read and studied the Bible and listened to the teaching from it, they met and ate together, they shared communion and they prayed together. They did these things in order to know and love Jesus more. But they did more than just do these things, the verse says that they devoted themselves to these things, and in doing so, they devoted themselves to Jesus. The Greek word used here for “devoted” is a strong word. It means to be very earnest, to be constantly diligent, and to be continually attentive.

Slide 4 Mother Teresa once said, “There is always the danger that we may just do the work for the sake of the work. This is where the respect and the love and the devotion come in – that we do it to God, to Christ, and that’s why we try to so it as beautifully as possible.”

Notice that Mother Teresa said that works done in respect and love and devotion are done to God and to Christ, not for God and for Jesus. That's the difference between thinking we need to earn God's favour by doing things or simply accepting we have God's favour, through his grace and our faith, and then responding to God with our devotion to him.

That's the devotion the disciples had to Jesus. They had come to a realisation of what Jesus had done for them, what his dying on the cross really meant, what price he paid so their sins could be forgiven. They now knew and appreciated what it meant for their sins to be forgiven.

And it changed their lives into ones of unrelenting devotion to Jesus. Jesus had paid it all, and their response was for them to be 100% totally devoted to him. And they did it so beautifully that Acts 2:41 and 47 tells us that every day new believers were added to their number.

That's the example we have been set by these first disciples of Jesus and by this woman who anointed his feet. It's up to us to think about how their example can challenge and encourage us to be the same, and to do the things that help us know him more and be more like him — out of devotion to him.

And so I would like to finish with the following questions for you to contemplate as you go home from church today:

1. Do you really know what it means to be forgiven from your sins by God?
2. If so, how has your knowledge and appreciation of God's forgiveness changed your life?
3. In what ways could you say that your life is one of devotion to Jesus?

Prayer, Lord we are challenged by the example of this woman and the first disciples we have read about today, but we can be encouraged by your promises that you will provide the means for us to live our lives devoted to you, when we have faith in you and submit ourselves to your word and to your will. Help us to do this more and more we pray, Amen

Song – Jesus paid it all [\(1\) Newsboys - Jesus Paid It All \(Lyrics\) - YouTube](#)

1. I hear the Saviour say Thy strength indeed is small
Child of weakness watch and pray Find in me thine all in all

Chorus: Jesus paid it all All to him I owe Sin had left a crimson stain He washed it white as snow

2. Lord, now indeed I find Thy power and thine alone
Came and changed the lepers' spots And it melt the heart of stone
3. And when before the throne I stand in him complete
Jesus died my soul to save My lips shall still repeat

Benediction

⁴⁷ Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.” ⁴⁸ And he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” 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.”