

June 13, 2010
Luke 7:36-50
Creekside COB

“Priceless”

JOKE

Forgiveness

The preacher, in his Sunday sermon, used "Forgive Your Enemies" as his subject. After a long sermon, he asked how many were willing to forgive their enemies. About half held up their hands. Not satisfied, he harangued for another twenty minutes and repeated his question. This time he received a response of eighty percent. Still unsatisfied, he lectured for fifteen minutes and repeated his question. With thoughts of Sunday dinner, all responded except one old gentleman in the rear.

Mr. Jones, are you not willing to forgive your enemies?" "I don't have any." "Mr. Jones, that is very unusual. How old are you?" "Eighty-six." "Mr. Jones, please come down in front and tell the congregation how a man can live to be 86 and not have an enemy in the world." The old man teetered down the aisle and slowly turned around. "It's easy. I outlived 'em!"

Jesus says today, "Your sins are forgiven." Powerful words given to this woman today. Powerful words to receive and powerful words to give.

Jesus places Himself in the middle of this dinner party and He places Himself in the midst of two different cultures. He puts Himself in the midst of the life of a woman of the city, a prostitute and Simon the Pharisee. Now there were others but Jesus speaks truth to these two people. He places Himself in the midst of this dinner party and begin to stir things up.

Jesus was always doing that, wasn't He? He places Himself in the midst of the lives in the Holy Scripture and causes tension. He causes a tension with His truth.

Jesus does that to us. He comes into our lives and stirs things up. Jesus causes a tension trying to break down our old beliefs -- transforming us. Jesus teaches us with His truth. Jesus puts Himself in our lives. Jesus puts Himself inside of those places where He wants us to change and teach us.

That is what is happening today. Jesus puts Himself in the midst of the lives of these people and He teaches them. He engages them in a valuable lesson on an act of grace - forgiveness.

VALUE

This woman understood how priceless forgiveness is. As she receives the gift of grace in forgiveness, Jesus teaches her the value of forgiveness.

When Jesus teaches us about forgiveness He reveals to us the truth of what we value.

JESUS TEACHES TODAY THAT FORGIVENESS REVEALS THE VALUE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.

A priest seated himself at a coffee shop counter next to a man who immediately noticed his clerical apparel. "Where is your Church?" the man asked. The priest pointed in the direction of his Church on the corner and the man said, "Why that's the Church I go to." "I've been pastor there for five years and I don't believe I've ever seen you," said the priest. To which the man replied, "I didn't say I was a fanatic!"

That is what we want. We want to have a fanatic relationship with Christ. We want everything God has for us. We want to enter into a life of grace.

The woman understood the value of the forgiveness. This woman was willing to risk all that she had to experience the forgiveness Jesus had to offer. She was willing to risk her flask of expensive ointment. She wanted a deeper more richer relationship with Christ.

She wanted to experience Christ in a greater way. As we enter into grace with Christ we can too experience the richness of a relationship with Him.

JESUS TEACHES TODAY THAT FORGIVENESS REVEALS THE VALUE WE PLACE ON OURSELVES

To place a value on our selves is to protect our souls. Psalm 23 - He restores my soul.

We value ourselves to have Christ enter into those places that we need to forgive or receive forgiveness.

IILLUS:

Do you remember Jim Henson, the creator of the Muppets? He died unexpectedly a several years ago. He was sick, but he didn't know it. He thought he had a cold. He thought it was a touch of the flu. He thought he would soon be better, so he did nothing about it. He had no idea that it was life-threatening. He could have saved his own life with a trip to the doctor, but he didn't know how sick he was. If you don't know you are in need of forgiveness, how will you get well.

Listen, to what Jesus has to say. Mark 2:17

When Jesus heard this, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners"

If you don't know you are sick, how can you get well.

When Jesus begins to teach us on forgiveness, we are compelled to see inside ourselves. We can see those places where we need forgiveness. We see those places where we need to give forgiveness.

THE PHARISEES WERE NOT WILLING.

Jesus shows them, "Look you are a sinner too." Look you sinned when you did not offer me hospitality when I came in here." "You didn't do all the things that you would do with an invited guest or a rabbi."

Jesus tells them in His parable that they were sinners too. They need forgiveness too. They weren't willing to hear what Jesus was saying

The woman sees her sickness. She knows who she is. We have to allow ourselves to become vulnerable.

Her heart is transformed into more of the image of Christ. She leaves herself vulnerable to become who Christ wants her to be. She values herself enough to know that forgiveness is what she needs.

To value ourselves is to say that we are more important than anything unforgiveness that we may have.

REVEALS THE VALUE THAT WE PUT IN OUR COMMUNITY

ILLUSTRATION

Some of you may remember an episode from the old Andy Griffith Television show in which the Women's Historical Society discovered that a living descendant of a Revolutionary War hero was living right there in Mayberry. The news generated excitement and curiosity throughout the town as people made plans for recognizing the hero's relative. Barney Fife, of course, twisted his own family tree to the point that he put himself in line for the honor. The rest of the townspeople felt special just because someone among them was related to a hero.

However, everyone was shocked when the person was finally revealed. A careful analysis of the genealogical records determined that the hero's descendent was none other than, Otis Campbell, the town drunk. Despite suggestions to find a "substitute Otis" for the presentation, the real Otis showed up for the ceremony true to form. When the ladies finally give him the plaque, Otis holds it in his hands for a moment, and then decides instead to give the plaque to the town. He tells them, "Just because you're the descendent of a hero doesn't make you one too. So I would like to present this plaque to the town of Mayberry, to which I am just proud to belong."

Jesus teaches us about forgiveness and reveals to us the value we place on community.

ILLUSTRATION

Denise grew up in a negative family. There was nothing she or any of her siblings could do to earn the respect of her parents. They were always angry and blamed all their problems on everyone else including their children. The children grew up without any need to keep their relationship with their family. They all went their separate ways with nothing more to do with the parents. This was all true until

Denise found Christ. Now that Denise has a relationship with Christ, she knew that it was her calling from Christ to restore her relationship with her family. She decided that it didn't matter what they said or did to her. She would show them forgiveness and love. She would show them the grace of Christ.

She began visiting and including her siblings in the restoration. And after two years, her relationship with her family hanged. She found that they became more positive about their family. They became more positive about their life.

Christ entered into a part of Denise life and taught her the value of her family community.

Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him--that she is a sinner.

Like the town of Mayberry, the Pharisees did not want to be in community with someone who was not like them. Someone whose sins were labeled worse than them.

The woman today was willing to step out of her comfort zone. The Pharisees were not her friends or her support group. But she willingly stepped in their circle to experience community. That is God's greatest desire - to have the world in community with each other. From the beginning of time God desired it.

CLOSING: *Your faith has saved you go in peace.*

PRICELESS

Jesus teaches us today that we can't put a value on forgiveness - it's priceless.

While I was reading the commentaries, many of the scholars wondered was she forgiven before she came in or had she heard about Jesus and that is why she came to worship Him.

But I say it doesn't matter, something happens to her. She is changed forever.

Forgiveness changes our lives.

When we experience the life changing grace of Christ, our relationship with Christ, our relationship with ourselves and our relationship with our community will grow in richness.

FORGIVENESS IS A POWERFUL WORD THAT GIVES US A PRICELESS EXPERIENCE WITH CHRIST.