

“The Woman who Forgot Herself”

(Luke 7:29-50)

- *(Recap)* John – His Doubt met by Christ & Scripture
- *(Recap)* John – His Greatness Eclipsed by Citizens of the Kingdom
- John – His Generation Playing by it’s own Rules
 - The ‘Parable of the Brats’ – Today’s generation also wants to dictate the terms of their commitment to God.
 - We even see this in the church – a desire to cling to ‘self’ in a company of people who by our redeemed nature are meant to be ‘selfless’.
 - The real issue was not John & Jesus’ eating & drinking; the real issue was an unwillingness by their hearers to confront their own hearts (v30 compared to v29).
 - Those who respond to God are, in time, shown to be wise (v35); those who don’t, to be fools.

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- A Sinful Woman – When Actions Speak Louder than Words
 - Her love was revealed by her actions.
 - In that love she discovered the joy of self-forgetfulness.
- A Skeptical Pharisee – When the Lord Weights the Heart
 - Psalm 139 / Jeremiah 17:10 / Jer. 12:3 / Proverbs 21:2
 - A person might be able to fool others by their pious actions, or even by their silence. But God is not fooled.
 - A person can be outwardly respectful of Christ, but inwardly unconverted.
 - Simon's belief in his own respectability, morality, knowledge and social standing...was the greatest hindrance to his salvation.

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- The Parable of the Two Debtors
 - This is not intended to create a scale by which we grade sinfulness.
 - The parable is about our response to God's forgiveness.
 - The more aware we are of the greatness of the cancelled debt, the greater will be our love for the One who cancelled it!
 - "Let us never forget this. However much the world may sneer at 'feelings' in religion, and however false or unhealthy religious feelings may sometimes be, the great truth still remains behind, that feeling is the secret of doing. The heart must be engaged for Christ, or the hands will soon hand down. The affections must be enlisted into His service, or our obedience will soon stand still. It will always be the loving workman who will do most in the Lord's vineyard" (Ryle).

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- A Pharisee's Indifference – When Actions Speak Louder than Words
 - The reason there is no great movement toward Christ in some professing Christians, no great effort to seek His face, no will or desire to serve Him....is because there is no great love for Christ, no true esteem for Him, nothing more than passing lip-service.
 - Do you love this God whom we serve?
 - Actions speak louder than words.

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- A Theological Bombshell – Sola Christus, Sola Fide
 - Christ Alone – “Who is this man who forgives sins? Who can forgive sins by God alone?”
 - By asking the question the Holy Spirit forces us as readers to face up to the claims of Jesus Christ.
 - Salvation may only be had at the lips of this Man – Jesus.
 - Faith Alone – “Your faith has saved you”
 - She was not forgiven because of her love.
 - She was forgiven (by God's grace) through her faith, which in turn led to her love.
 - “Because she was forgiven so much, she loved so much” is the message of the parable.

Some Closing thoughts:

- “I used to feel that way too, before I achieved low self-esteem”
 - “As the speaker bombarded us with phrases like ‘got to take control of my life’ and ‘I’ve got to really believe myself’ – the man beside me took refuge in the old Calvinist doctrine that pride is the enemy of hope” (Delbanco)
- There is much talk of self-esteem. Much talk of self. And much evidence of selfishness. But the way of Christ and the way of salvation is to forget yourself and make much of Him.
- **Have you learnt to forget yourself?**