Fresh air and Freedom Luke 7:36-50 Grange Baptist Church 1st October 2023

Passage: Parable of the ‘sinful woman’ anointing the feet of Jesus, Luke 7:36-50

Reminder and encouragement today.

Fresh air, bush…that smell..its amazing, life giving…peace.

**Context:**

In this story, we do not find ourselves in a bible study or discussion group about forgiveness. We are at a dinner party, clattering of plates, people talking, laughing, drinking.

It’s noisy, messy and lively, there’s stuff happening.

Then a woman, uninvited, crashes the dinner party simply because she had heard Jesus was in town.

But why? Because she was desperate to see Him?

Find out later.

Not only did she crash the party, she annoyed, offended and upset the host and the other guests.

She didn’t care, she knew she had to be with Jesus, knew she had to see Him.

The host of the party, ‘Simon’ a pharisee, questions Jesus, ‘do you know who you are letting touch you?’

Jesus responds with a parable, and challenges Simons’ thinking.

Jesus forgives the woman and she goes on her way. But he also says “go in peace”… which is interesting

Short summary of the story….

Release deliberately, sense of action happening.

“Forgiveness”. We kind of understand…but release…escape.

Movie: “The great escape”, Steve McQueen, 1963, famous music etc.

Prisoner: Receive pardon from king, queen… only a scrap of paper, an idea. But when the gaoler swings open that that door and they are released into the fresh air…the open space, the new world.

Its more than you stay in your cell, you are forgiven, its you are released into fresh air, new life and love.

Release from the weight of our sin not something handed down to us as a religious theory.

Its an experience that people like us have had, and continue to have withing the fellowship of the church.

If we were to think about forgiveness of sins…abstract truth…

Raising questions.

What is Sin? I like selfishness…not going to name specifics…that’s a slippery slope..not done by Jesus…rarely..

Does forgiveness wipe out the penalty?

Preached on that before

Are we all forgiven?

Well we have all sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God…so yeah..

Does a baby need to be forgiven?...

Questions I have heard… you may have too.

Questions which deserve an answer…but not now…we are looking for this truth in action.. the truth of forgiveness that means release…from our sins.

Which Release from our sins or the spiritual consequences anyway…

Human being: responding to him ..bought to her the fact …accepted by God. Finding new life, a new hope a new beginning…

He saw it happening as she showed him her love and affection, commitment to him..

**Did this in a number of ways…**

**The oil**.

She had prepared herself. Alabaster jar of oil, very valuable, but prepared to crash a party, didn’t care about niceties or who she upset or offended…and spared no expense to be at the feet of Jesus.

**The tears.**

Here response being in the presence of Jesus, is not one of joy or excitement, but of deep understanding of herself, as she stood behind him and wept. Her tears, the very product of her realisation of her situation flowed onto the feet of Jesus. Just being in the presence of the perfect son of God, the man who could release her from her turmoil…physical reaction in her..tears flowed…

**The hair.**

Maybe she just didn’t have a towel?

This, along with the tears shows the physicality of her response to her sinfulness and need for Jesus. An intimate act of gratitude and sacrifice….

There are no niceties when we get to this place…raw and broken, in need of the grace of Jesus and his love and forgiveness..

Look at this story.

“If this man were a prophet he would know who this woman is that touches him and what sort of woman she is, a sinner. This was a self righteous attitude, nothing to do with sinning or care for the woman. Jesus knows who the woman is, all right, does not care what sort of woman…

Jesus responds, “I tell you, her great love proves that her many sins had been forgiven., where little has been forgiven, little love is shown…possibly confusing, not that less sinful, but less awareness of their sin…

Jesus turns to Simon and tells this parable …

Two men owed money…to money lender..one fifty dollars, one five hundred.. as they had no means of repaying the loans, he let them both out off.. forgot their debt…

Jesus asks, which one of the would love him most, story well suited to the company.. no doubt about the answer. ..” the one who has been let off the most…Jesus, You are correct…

Point of this parable… A big sinner will love the one who forgives more than the little sinner…thank goodness…none of us are big sinners… but this is not about action…its about awareness of sin…..Jesus did not say that there is only a little to forgive…only a little was forgiven…

The host and guests are operating by a different set of ideas, profit / loss account with god, sins/virtues…good deeds/breaking the law…

Over against category of sinners…felt secure… gratitude…words… “god I thank thee that I am not as other men are..”.

Before we begin to congratulate ourselves and say “ God I thank you that I am not like one of those pharisees> we might ask if we have reached the point that woman was at the feet of Jesus.

The power of the word of god to release us depends on us being down there with that woman…

Means: give up keeping score quit comparing ourselves with others, be prepared to give up the grudges we’ve been nourishing against other people…

stop worrying whether or not we have made the grade.. but fling ourselves with gratitude and love into the arms of waiting father…

**Awareness of need for Jesus.**

The woman was well aware of her need for forgiveness. Somehow she had been struggling, wrestling with her sin and heard Jesus was in town, needed to be with him.

Seen herself, whatever her sins were-had seen them….so much was forgiven.

**Forgiveness and Freedom**.

“your sins are forgiven, go in peace.” Interesting that Jesus uses the word ‘Peace’ here.

He knew the turmoil, the lack of peace she had about her spiritual state…that she wasn’t happy with how she was living…that she felt trapped…enslaved by her sin..she had no peace…no internal peace..

Don’t know if you have been to this place…I have…where we know we need Jesus, his forgiveness, grace and love, but we look at the human consequences..or results of confronting our sin and we decide to live without peace..the peace that passes all understanding, that only comes from forgiveness and grace given by Jesus.

Inf front of everyone she’s saved, she has become a new person, and now the despised former sinner can and does depart in peace..the guests present really didn’t understand what was happening..

Sandra story..

Jesus knew the torment and turmoil her life had been, the lack of peace in her life caused by the sinful way she had been living.

So he released her from the prison of her sin, released her from the stifling guilt that suffocated her, He freed her into the fresh air of forgiveness. Into the light of the Son.

Why does this one woman out of the crowd at the dinner party..get assurance of release from her sins…

Surely it is because she got to the place where forgiveness happens…

A place of Radical Confession without any attempt at self justification, or a comparison of herself with others.

**Knowledge or action**.

We can know about forgiveness, have some concept of what it means. This story shows us that forgiveness of our sin, the guilt and struggle this brings should spring us into action, it releases us, sets us free.

The question is, ‘ do we live and interact with others as people released, living in freedom, people at peace.?

**For us.**

We sometimes create a life for ourselves where we justify all sorts of things, where we ‘de-sin’ our attitudes, actions and words. Coming to an awareness of our need for Jesus, an awareness that we need Him, his forgiveness and grace on a daily basis, releases us, sets us free, launches us into the freedom and fresh air that is the grace of God.

Your sins are forgiven… your sins are forgiven…

Release….given to us… not only from the weight of bad conscience… it is from the despair that we shall never overcome the power of sin within us… the bondage that drags us down..

Your sins are forgiven… truth that springs us into action… word comes with power.. the words Jesus spoke to that woman he speaks to us.. Your faith has saved you… your sins are forgiven… go in peace..

Pray this week that you can encounter Jesus in a new way, or maybe an old way, like this woman did, knowing who He is, who you are and accepting His forgiveness that sets you free.

We are free, released into the fresh air through the death and resurrection of Christ… celebrate and remember that today…

Communion