

Sermon

1 Kings 21:1-10,(11-14), 15-21a

Psalms 5:1-8

Galatians 2:15-21

Luke 7:36-8:3

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June 13, 2010

Luke 7:36-8:3

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, for I am a sinner.”

A prayer that I say quite often. Some people say the “Serenity Prayer,” but I say the “Jesus Prayer.” This prayer validates who I am—a sinner. It doesn't mean that I sin all of the time, it just means that I am human.

As Paul writes in his letter to the Romans,

“For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

Wretched woman that I am!

Who will rescue me from this body of death?

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.” (7:14-25)

So as you can see, I totally identify with Paul in his struggle with sin, in fact, I'm sure that we, in fact, can all identify, with Paul, in his struggle with sin, because, we are all human, and because, we are all born with the ability to sin.

In today's gospel reading, we hear that Jesus was invited to eat with one of the Pharisees

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at his house, and Jesus accepted the invitation.

We also heard that a woman, who was a sinner, also heard that Jesus was eating at this Pharisee's house, and she got up and, went to Jesus. We are told that she stood behind Jesus, and washed his feet with her tears and dried his feet with her hair. We are also told that she not only, anointed his feet with the oil that she brought with her, but continually, kissed his feet as well.

Let's look at this picture a little closer.

Here is a woman, no I take that back, here is a sinner, who approaches the one who was born without sin, Jesus Christ, and begins to wash his feet.

In those days, shoes was a luxury, and not every one wore them. I'm guessing that Jesus was not wearing any shoes, at that time, so his feet must have been pretty dirty.

It's ironic, that the one that was born without sin, would have dirty feet, and that this sinner would come to him and wash his feet, and make his feet look clean and smell good as well.

Let's continue on with this picture.

We hear that a Pharisee invites Jesus to his house to eat with him.

“A Pharisee,” could be anybody, but this particular Pharisee thinks to himself, or should I say, makes a judgment, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—a sinner.”

It is at this point, that we hear a name. Jesus calls him Simon. Jesus calls Simon and Simon says, “Teacher, Speak.”

Again, It is ironic, that the one who is born without sin, calls Simon, a sinner, by his name, and tells him a story and asked him a question. Upon Simon's response, Jesus says to Simon, “you have judged rightly.”

It seems as if someone is always inviting Jesus to eat with them. Jesus has no problems sitting down and eating with everyone, sinners, tax collectors, and even Pharisees, anyone, it doesn't make a difference to him, food is food.

In the story that Jesus shares with Simon, we hear that the creditor has canceled both of the debtors debt. Despite the fact that one debt was higher than the other, both debts were wiped clean. As far as the creditor was concerned, both debts were of the same value. Simon chose the debt of the greater value to be the one who would love the

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creditor more, but in Jesus' eyes, all debts are all of the same value. Jesus not only wiped the debt of the woman, who was a sinner, but Jesus also wiped Simon's debt clean as well.

We are told that not only this woman, who was a sinner, but other women who had been cured of evil spirits and other infirmities began to follow Jesus. These women who were sinners, were made clean, and whole again, by the one who was born without sin.

Out of love for each of us, God sent his only Son to come down from heaven and live among us, by taking on a human form. Jesus came down to earth to show us how to live and how to love. We are to love unconditionally.

This is a very hard assignment for us to do, love unconditionally, but each day, we are given, through Jesus' mercy and grace, the ability to accomplish this difficult task.

Jesus, not only invites, but calls each of us, by our names, to come to his table. We are all welcomed to gather around his table, and he is graciously feeding us, of his heavenly food. No one has ever been turned away from Jesus' table.

As human beings, we are all born with the ability to sin.

It is through our Baptismal Covenant, that we affirm that we will persevere in resisting evil, and whenever we fall into sin, we will repent and return to the Lord, with God's help.

Through our Baptismal Covenant, we are also called, as were those women who were cured from their various infirmities, to follow Jesus.

We are all called by our Baptismal Covenant to proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ.

When I was discerning my call to become a deacon, I remember being asked several questions, by so many people, on my discernment committee, on the parish level, and down at the diocese level.

One question that I was asked constantly was, "What do you feel that God is calling you to do?" My answer was and still is today, "I want to go out into the streets, and let everyone know, that no matter what it is that they may have done, good or bad, God has not forgotten about them, and that God still loves them, in spite of what ever."

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Just imagine, right now, can you see it? The one who was born without sin, is stretching out his hands, and is inviting each of us, to come and taste of his body and blood.

Just imagine right now, that Jesus is standing, right here, with his arms stretched out, and saying to all of us, no matter what we have ever done or failed to do, we are still loved. God has forgiven us. God loves us, even now.

“Lord, Jesus Christ. Son of the living God.

Have mercy on me, for I am a sinner.

Amen!