



## Sermon Notes from 19 January

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### The Love That Blesses (Luke 7:36-50)

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The love for God and the love for people is so interconnected for the Christian that the love that blesses others must begin with blessing God. This blessing is a declaration through our words and actions that show gratitude and adoration towards God. We look to a narrative from the bible (Luke 7:36-50) to learn God's way of loving.

What this story reveals about agape love in relation to Jesus:

#### **1) Agape love flows from a heart that is broken and contrite before Jesus**

vv37-38 – A woman (a prostitute), who was on the lookout for Jesus, wanted to honour Him. She brought along an alabaster flask of perfume (very elegant, exquisite and expensive perfume) to anoint Jesus. As she approached Jesus, she was overwhelmed with emotion and her heart broke in His presence. She was broken and contrite. She loosened her hair (a sign of shame and looseness in Jewish culture) and wiped Jesus' feet with it. She poured out the perfume to anoint His feet. All throughout, Jesus did not stop her—for He knew what was in her heart. It is only because of Jesus that she was able to love this way. All the painful memories of her past that had made her feel dirty were redeemed at Jesus' feet. She felt cleansed in the presence of Jesus. You cannot be a true Christian without a broken and contrite heart (Ps. 51:17). When you come to Jesus with a broken and contrite heart, the ugly mess in your life will become a beautiful message for the love of Jesus. For the broken and contrite, whatever they hold dearly (alabaster flask), they are willing to surrender. Jesus is infinitely more precious than anything in this world.

v39 – Simon (the Pharisee) on the other hand, held a hardened heart. In his self-righteousness, he

dishonoured Jesus with his inaction. While he respected Him, he did not see Jesus for who He truly was. This led to his inability to display genuine love and honour. Despite this, Jesus still lovingly pursued Simon (v40).

#### **2) Agape love flows from a heart that recognizes one has been forgiven much by Jesus**

vv41-43 – Receiving much forgiveness from God will lead someone to love God much in return. The reason the woman was forgiven was not because of her love; she had already been forgiven. Out from this came the fruit of her loving actions – because she was loved much, she could love much (v47). God's forgiveness for us is the cause; our love in return to Him is the effect. The woman recognized that her need for forgiveness was great, and that she had truly attained pardon. Simon on the other hand, was blind to his own hypocrisy and depth of sin. Forgiveness is based on objective truth, not subjective values or feelings. Without objective moral truths, the whole basis of forgiveness collapses altogether. True love requires true forgiveness; true forgiveness requires absolute truth from God Himself. When you understand forgiveness as an objective, precise debt cancellation, it will shape the way you forgive others.

v48 – Every Christian should hear Jesus saying "your sins are forgiven" tenderly to their own soul. This is music to a redeemed soul. The woman places her faith in Jesus. She believed who He said He is: the Lord of all. It was her faith that saved her (v50)! This faith saves because it is in Jesus. He is the One who pays with His blood so that our debts can be cancelled (Col. 2:13-14). Like the woman, let us say in our hearts to Jesus: 'thank You for forgiving me. I love You much.'