

3 Pentecost C; June 13, 2010  
Grace and Glory Lutheran Church; Pastor Ken Albright  
Text: Luke 7:36-8:3  
Theme: Notice

Jesus knows what we're thinking.  
Simon is thinking—is this rabbi really a prophet???  
Surely, if he were God's articulate agent—he would have the brains enough to know not to be associated with this woman, this sinner, anointing his feet.

And yet, here is Jesus, who IS a prophet—and that's just the tip of the iceberg of his capability and identity.  
He not only knows who this woman is— it looks as though, by the way the story unfolds, he has already encountered her and set her free from her broken life.  
And it is clear that he knows the thoughts of Simon the Pharisee.  
It says that Simon “said to himself... If this man were a prophet...”  
To himself. Not to Jesus. Not to others. This was Simon thinking to himself.  
Yet Jesus knew what was going on in his heart and mind, and he addressed it head on.

Jesus Christ, this story is telling us, knows us. He knows our thoughts, our struggles, the things we him and haw over. He knows the brokenness of our human condition, whether that be thinking and behaving as if we are better than others, or thinking and behaving as if we are worse.

This story isn't just history...its happening right this minute in worship.  
What has this story gotten you thinking about?  
Who is on your mind this morning?  
Who have you identified and labeled “sinner” this week?

Do you and I believe that Jesus knows our thoughts? That Jesus knows our judgments.  
That Jesus knows our hang-ups and our affinity for arrogance?

Do you and I know that Jesus loves us so much that he cares to address the things we're churning about? Do we know that he's going to take the time with us to correct our erroneous assumptions and ruffle our egotistic feathers in order to rearrange them into a fine plume?

Another thing we see in this story is that forgiveness of sins leads to great expressions of love.  
Simon failed to do for Jesus what any good host would do for a guest.  
And yet, this sinful woman, comes into Simon's dining room, and she does things for Jesus, not that a host would do, but that only a servant would be expected to do.

Throughout the entire Gospel of Luke, Jesus has regard for sinners.

Every time the word sin is used in Luke's gospel, it is being forgiven by Jesus.

Jesus is all about canceling out our debts. That is his work.  
That is his goal. That is what came to culmination on the cross.

He came to take our balance sheet and correct it—no questions asked.  
And Mary, whom we see in this story today, is one who came to experience it first-hand.  
She was shown great love—and she turned around and started giving it right back.

Jesus calls Simon's attention to Mary. Notice his question to Simon:  
"Did you notice this woman?" He's saying: Pay attention to this woman.  
She has something to teach you. About forgiveness. About servanthood.  
About gratitude. About life lived in response to God's graceful activity.

Today, Jesus beckons you and I to take notice. To take notice of people who we may  
tend to ignore, or look down on, and to think again about what their actions prove.

To look again, not with an eye toward that other person's SIN, but with an eye toward  
that other person's high regard in the eyes of Jesus. To look again, and remember that  
people who know great love, show great love.

I want you to notice also, what Jesus says to the woman. He tells her to "go in peace."

Fred Craddock in his Commentary on Luke's gospel, makes these comments about Jesus  
command to the woman, "Go in peace."

*Where does one go when told by Christ "Go in peace"?*

*The price of the woman's way of life in the city has been removal  
from the very institutions that carried the resources to restore her.*

*The one place where she is welcome is the street, among people like herself.*

*What she needs is a community of forgiven and forgiving sinners.*

*The story screams the need for a church, not just any church but one that says,*

*"You are welcome here." [p. 106]*

Today we are called to be the church—God’s welcome wagon. We are here to say to Abigail Claire in the waters of baptism, “you are welcome, here.” In the community of forgiven and forgiving sinners we call church, you belong.

Today we are saying to Jim and to Chris and to Sharon and to Selena:

you are welcome here.

And we renew our minds as we notice the way in which you live out your lives among us...notice your servant stance.

Notice your passion for ministry.

Notice what makes you rejoice and be glad.

Notice how you demonstrate your admiration

and indebtedness to Jesus’ freeing activity in your life.

If I were to take a stab at what are this congregation’s favorite hymns, I think one that would be at the top of my list of guesses would be the hymn “All are Welcome.” Remember the refrain, so appropriate to this day:

***“All are welcome. All are welcome. All are welcome IN THIS PLACE.”***

In Jesus’ name.

Amen.