

The Forgiveness of Our Sins Is Evidenced by Our Actions of Love and Gratitude

"It had been a long and tiring day for Jesus," Deacon Don Hughes said in his sermon Sunday. "His day began with an exchange with two of John the Baptist's disciples. John has sent them to inquire if Jesus is indeed the Messiah they had been expecting."

Some in the crowd around Jesus "are receptive (those who had received John's baptism), and some are not (those who had not received John's baptism). Among those who had not received John's baptism is Simon the Pharisee," who invited Jesus to his home for a meal.

"Into this dinner," Deacon Hughes said, "enters a certain immoral woman. The woman is an uninvited guest, but the custom of the day permitted this. Privacy such as we practice in our day was unknown in Jesus' world. Doors remained open, allowing friends or passersby to wander in. This woman of the streets has scouted out the whereabouts of Jesus with the sole intent to express her gratitude. Overwhelmed, the tears begin to flow. To take care of Jesus' tear-stained feet, she commits a major social faux pas by loosening her hair to dry his feet. Eventually, she is able to do what she came to do: anoint the feet of Jesus.

"Of course, this moment does not go unnoticed by Simon. Simon interprets this incident as proof that Jesus is no prophet of God. Jesus intervenes and works out a parable between the two of them, so that the woman might be encouraged and Simon's thinking corrected." Jesus' parable concerned a man who loaned a large sum to one person and a lesser sum to another, and then forgave both debts when neither could pay. "Who do you suppose loved him more after that?" Jesus asked. Simon correctly answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt."

Jesus agreed, and "then brings to Simon's attention his neglect to extend to Jesus the kiss of greeting, water to refresh his feet and oil for his head. He confirms that the woman's sins are many," but emphasizes, Deacon Hughes said, "that because she has been forgiven much she has shown him much love."

"Now think on this," he continued. "The evidence for the forgiveness of sins was in the woman's actions of love and gratitude." Ambrose, the fourth-century bishop of Milan, said that we, too, anoint the feet of Christ when we act on behalf of "one of the least of these", Deacon Hughes said.

"From this it is not difficult to turn our attention to the mission of the church to be Christ to the world," he continued. "And, of course, from our Lord's Prayer we pray, 'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' There is much here to be contemplated again and again," he said.

"Take this story with you this week and make it your own. There is no intention to imply that anyone present this morning is lacking in expressions of gratitude or acts of compassion. This is only a gentle reminder that we have been forgiven much. Therefore, let us love much, and from us will flow acts of gratitude and kindness."



"Slave", bronze by Pietro Tacca (1577-1640). © Web Gallery of Art. In the Epistle lesson for this Sunday we will read, "There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all Christians—you are one in Christ Jesus."

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Sundays	10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service
	11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation
	11:45 a.m.: Post-service discussion.
	6:00 p.m.: (First Sundays only) Evensong, tea, refreshments.
	Thursdays: 5:30 p.m.: Evening Prayers. 6:00 p.m.: Singing & discussing hymns.
	Readings, 6/24: Zech. 12:8—13:1; Ps. 63:1-8; Gal. 3:23-29; Luke 9:18-24.
	7/1, 10 a.m.: 1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21; Ps. 16; Gal. 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62.
	7/1, 6 p.m.: Ps. 145; 1 Sam. 10:1-16; Rom. 4:13-25.
	Prayer Emphases: Denmark; Community Churches; Lakeview Church of the Nazarene, Nampa, and the Rev. Mark Harmon; Evangelicals for Social Action; parishioners on Esquire Circle.
	For the poor: Ground beef, chicken, bacon, fresh produce, canned fruits and vegetables, milk, butter, cheese, cooking oil, pancake mix, syrup, chili powder, garlic powder, diapers, baby wipes, toilet paper, hand and bath soap, shampoo, conditioner, razors, shaving cream.

Thou Art Our Holy Lord, Epworth # 503, This Sunday

As our hymn of entry into the heavenly worship, we'll sing Clement of Alexandria's 3rd-century hymn: "Thou art our holy Lord, the all-subduing Word, healer of strife; . . . Thou art the great High Priest; Thou hast prepared the feast of heavenly love; . . . So now, and till we die, sound we thy praises high, and joyful sing; let all the holy throng who to the church belong unite and swell the song to Christ our King!"