

## **Thankful Guest**

Dinner with Christ: Part 1 “Thankful Guest”

Rev. Cameron D St.Michael – June 12, 2022

Trinity Sunday

**Readings:** Luke 7:36-50

**Reflection:** 8

**Greeting:** The Lord prepares a great feast for all the peoples. He destroys the dark shroud veiling all the people. The Lord our God swallows up death forever! God wipes away tears from every face! Praise the Lord! (*Isaiah 25:6-8*)

**Prayer:** O God, our Guide and Guardian, you have led us away from the stress and the strain of the world to be in your peaceful presence. Grant us grace to worship you in Spirit and in truth. May we find comfort in your love and may you build us up by your faith. Enable us to do the work that you have called us to, without fear of failure or hesitation to do good. May we worship you, not just with our lips this hour, but in word and deed all the days of our lives; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

**Reflection:** Psalm 8

*O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are humans that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! (Psalm 8 NRSVue\*)*

We read the words of Psalm 8 and hear of God’s glory. We celebrate that God has blessed humanity and cares for his people. How do you celebrate the role God has given us as custodians of creation? Are you thankful for God being mindful of you? How do you show your thankfulness? Do you celebrate God with those who are around you? Do you invite others to come to praise God with you? In what ways do you lift others up in prayer? How can we show the love of Christ in our daily lives?

**Prayer:** O God, you are our hope and our praise. You welcome us all to your table and invite us into your peaceful presence. May we be strengthened by your steadfast love and faithfulness as we come before you in prayer this day. Help us Lord, that you lift us up in both our joys and our sorrows. Be with us in both our laughter and our tears. May your light guide us and lead us to life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

### **Sermon:**

Our scripture reading for today comes from the New Revised Standard Version Bible. Our reading for today comes from the gospel according to Luke chapter 7 verses 36 through 50.

*One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and when he went into the Pharisee's house he reclined to dine. And a woman in the city who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair, kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner." Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "speak." "A certain moneylender had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven loves little." Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" But he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (Luke 7:36-50 NRSVue\*)*

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

Today we start a 3-week series called "Dinner with Christ." In it we will be looking at a few of the interactions Christ had when sitting down to eat with people. Today we look at a thankful guest at the dinner table. It's also someone who is a very unexpected guest, and for some, an unwelcome guest. In our account from Luke, one of the Pharisees asks Jesus to have dinner with them. While he's there, a woman comes in and bathes Jesus' feet with her tears,

dries them with her hair, kisses his feet, and anoints them with oil. Now this sets up some problems because the woman is a known sinner. The Pharisee knows who she is and begins to doubt that Jesus really is a prophet, because he feels like Jesus should know who this woman is as well. And that if Jesus did know he would have stopped her from doing anything for him. Jesus senses where the thoughts of his Pharisee host are headed. So, he begins talking to the Pharisee. In doing so he raises a question that begins to get to the heart of today's lesson. Jesus wants to know about a moneylender canceling debt. The debts of two people were cancelled, with one owing 500 denarii and the other only 50. If both debts are cancelled, who's more grateful? Who will love the moneylender more because of what was forgiven? The Pharisee answers correctly, that the person with the bigger debt will be more thankful because more has been forgiven. Jesus then agrees with them. Yes, the Pharisee is correct. But then Jesus redirects his attention to what is happening in the Pharisee's own house. Jesus notes that he was given no kiss, no water for his feet, and that he was not anointed with oil by his host. But this woman, so scorned by the Pharisee has done all those things.

Jesus then says that this woman's many sins have been forgiven and that's why she shows such great love. This really stirs up the people there. They want to know who Jesus is that he can forgive sins. But he tells her that her faith has saved her and that she should go in peace. I tried to imagine what it would look like and what it would be like, and I start thinking about what was really going on here. Because, though the acts are all symbolic, the symbolism isn't where I wanted to go today. It was this pure act of gratitude and thankfulness and love. That all of these things are done out of love and gratitude, and because of faith. That's something that pops up a lot that when Jesus is talking to people. We tend to miss just how important our faith is as a factor in so many things in our lives. The way our faith factors in the ways that we show our gratitude and how much it pushes us to do more. Because this unnamed woman shows up to dinner anointing Jesus' feet and washing them with her tears. And Jesus tells her all of her sins are forgiven. All of them. He doesn't make her confess to what they are. He doesn't make her promise about what things will be like in the future. She isn't forced to make any promises. The thing that astounded me was the way that Jesus just turns to her to tell her that her faith has saved her and that she should go in peace. Imagine hearing Jesus say that your sins are forgiven, that you're free because of your faith. That those chains that hold you down are chains no more. That weight you carry with you is lifted. I can shed a tear for that. I'm willing to pause for a moment just to reflect on how amazing that is.

But of course, people question it. Who is this Jesus that he can forgive people's sins? And we do know the answer. He is Christ. He is the Son of God. Certainly, he can forgive sins. But what about the fact that Jesus doesn't put the responsibility on himself? Jesus says it was her faith that saved her. That her belief is what set her free. And as I read that it struck me that her faith that she could be forgiven was so important in Christ's eyes. That this wouldn't have happened if she hadn't wanted forgiveness. And she wouldn't have committed her grateful act if she did not have faith she could be forgiven. But this also says something about how Jesus

saw her. That Christ saw this woman for who she was trying to be, not who she had been. It was her current faith that defined her, not the way that others judged her. Not defined by her sins but defined by her love. That Christ sees us all as who we are striving to be instead of what we have done. He sees where we are trying to be even if we aren't there yet. He is there to welcome us with open arms and to set us free from all those things that hold us back. Because we all fall short of God's glory. We all fall short of what we should do at all times. While we are still striving to live the way we should live, we still need to be forgiven and to forgive. And that we should always be thankful for being forgiven and for being able to forgive.

So, I hope that we can all be more like Christ in how we respond to those seeking forgiveness. I hope that we can take inspiration to have faith as we seek to be forgiven. I pray that we are all able to seek grace and show grace to others. That we can be grateful for the way that we are forgiven while also being grateful that we can forgive. So that instead of our response being that of the Pharisee of judging others as unworthy, but instead applauding those who show faith and seek forgiveness. Because we must recognize our own need to be forgiven along with our need to be willing to forgive. That we grow closer to Christ when we emulate Christ. When Christ sits down to dinner and is approached by this woman that everyone else sees as unworthy, Christ lets her come close. Christ allows her to put her faith on display. Christ allows her to express her thankfulness. She is forgiven, and by her faith she is saved. May we all find faith of that strength. That beyond all fears of reproach that we seek to be forgiven and to forgive others. That instead of judging others as sinners unworthy of our time, that we see people as worthy of love, worthy of compassion, and worthy of grace. So that we may demonstrate the love of Christ to others. So that we may extend the grace that has been shown to us. That we may be more like Christ in how we care and how we demonstrate to others what that care truly looks like. That we may be thankful and faithful for all that our Savior is and has shown us. Amen.

**Prayer of Confession and Pardon:** God, you are with us even when we turn away from you. Guide us back into your loving arms. Judge us not by the perfection of our actions but show us mercy and love. We have strayed like lost sheep from your ways, failing both in what we have done and what we have failed to do. Bring us back into your fold that you may guide us and lead us in all things. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us and forgive us. May we walk in your love and trust your ways. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy upon you. May the Lord forgive all your sins and lift you up in love through Jesus Christ our Lord, and by the Holy Spirit keep you in life eternal. Amen.

**Offering:** If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed below. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

### **Lord's Prayer**

**Dismissal with Blessing:** May we go forth reflecting God's love in our lives as we go forth in the peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Our Current Series – *Dinner with Christ***

Our current series will be looking different times that Christ sat down to have dinner with people. Each interaction teaches us an important lesson about our Savior and ourselves.

June 12th – *Unexpected Guest* – Luke 7:36-50

June 19th – *Faith after Dinner* – Matthew 9:9-26

June 26th – *Unpleasant Table Talk* – Luke 11:37-52

**Prayer List**

Rev Charliam Renner	Bishop Frank Beard	Our Conference	Our Healthcare Workers
Patti Corder and the Greenup Ambulance Crew		Angie Veach	Eric Veach
Ed & Verna Titus	Henry Catey	Jake Kiser	Cindy Cisney
Nancy Hoke	Don Wells	Tricia Adkins	Don Stewart
Ronnie Winstead	Dwight Parsons	Lauren Stewart	Phyllis Gable
Sage Martin	Dalton McFarland	Ruth Ann Finley	Jodie Bunch
Tom Finley	Laura Carlen	Judy McCellan	Rosie Chancellor
Susie Callahan	Kenny Holmes	Ted Marrs	Darrell Quick
Chuck Hogan	Brittany Gilbert	Mammoser Family	Family of Albert White
Gary Pearce	Neal Ryan Family	Jackie Potter	
Richard Durham	Kathy Hanks	Wayne Carrell	Gary & Mary Winterrowd
Leo Smith	Bonnie Hite	Sue & Bob Smyser	Larry Thompson
Greg Williams	Family of Eloise Buffenmeyer	Martha Roberts	Charlie & Charlotte Baxter
Paul Schulte			

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