

Nick Davis: 6 March 2022

Saving Faith: Luke 7:36-50

(Sermon Summary)

This sermon is for people who are struggling, who fear they have gone too far in their sin and will never have assurance that they are saved. Many true Christians lack peace, and this affects the way they worship, pray, witness and serve the Lord. The good news is that all Christians can be assured that they are truly God's children, because we have been given the Holy Spirit. But we need to be careful - there is a dead faith which will lead only to condemnation. The contrast between Simon the Pharisee and the sinful woman who anointed Christ helps us to understand the difference between dead faith and saving faith.

Dead faith

Outward respect to Christ

Simon the Pharisee had invited Jesus to his home and was outwardly respectful. The Pharisees were fascinated with Jesus and His teaching, but they were blind to their own sin, ignorant of the Gospel and unwilling to come to Christ. Simon may well have wanted to boast about having a famous teacher in his home. Today people may say "I'm glad you have a faith that works for you" but in truth they hate what we stand for and will try to catch us out by raising contentious issues.

Wrong motives

Within the wider church there are people who have responded to a false promise of riches and blessings in this life. They want the blessings, not Jesus. Others are in church because they like the people, or have a nostalgic affection for the activities and traditions.

All this is dead religion. What are our motives in coming to church? A church is not a museum for dead, moral people but a hospital for needy sinners.

Self-righteousness

People today - even criminals - think that if there is a Heaven, they will go there and are OK on their own. Jesus came to seek and save lost, wretched, filthy sinners, not the righteous (Matt. 9:13).

A bruised reed He will not break

We are uncertain who the woman was; we just know she was a notorious sinner, a prostitute. She knew there was no hope for her in the religious system of the day: if tried for adultery, the only penalty was death. Jesus was her only hope. She may well have responded to His invitation "Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28). She cast her sin on Jesus and took up his easy yoke. Simon, on the other hand, didn't see himself as a sinner and felt no need for forgiveness.

Jesus, as God, had every right to judge the woman for her sins and stone her, as she had broken the Commandments. But he didn't - he embraced her. A broken and contrite spirit God will not despise (Ps. 51:17).

No-one who has saving faith thinks that they're a good person. If you realise your sin and shame, Jesus has come for you. He's not here for the religious person. If you come to Him with an empty hand, and know you are a sinner, He will not cast you out (John 6:35).

When we continue to sin

Suppose we keep letting Him down, committing the same sin? This doesn't mean you are not saved. If you confess your sin, he is faithful and just to forgive (1 John 1:9). Don't listen to the Devil's accusations - if you are battling with sin it shows that you are alive! Dead men don't know they're dead. If you are battling, Jesus says to you "Go in peace".

If we are weak in faith

Your faith is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8). If you can see the glory and riches of Christ, God has given you faith and he will complete the good work that He has begun in you (Phil. 1:6). Even if your faith is as weak as a spider's web, it will carry you over the lake of fire and into the arms of Christ.

Are you wondering whether you are a Christian? If you have come to the Cross as a broken sinner and can truly say "Nothing in my hands I bring, only to Thy

Cross I cling”, you have everlasting life. Jesus will not lose any who belong to Him (John 6:37-39); you can’t lose your salvation.

If you have called on His name, you have saving faith and everlasting life. So go and serve your King, live for Him, pray for others to be saved and be bold in your witness. If you haven’t yet come to Him, the arms of Christ are ready to receive you. Come to the waters; come and eat the bread of life (Isaiah 55:1). Then one day we will see Him in glory and cast our crowns before Him.