

04/24/22 @ BUCYRUS UMC

TITLE: HIS TOUCH LASTS

TEXT: LUKE 7:36-50

GOD'S WORD: JOHN 20:11-18

I – LAST WEEK'S RESURRECTION STORY:

Last week we celebrated the holiest of days in the Christian Faith...Easter. We recognize and celebrate others like Christmas, and even the days leading up to Easter as Maundy Thursday and Good Friday have a special place on our calendars too. But Easter is the crowning glory as we receive the Good News of Jesus' resurrection and how it affects our faith and our lives for all of eternity. Pastor Becky used the Easter morning reading from the Gospel of John and I want to look at it again the morning and see something else that's contained in the story.

You all know the story of the empty tomb and what happened that morning with angels and stones being rolled away. I want to look more closely at the actions of Mary Magdalene. She came to the tomb that morning alone and found the body of her beloved Jesus gone. She went and told others about it, then she came back as other disciples discovered the empty tomb themselves and then left. She was alone once more, standing outside the tomb alone crying and weeping. Her heart is broken. Her emotions are raw, she can hardly see through her tears and doesn't even recognize the two inside the tomb who speak to her are angels and she tells them why she's crying, because someone stole the body of her beloved Lord. So it's no surprise to me that she didn't recognize the man who's now standing outside the tomb and thought he may be the gardener. Imagine how desperate she is, how much harder her tears are flowing as she tells him that if he would just tell her where Jesus' body had been taken she would go and get him.

Then the part that I think tells a story we need to look at a little closer. A part of the story that tells me something about our relationship to Jesus. He calls her name and she recognizes him at that moment. That tells me that she knew Jesus well before this moment and that allowed her to recognize him and cling to him in her grief. We are led to believe by the rest of the story that her tears stopped and she was elated at seeing him again.

II – MARY MAGDALENE:

We know that Mary knew Jesus before this moment. We read in Luke 8:1-2 that:

Soon afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby towns and villages, preaching and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom of God. He took his twelve disciples with him, ² along with some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons;

She was touched and healed by Jesus as the other stories Pastor Becky has shared with you during lent.

After he healed her she became a close friend and disciple of Jesus. During Jesus' earthly ministry it was Mary along with other women who followed and cared for his needs. She was present during his trials and sufferings and was one of the ones who stayed and was near him during his death. When all of his other disciples fled because of their fear of the Jews, she stayed and watched Joseph of Arimathea bury him. After the Sabbath rest it was her who was returning with spices and perfume to anoint his body. And it was her who was the first to see the resurrected Jesus.

This all led up to her recognition and embrace of Jesus just because he called her name.

III – TEXT:

There is another story in the Bible that I think points this out even more. It's about a woman who publicly humbles herself to touch Jesus because he has touched her. The tradition of the early church was that this woman was Mary Magdalene...

Luke 7:36-50 (NLT)

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. ³⁷ When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. ³⁸ Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them. ³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She's a sinner!"

⁴⁰ Then Jesus answered his thoughts. "Simon," he said to the Pharisee, "I have something to say to you." "Go ahead, Teacher," Simon replied. ⁴¹ Then Jesus told him this story: "A man loaned money to two people—500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. ⁴² But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?" ⁴³ Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt." "That's right," Jesus said. ⁴⁴ Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn't offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You didn't greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not

stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume.

⁴⁷ “I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.” ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven.”

⁴⁹ The men at the table said among themselves, “Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?”

⁵⁰ And Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

Jesus has accepted an invitation to dinner at the home of Simon, the Pharisee, and as he is reclined at the table a woman comes into the room and kneels at the feet of Jesus. She has with her an alabaster jar of perfume that she intends to anoint Jesus’ feet with, but before she can pour it on his feet, her tears are flowing non-stop and making his feet wet. She then takes her hair and wipes his feet, which would have been covered with the dust of the road he had traveled to get to Simon’s home. Not a good job for a whole basin of water and a towel, but she does the job with her tears and her hair. She proceeds to kiss his feet and then pours the perfume on them as she continues kissing them.

Talk about a humbling thing to do. I have to wonder if even a tenth of you would do the same if Jesus himself walked in at this very service and seated himself on the step in front of the altar. I suspect not and unfortunately that tells me about our prior relationship with Jesus and how strong or weak it is. I’m sure we’d be afraid of the Pharisees in the church and how they would not receive our actions well and would condemn them as they taught us what proper church etiquette was as Simon did with Jesus.

But Jesus tells him that the woman was acting as she was because she was so overcome with her thankfulness at being forgiven her sins, which Jesus points out were many, and she can’t stop herself from this kind of devotion now. The rest of the Pharisees don’t care about the sinner finding grace or forgiveness, they just question the authority of

Jesus to build the Kingdom of God. Jesus then pronounces that because of her faith she has received Salvation as he gives her a Benediction.

IV – VIDEO:

It is no wonder that Mary was crying at the tomb of Jesus!

Let me share with you this morning a video of a song called “The Alabaster Box” by Ce Ce Winans.

PLAY VIDEO

V – YOUR TOUCH:

Jesus touched her and his touch lasted.

- You didn’t feel what I felt when he wrapped his love around me
- I was a prisoner to the sin that had me bound
- Until the day Jesus came to me and healed my soul with the wonder of his touch

So she washed his feet with tears, wiped them dry with her hair, and anointed them with perfume. And then she followed and served him and although heartbroken she recognized his voice in the midst of anguish and tears.

She was that overwhelmed by his forgiveness and love...are you? Do you still resonate with his touch on the day you found him? Has his touch lasted? Are you driven to tears by his grace?

I pray you have all been touched, that you remember that touch, and that you live that touch as Mary Magdalene has taught us.

If you haven’t felt that touch, please see Pastor Becky or I very soon.

AMEN