

*The Beauty of Repent: Turn to Jesus*¹ **He Changes Your Life**

Dear fellow forgiven criminals at the cross of Christ:

Introduction: What a change! For the worse – painful to see, hard to deal with:

- Young girl – bubbly to brooding...baggy, Goth music
- Young man – loved parents, church...wrong crowd, lying, drug abuse, hates church, loses life
- Alcoholic – refuses treatment, double addiction...ages 10:1, shocking

What a change! For the better – wonderful to witness, joy to experience:

- Employee – angry, burning out...seven days in Mexico: tanned, relaxed, at ease
- Young man – didn't care about homework, job, parents, couch video games...Marines
- Woman – walker, back pain...hospital: surgery pain-free, moving with ease

See again our unchanging Lord Jesus Christ: often ate with tax collectors and women of ill repute. Also accepted invitation to dine with Pharisees, this time the home of Simon the Pharisee.

I. Set the table: Place and Players

A. Simon the Pharisee

1. Not much known, religious professional
 - Don't know city, guest list, menu
 - Can guess Simon finding fault rather than feeding, questioning rather than quenching
2. The dinner – not much known, but...
 - Uninvited guest showed up...center of attention
 - ***“A woman....poured perfume on them.”*** (Luke 7:37f)
3. Simon's reaction: pure Pharisee
 - Woman – unmasked, uninvited, unappreciated
 - Jesus – can't be true prophet letting this moral disaster kiss his feet!

B. God's Son from heaven

1. Jesus' reaction: pure grace
 - † Parable of two debts
 - † ***“Now which of them will love him more?”***
 - † Simon unknowingly stumbles into Jesus' point: ***“I suppose...greater debt...”***
2. Jesus' point: Simon, the forgiveness of sins changes a woman!

C. Woman of the world

1. What we know about her: sinner, prostitute, hooker
2. Can we put ourselves in her sandals?
 - Did she ever shed tears of humiliation?
 - Crying to sleep for the mess she'd made of her life?
 - Loneliness while women her age in loving homes, protective arms of husband?
 - Hungry – dreading to do what she had to do to eat?
 - Abused, battered in risky life?
3. No one cared: another nameless sinner with plenty to cry about

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II. Results – change of heart, repentance?

- A. The sinful woman...saint
 - 1. Tears of sorrow → tears of thanksgiving
 - 2. Lips once adulterous → kissing Christ's feet in adoration
 - 3. Herself to highest bidder → highest gift of perfume on Jesus' feet
 - 4. Heart of a prostitute → heart overflowing with praise
 - 5. Woman of ill repute → home to her Father's house as dearly loved daughter
 - 6. Deep debtor → full debt of sin forgiven by Him who came to seek and to save the lost
 - 7. Her sermon silent, speaks volumes in tears and perfume, pure grateful love
- B. Simon the Pharisee
 - 1. Silent sermon on self-righteousness: plenty of judgment stored up, little love to show
 - 2. Contrasted with the sinful woman: barely acceptable welcome
- C. Our reaction: What is the sermon of our life? Who are we at the dinner party?
 - 1. Biblical high ground – forgiven prostitute!
 - When was the last time you...cried tears over sins and shame?
 - ...gave over the top gifts w/o Pastor's sermon?
 - ...stretched social norms in shameless love at work, university, friends, relative?
 - ...determined to see Jesus no matter what our past, people think, schedule?
 - 2. Accustomed to loving less? → Repent of love affair with Simon the Pharisee!

III. Return in Repentance

- A. Jesus said to her and YOU: ***“Your sins are forgiven....Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”***
- B. Jesus changes our tears of shame into thankfulness too.
 - 1. Ate dinner – invites to free banquet of salvation: ***“You prepare...overflows.”*** (Psalm 23:5)
 - 2. Anointed with precious perfume – anoints you with His holy, precious blood.
 - 3. Washed with tears – washes us in forgiving flood of baptism.
 - 4. Kissed feet – run good news, pure peace, sure salvation: ***“...your sins forgiven. Go in peace.”***
- B. Jesus' forgiveness changes everything in our lives.
 - 1. Selfish...to selfless: ***“Christ's love compels us...for him...raised again.”*** (2 Corinthians 5:14f)
 - 2. Grateful faith itches to express itself through love.
 - 3. Eyes see...Christian love sees...
 - a. ...church...special place to meet with God
 - b. ...order of service... opportunity proclaim forgiveness – pray, praise and give thanks
 - c. ...offering plate...opportunity for generosity
 - d. ...stranger...changed into object of concern
 - e. ...fellow members...brothers and sisters
 - f. ...another family's child...opportunity to teach and train in Christ
 - g. ...ministry...pure gospel opportunity

Conclusion: Faith's reaction to Jesus' forgiveness

- Not because the little Simon in us wanting to impress fellow Pharisees
- Not because we need to prove our worth to God or impress fellow man
- † We love our Lord and fellow man because in Christ we are forgiven, dearly loved.
- † Our faith in Christ's blood has *saved* us...*changed* us.... Young man changed over several weeks by drill sergeant. How much more we by never-ending love of Lord of universe!

In faith **Turn to Jesus; He Changes** everything about **Your Life**. All through Jesus! Always Jesus!
Only through Jesus! Amen.