

Summary

Prevailing cultural messages suggest that we need to do whatever it takes to be adored. The path to happiness, the idolatrous world system suggests, is to be so beautiful, powerful, or remarkable that others adore us, laud us and think much of us. But, in the kingdom, we discover that the opposite is true. Joy is not found in the adoration of others but in our own adoration of God. The adoration of God – esteeming Him above all else – brings delight to the soul because we are made for wonder.

The contrast is stark between the Pharisees (who wanted to be seen and adored) and this woman who wanted to adore Jesus. Hear and receive this invitation into a life of reflection and worship that gives adoration to God. The heart that is consumed with worship and adoration of God's beauty and glory forgets self and, in that self-forgetfulness, finds authentic life.

Getting to Know Each Other

1. When is a season in life that you have been full of wonder and consumed with the beauty of someone or something else? What was so awe-inspiring and engaging about the experience? What set it apart from other times in your life?

Read Luke 7:36-50

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table.³⁷ And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment,³⁸ and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner."

⁴⁰ And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."⁴¹ "A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.⁴² When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?"⁴³ Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly."⁴⁴ 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 wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet.⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.⁴⁷ Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little."⁴⁸ And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."⁴⁹ Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?"⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Getting Into the Bible

2. Take the time to read back through the text. What words would you use to describe the scene with the woman?

3. Compare and contrast Simon's theology with that of the woman; how do they see God differently? Themselves? Others? How did it inform the way they lived?

4. What does it say about Jesus that he receives this woman's adoration and affection? What strikes you about His response to Simon?

Application

5. How does this passage of scripture move you toward Jesus? What ways does it comfort and encourage you? Confront and challenge you?

6. The woman in Luke 7 reminds us of the heart of the More Blessed Stewardship Journey. It is not only "more blessed to give than receive" when it comes to money (although that is true). The saying is an all of life statement about our response to Jesus and His forgiveness. Consider and discuss how you can pour yourself out in worship to Jesus in some of the following areas:

- a. Musical worship
- b. Relationship to the vulnerable
- c. Marriage and family
- d. Work
- e. Stewardship of your home
- f. Care for the creation itself

7. As we conclude our More Blessed Stewardship Journey what are some of the most significant ways God has spoken to you in this series? What do you want to remember and how can your group pray for you?

Here are the title and texts for the sermons in the series if that would help you:

1. More Blessed to Give than to Get (Acts 20:32-35)
2. More Blessed to Praise than to Be Praised (Phil. 4:4-9)
3. More Blessed to Serve than to Be Served (Matt. 20:20-28)
4. More Blessed to Be a Friend than to Be Befriended (Acts 2:42-47)
5. More Blessed to Invest than to Possess (2 Cor. 9:5-11; Neh. 12:43)
6. More Blessed to Release than Control (Jacob narrative in Gen. 25-33)
7. More Blessed to Adore than to Be Adored (Luke 7:36-50)