

Life Group Notes
Sunday 20 May 2018

Speaker: Josh John

Series: Followers of Jesus

Title: Followers Who Worship

Passage: Luke 7:36-50

Metaphor

We can think that what is happening at our Sunday meetings is that: The band / anchor / speaker are the “performers, PA team are facilitators, congregation is the audience, that we get to decide if things are going well or not, if we will switch on to what’s happening, or if it’s not to our liking that we disengage. That we get to decide if we participate or spectate.

Reality is that: Band / anchor / speaker / PA team are facilitators, congregation are the performers & there is an audience of one, God. Who is watching us, examining our hearts, testing our motives.

Problem is that we have gotten the word worship muddled with singing. Singing is an outworking of worship, but it is just one outworking not the whole thing.

Worship is about surrendering ourselves to God through our words (that can be sung), through our actions, through our lives.

1. Simon The Pharisee

Simon didn’t grasp who Jesus was and resulted in a lack of honour being brought upon Jesus. Lack of honour = dishonour. Jesus is testing, examining Simon, knows he is not being honoured by Simon and brings it up.

Is Jesus the esteemed one of our hearts? Do our actions show our desire to bring honour to Jesus? Or is there a lack of action from us which brings dishonour to Jesus?

Actions alone aren’t enough for God. What God desires are actions that come from a heart that loves him, that has surrendered to him. (*Proverbs 16:2 & Jeremiah 12:3*)

2. The Woman

Only title given to the woman is “Immoral”. Luke doesn’t tell us her sin as that isn’t the point. What we are meant to grasp is that her sin, her reputation as a sinner preceded her (“*She’s a sinner*”)

This reputation was destructive, it ruined her life. She would have done anything to be rid of it. Somehow she ends up at Simon’s house. Did she hear him speaking and his words brought hope (“*come to me, those of you who are heavy laden and I will give you rest*”) or maybe she witnessed how he showed compassion to the broken and hurting. We see that she makes a choice to come to Simon’s house, to worship Jesus in an extravagant way. Jesus was watching, Jesus was examining her heart, testing her motives.

There’s a tension going on here. Jesus’ words aren’t “your worship has saved you” but “your faith has saved you”. But we can’t deny that there is something in how she demonstrated her faith, in how she extravagantly worshipped Jesus, that Jesus saw an active living faith. There is something in how Simon simply spectated, how there was no extravagant worship from him that Jesus saw an absence of faith.

James 2:17 reminds us that “Faith by itself isn’t enough, unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.” It is no good having a cerebral faith that produces nothing in us, that faith is dead. A living, active faith will always propel us to action, propel us to worship Jesus extravagantly, to surrender ourselves to him.

What was fuelling her to do this? Jesus parable (Luke 7:41-43) shows she recognised how high her debt of sin was & Simon didn't. This meant one loved much and one loved little. The bible is clear, our sin was great (Psalm 130:3) and we can't let ourselves get caught into thinking "it's only a few pieces of silver between friends". We need to remember we were in debt but Jesus has paid it all and let that fuel our worship.

Costly Worship

Worship is meant to be costly, It's meant to cause us to empty ourselves because we are building his throne and you can't build something at no cost.

We see an act of costly worship in 2 Samuel 6:12-13, where David weighs the enormous cost of worship to himself, to his people and decides God is worth it.

So too the woman weighs the costs of worship and she decides Jesus is worth it. She allows herself to decrease that he would increase. Jesus is once again watching, examining the cost of her worship.

At the end of the passage we see that her costly worship results in joy. Jesus turns to face her and he tells her that her sins are forgiven and that her faith has saved her. What joy would have arisen in her as she receives this public declaration of forgiveness, of an assurance of hope. So we too find forgiveness, acceptance, hope at the feet of Jesus, it is costly worship that brings us to his feet.

The incredible, scandalous thing is that God poured himself out for us. That Jesus, the precious son was broken for us, to cover up the stench of our sin. We were washed clean by his blood though we weren't an esteemed guest. We were given a holy kiss to show we were welcomed into the household of God when we should have been cast far away. He covered us in the perfume of his grace so we could carry his scent wherever we go. This is the God we serve, who calls us to worship him, in the light of who he is and what he has done isn't he worth it?

Questions:

1. What struck you about the metaphor and the difference between what we can think is happening and the reality of what is going on? That we are performers for the audience of one.
2. The woman's active living faith brought about extravagant worship, Simon's absence of faith brought about no worship. What is your faith in Jesus producing in you? If it's not what you want it to be why do you think that is?
3. Josh asked the question, what do you think your response would be if Jesus walked into the room? Would we look more like the woman or Simon? Get into groups and pray for each other to be filled with the Spirit, that he would help us to choose to be like the woman, that we would extravagantly worship Jesus.