Friday, January 16, 2009

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Make Church a Part of Your Life WEEKLY SERMONETTE "Because He First Loved Us"

By Jerry Cummings, Pastor of Living Hope Fellowship, Norton

began to weep, broke an mercy of God". expensive bottle of perwith her tears, kiss his feet, and dry them with her hair. This expression was received by the Pharisees and the disciples, about as well as it would be received in one of our church services today. She was harshly criticized for wasting something that could have been sold and given to the poor, and Jesus was criticized for letting a sinful woman have so much physical contact with His head and feet. But Jesus praised her actions as a wonderful expression of love.

Then Jesus turned to those in the room and explained that this woman had given this outpouring of love because she had been forgiven much. He taught them that those who are forgiven much, love much, and in turn, those who are forgiven little love little. It isn, t that she was a greater sinner than the rest, but she was far more in touch with

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In Luke 7 we read about thinking about this passage I of God's mercy, to offer your has shown us. The Father a woman who is simply am reminded of other scrip- bodies as a living sacrifice, gave his only beloved known as, "a sinner" who tures which show us that holy and pleasing to God this Son. Jesus gave his life. came into a room filled indeed the whole Christian is true worship". Paul does Wereceived total forgivewith religious leaders and life could be summed up as not tell them to offer their ness, along with eternal disciples of Jesus. She a "grateful response to the lives to God simply because life and so, so much more.

Romans 12:1 tells us, logical and grateful thing to is deeply impacted by the fume and began to anoint "Therefore, I urge you, do when we recognize the Jesus' feet, wash them brothers and sisters, in view greatness of the mercy God

What's in a Name?

People desire designer products because they have become known for style throughout the years. The "names" assure us of quality.

We, too, are known by our names. Mention of "John Smith" immediately inspires a positive or negative reaction, depending on the man's reputation. A good name is indeed our most priceless, and most perishable, possession.

There is one name we can always count on, the most hallowed name of all - God. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe." (Proverbs 18:10) Praise God's name in His house this week.

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|---------|---------|-----------|----------|---------|----------|
| Mark | Mark | Mark | Mark | Mark | Mark | Mark |
| 5.1-20 | 5.21-43 | 6.1-29 | 6.30-56 | 7.1-23 | 7.24-37 | |

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of a command, but as the The heart of the one who greatness of this mercy and love is moved to give themselves completely to God in a way that doesn't make sense to those who have been "forgiven little".

> Consider these verses: Ephesians 4: 32 "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

1 John 4:19 "We love because he first loved us."

1 John 3:16 "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers."

All of these verses speak of a response of love and surrender to the merciful actions of God through Jesus Christ. It is a grateful response. Rather than work at trying to be more surrendered, more loving, more obedient, maybe we need to spend more time refreshing our hearts in the reality of the great goodness of God shown to us in Jesus.

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how much mercy had been shown to her by Jesus. In

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GRASPING FORMS OF WORSHIP

Corporate Worship Takes Many Forms

Psalm 122:1, "I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD.'" The Holy Spirit moved the writer of Hebrews 10:25 to write, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing." The New Testament writer of the Book of Hebrews reminds us of our need to quicken and sharpen one another to do what is good and right. When one or more Christians choose to do their own thing and not fulfill their part of corporate worship, the Body of Christ becomes anemic in the ability to publicly proclaim all the works of Christ on this earth. (1 Corinthians 12:12-31) It is the will of God that we should worship in public ordinances that are in line with the Word of God. It should be our desire to stir up one another to go and worship the Lord through public worship services as well as individually.

The Holy Ghost has given many different gifts to the Body of Christ for the purpose of meeting the common good for all. (1 Corinthians 12:7) Each Christian has different gifts. One way of enjoying all that the Lord has for His children is to congregate and exercise those gifts as a corporate Body of Christ. Corporate worship takes many forms such as congregational services, Bible studies, fellowship dinners, group preparation for ministry, prayer meetings and working together to meet the needs of those going through some kind of trial. These are just a few of the ways the Lord has made for us to enjoy service to Him and to one another.

Choosing to walk in obedience to our exhortation to meet regularly for corporate worship enables us to over come that attitude that church is to please me, overcome that desire to punish God's people by withholding our presence, by withholding the exercising our Spiritual gifts and from holding a grudge against God because He did not gift us the results we thought we should have in our endeavors for the Lord.

Partaking in corporate worship in all the different forms offered equips us to enjoy all the Holy Spirit gifts, thus enabling the Body of Christ to be blessed, encouraged and united in purpose.

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7

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