

“LOVE: THE WORK OF FAITH”

The story in Luke 7, of the sinner woman who entered Simon’s home while Jesus was there, contains many lessons for us. One such lesson concerns faith. Jesus pronounced her forgiveness (v. 48) yet stated that His forgiveness was because of her faith (v. 50). The context reveals crucial aspects concerning faith that apply to every occurrence of salvation.

We read in Gal. 5:6, that salvation is a result of “...faith working through love.” This means that faith is to be exercised in acts of love. Faith is to be exercised by an alien sinner and by a Christian (cf. 1 Thess. 1:3). James repeatedly spoke of works through which faith is perfected (James 2:18, 20, 22). As we look at this sinner woman, we will see what this means.

Her faith in Jesus’ power to forgive her was shown by her acts of love toward Him. The washing, weeping and anointing of His feet were works of love, not merit. Jesus acknowledged of her, “she loved much” (v. 47). Her love and her faith were both perfected by these works of humility and serving. These acts of love were evidence of two things:

- 1) her unworthiness because “her sins were many” (v.47); and,
- 2) her belief that Jesus was the Son of God, as He claimed (John 5:36).

Jesus came to “call sinners to repentance” (Mark 2:17). Her acts of love evidenced her repentance. Her acts of love validated her belief that Jesus would show mercy to sinners by granting forgiveness (Matt. 9:13).

In ‘coming’ to Jesus we will exercise our faith in Jesus’ promise of life abundantly (John 5:40; 10:10). Thereafter, adding to our faith validates our faith in Jesus’ promise that doing so ensures our entrance into the eternal kingdom (2 Peter 1:5-11). That is faith working by love. Pardon is the reward for our work of faith, but pardon does not precede our work of faith. “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isa. 55:7). rb