

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading 1 2 Sm 12:7-10, 13

Nathan said to David: "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king of Israel. I rescued you from the hand of Saul. I gave you your lord's house and your lord's wives for your own. I gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were not enough, I could count up for you still more. Why have you spurned the Lord and done evil in his sight? You have cut down Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you took his wife as your own, and him you killed with the sword of the Ammonites.

Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah to be your wife.' Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan answered David: "The LORD on his part has forgiven your sin: you shall not die."

Reading 2 Gal 2:16, 19-21

Brothers and sisters: We who know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

For through the law I died to the law, that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

Gospel Lk 7:36—8:3 or 7:36-50

A Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him,

Reflection Questions

- Reading the passages slowly and reflectively, what word, phrase or idea strikes you in the readings? (circle or underline them)
- What do you think God is trying to say to you personally through these words?
- Imagine a great religious and political leader committing adultery and trying to cover up the pregnancy with the secret killing of the husband. This is actually what has happened with the great leader of Israel - King David (see 2 Sam 11). David moves from covering up to confession, with God's resulting forgiveness. What strikes you about God's forgiveness? The painful consequences of sin?
- King David is thought to have composed the famous Psalm 51 expressing heartfelt sorrow for sin. If you were to have a heart-felt conversation with God what words would you use? Use Psalm 51 to help you. Consider making use of the sacrament of confession this coming week. What obstacles do you need to overcome to experience God's waiting embrace?
- Paul is responding to a big question: Am I acceptable to God? Jewish people in the Galatian community were trying to convince new christian disciples they still had to observe all the Jewish laws to be 'right' and acceptable to God. Paul, who was a very law-abiding Pharisee cries No! Human frailty eventually breaks the law and observing 'laws' pales in comparison to what has been given in Jesus! God has

and he entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. Now there was a sinful woman in the city who learned that he was at table in the house of the Pharisee.

Bringing an alabaster flask of ointment, she stood behind him at his feet weeping and began to bathe his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner." Jesus said to him in reply, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Tell me, teacher," he said.

"Two people were in debt to a certain creditor; one owed five hundred days' wages and the other owed fifty. Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both. Which of them will love him more?" Simon said in reply, "The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven." He said to him, "You have judged rightly."

Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? When I entered your house, you did not give me water for my feet, but she has bathed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but she has not ceased kissing my feet since the time I entered. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with ointment. So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven because she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." The others at table said to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" But he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Afterward he journeyed from one town and village to another, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. Accompanying him were the Twelve and some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who provided for them out of their resources.

-come among us, taught us, forgiven us, revealed the resurrection to us. Faith is entering into the embrace of God's acceptance for us in Jesus. What is your response? How could you accept the 'acceptance' of God?
- Paul paints a powerful picture. I have been crucified with Christ....Imagine each day climbing onto the cross - arms extended in an embrace of our broken world - like Christ giving of his body and blood on the cross to heal the world. How could your arms be extended to embrace the world more?
- Some cultural information behind this parable is helpful for reflection. Hospitality was always to be shown to guests. Water to wash feet, hands. Perfume / oil to anoint one's head. Simon shows no hospitality to Jesus. Women were also conditioned only to show and let down their hair for their husband. The woman is showing very intimate actions of love toward Jesus. What now strikes you in this parable?
- Simon the Pharisee and the Woman who was regarded as a 'sinner' in the town are both struggling with who is 'acceptable to God'. The Pharisee thought only people keeping all the rules and laws were satisfying the 'purity' code of being 'clean' and therefore 'right' with God. Simon is horrified that Jesus allows a sinful woman to 'touch' him and thereby make him 'unclean'. What is Simon's deep theological problem?
- Imagine someone releasing you of a debt of a year and a half of your wages. Or 3 months of your wages. What would your feelings be? Would this experience find expression in any action? What is the greatest 'release' experience you have had. Did it change your lifestyle in any way?
- The quality and image of discipleship between the Woman and Simon is different. What attracts you? Why?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?