

YOUTH UNIT II: The Measure of Faith
YOUTH GENERAL LESSON TITLE: Faith of a Woman Who Loved Jesus

YOUTH TOPIC: Expressing Love and Faith

LESSON 8

DATE: April 21, 2024

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Luke 7:36-50

PRINT PASSAGE: Luke 7:36-39, 44-50

KEEPIN' IT CURRENT! (5 Minutes)

“All to Jesus, I Surrender” – What do Kodak Black and Daddy Yankee have in common? Yes, they are both entertainers. Kodak Black is a rapper, while Daddy Yankee is a Latin rapper and pop singer who has become popular in America. But there is something more important that they have in common. Both of them have expressed a desire to make a change in their lives out of their love and devotion to Jesus Christ.

Daddy Yankee is known for having popularized Latin pop in the United States. In the states, he is most known for his 2017 song “Despacito.” However, in 2023, Daddy Yankee posted a video to Instagram indicating that he was retiring from music to devote his life to Jesus Christ. During the final concert of his farewell tour, Daddy Yankee said, “Tonight I recognize, and I am not ashamed to tell the whole world, that Jesus lives in me and that I will live for him.” Apparently, Daddy Yankee had felt something was missing in his life, he’d been feeling empty. And so, Daddy Yankee who is claiming new birth in Jesus Christ will go by his birth name Ramón Ayala. Ayala indicated that he was ending one chapter and starting a new one.

Several years ago, Rapper Bill Kahan Kapri, also known as Kodak Black, announced that he had accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. At a gas station in Florida, two Christian ministers prayed for Kodak Black. A video recorded of the encounter shows Kodak Black praying the following prayer:

“I pray right now that you forgive me of all of my sins, and I receive your forgiveness and I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins and He rose from the dead. I accept you, Jesus, as my Lord and my Savior. Come into my heart, clean me up. Use me for your glory. I believe that if I was to die when I wake up, I will be in your arms. In Jesus’ name, I am saved. Amen.” (www.christianpost.com/news/kodak-black-accepts-jesus-as-my-lord-and-savior.html)

In today's society, most consider rappers to be less than desirable individuals, modern day sinners. (Rappers are no more sinners than is anyone else.) But Jesus was a friend to sinners, to especially those who demonstrated faith in him and love in their actions. In the case of Daddy Yankee, he has walked away from the fame and financial benefits associated with his music career. And, in the case of Kodak Black, he has publicly proclaimed his love for Jesus and his willingness to reject those things that are not like God. What faith!

KEEPIN' IT REAL! (5 Minutes)

- ▣ Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? On a piece of paper, write "Yes" or "No" and hand the paper to your teacher. The teacher should share the results of the poll in terms of how many students have and have not accepted Jesus Christ. (Students: You do not need to put your name on your paper, but you can if you'd like to. Teachers: If any student does provide their name indicates that they are not saved, please keep that information confidential. Please talk to them about their salvation status and pray with them privately.)
- ▣ How much do you love Jesus? How do you express it? What are you willing to give up for Jesus? Please discuss.

KEEPIN' IT BIBLICAL! (20 Minutes)

KEY VERSE: "Hence she has shown great love." Luke 7:47.

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. ³⁷And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. ³⁸She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner.'

⁴⁴Then turning towards 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 bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her

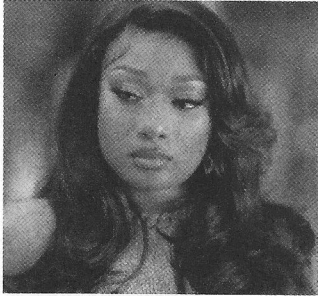
hair. ⁴⁵You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.' ⁴⁸Then he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' ⁴⁹But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' ⁵⁰And he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'

In order to really understand today's bible lesson, we must understand hospitality in Jesus' time, as well as the honor-shame culture in first century Galilee. First, hospitality, especially for travelers, was very important during Jesus' time. Remember, there were no Marriotts, Hiltons, or Holiday Inns in the first century. Yes, there may have been "inns" that amounted to a room available for travelers, but travelers really relied upon the kindness of others as they traveled. Second, within the honor-shame culture of first-century Galilee, a spiritual leader like a Pharisee would have been highly honored, while a woman, particularly one known to have sinned sexually, would have been at the bottom of the ladder, deeply shamed and avoided.

Jesus makes clear that the woman provided Jesus the hospitality that he should have been afforded by the Pharisee. The Pharisee failed to offer Jesus water to wash his feet, which would have been dusty and dirty from traveling. (v. 44b) But the woman washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. (v. 44c) Both were loving, intimate acts by the woman, which would have been taboo. Jesus goes on to say to the Pharisee, you did not greet me with a kiss, but the woman continually kissed my feet. (v. 45) The Pharisee's possible arrogance is juxtaposed against the woman's humility and love in the presence of Jesus. And finally, Jesus notes that the Pharisee did not anoint his head with oil, but the woman anointed his feet with ointment. (Note: There is a distinction between "oil" and "ointment" in 7:46.) Olive oil was typically used to cleanse and refresh traveling guests, but the woman brought a costlier and more valuable gift of ointment, likely scented with spices as an aromatic perfume. Thus, the Pharisee didn't even offer Jesus the bare minimum that hospitality would have called for, but the woman gave Jesus her best, that which was costly.

In today's bible lesson, we see taboos and social barriers being crossed when it comes to expressions of faith and love. As it was then and is now, often people of power and influence who fail to find the need to be faithful to Jesus and demonstrate love for Jesus. However, those on the margins of society often place all of their faith in Jesus and express their love for Jesus. That is why it is

so unusual when a powerful person is willing to give up the trappings of their cultural success to devote their lives to Jesus. The woman in our bible lesson was not concerned about whether it was appropriate for her to come into Jesus' presence, bathe his feet with her tears, dry his feet with her hair, or anoint his feet with costly perfume. She was giving Jesus' everything that she had and without regard to whether it was taboo or not. Yes, she and Jesus crossed the social boundaries and disregarded the taboos of her time, which demonstrates the courage shown by both the woman and Jesus, the woman's deep conviction and commitment to Jesus, and Jesus' love for those on the margins of society.



Even today, the woman's actions would be deeply uncomfortable (v. 38) and considered inappropriate in a public context, but Jesus ignores social taboos in favor of responding to (accepting) the woman's sincere gratitude and love (vv. 47-48). Imagine the woman in our text being replaced with Megan Thee Stallion or Cardi B. What would the societal reaction be? There would be an uproar, especially from those in the church. But Jesus would accept both Megan Thee Stallion and Cardi B just as they are, if their expression of love and faith toward him was sincere.

In the end, Jesus honored the woman and shamed the Pharisee. Yes, Jesus having been invited to the house of an honored member of society was itself an honor. However, Simon's lack of hospitality (a cause for shame in the first-century world) suggests some insincerity or ulterior motive in his invitation. Jesus' words shame Simon for his concern with status (vv. 44-46), but he welcomes and honors the woman's service that comes from a place of humility and truth (v. 47).

We must be careful about judging others, including those who are down and out and simply trying to find their way to Jesus.

KEEPIN' IT TOGETHER (5 Minutes)

In October 1999, Gospel artist CC Winans released her fourth album, which was entitled *Alabaster Box*. It was the first album that she released on her own label, Wellspring. She called herself experimenting before she signed artists to her label. The album did very well.

One of the songs on the album by the same name is "Alabaster Box," which is based upon what is recorded into today's bible lesson. A sample of the lyrics

include the following:

“Alabaster Box”

The room grew still as she made her way to the Jesus
She stumbles through the tears that made her blind
She felt such pain, some spoke in anger
Heard folks whisper, “There’s no place for her kind”

Still on she came through the shame that flushed her face
Until at last, she knelt before His feet
And though she spoke no words, everything she said was heard
As she poured her love for the Master, from her box of alabaster

What beautiful lyrics written by the song’s writer – Janice Sjostran. They perfectly capture the experience of one considered by sinners to be a sinner. Often we judge others as sinners, not recognizing our own sinfulness. We fail to recognize that Jesus came to forgive sinners, including those that we don’t think are worthy of God’s forgiveness. Yes, often we want God to forgive us for our sins, but to withhold forgiveness to those we don’t think are worthy of God’s forgiveness.

A real encounter with Jesus should make us want to express our love for and faith in Jesus. It can happen to Black Kodak. It can happen to Daddy Yankee. It happened to the woman in our bible lesson. And it can happen to you. In our lives, an encounter with Jesus will not happen just once, but repeatedly as we encounter Jesus on new and deeper levels.

iTHINK! (5 Minutes)

- ❑ Remember a time when you forgave someone and a time when you asked for forgiveness. Make a list of the emotions and thoughts you had in both instances. What was harder to do forgive someone or ask to be forgiven? Journal about it.
- ❑ The woman in today’s bible lesson showed her love with humility, Jesus forgave her sins; but the onlookers judged both of them. Update the story by creating a one act play, which shows how you would react to a similar situation.
- ❑ Using your medium of choice (for example paper and colored pencils) express graphically or verbally an experience of God’s forgiveness, including any gratitude you experienced from having been forgiven.