

Falling in Love with Jesus
Gifts I'd Give My Kids and God wants to give His.
Luke 7:36-50.

Intro:

Health Issues explained. **I'm not old, but life is brief. None are guaranteed tomorrow. The life we have lived the past year is proof of that.**

Opening illus:

In the Bressman household growing up, we celebrated Easter morning in a similar fashion to Christmas. All four of us children would come into the Living room, and there would be baskets full of candy, one for each of us. And a couple of small toys. We would go to church, and the pastor would preach hard that Sunday because there were people there who might not show up again for a while. (Probably Mother's Day or Christmas) The choir would sing, and it was a big day for them! The soloists were better, the music was better, and then we would go to a buffet after church or over to my Nanas house and eat lunch. Kind of a typical Easter growing up. One Easter, my sisters and I got to pick out colored chickens that they somehow dyed like easter eggs, and I picked out a blue baby duck FRED the DUCK. He grew up, and we took him to the farm of a friend.



Easter has changed from those simple times. As a child, I focused on gifts, but Christmas and Easter changed when I became a Father. You who are parents know what I mean. I remember one such holiday when my kids were small that I started thinking —

What do I really want to give my kids?
What things could I give them in life?
What do I hope to instill in them as their father?

I remember sitting down and writing out a list of 100 things that I want my kids to learn from me and it eventually became a series of posts on my personal blog at www.bobbybressman.org. This also became the seed thought for this series. What are the eternal Gifts I want to give my kids? I'm not talking about things you can go to the store and buy. Certainly NOT FRED THE DUCK.

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Now I'm not holding myself up as an example because I am not a perfect father. I have buttons that can be pushed, and my kids know how to push them.

So, I asked, "Lord, what would You want for us as your children to have?" So, this list of 100 things were narrowed down to a few of the same things that our Heavenly Father wants for me—and what He wants for us as a church. These things in this series should be at the core of who we are as a church. Grace, Love, Passion, Acceptance, Respect, Relevant, Creative, Teachable, Honor, Patience. The first gift is paramount. It is the best!

The 1st—and this is the best gift of them all— I wanted my kids to grow up having a life of total surrender to Jesus—I want them to fall in love with Jesus.

ALL THE OTHER GIFTS HINGE ON THIS ONE:

Now, let me be clear—I don't want them to fall in love with a just doctrinal truth or denomination, but a Person and that person is Jesus Christ!

I don't want my kids to merely be religious; I want them to fall in love with Jesus.

If Christianity is dull and boring, if it is a burden and not a blessing, then most likely, we are involved in a project, not a Person—a system, not a Savior—rules, not a relationship.

I want my kids to Fall in love with Jesus!

God doesn't just want our religious interaction but a relationship! He wants you, and not just your wallet or attendance card.

That is why I stress so much that you can be a church member and not know Jesus. Your relationship with him trumps your religion.

—I want my kids to know and experience a relationship with Jesus centered in a daily walk and relationship with Him!

Your eternal salvation and present joy are not centered in the fact that you walked the aisle, said a prayer, and got wet.

—I want them... and you to be sure of your salvation because of your relationship with Him RIGHT NOW!

Without a personal relationship, we will have reduced a life of surrender to Jesus as a list of rules and regulations that are to be followed. If I can just cut God in occasionally—I'll be ok.

The story we will cover today is illustrative of that.

One Easter, we had all received skates. Not the good ones that you lace up but the cheap ones that you cinched over your shoes. Some of us kids decided to play skate limbo. Go down the hill

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outside the house, and we had a tree branch that we competed with to see who could go under the lowest.

We all got our skates on. I had one cousin who kept changing the rules!

The one who held the branch controlled the game.

Many people treat Jesus like a limbo game—we want to know how far we must go before we lose? We spend our time playing a game and trying to match up to everyone's expectations and rules of what it means to be a "good Christian." I think that is a gift that God desires to give each of us—to get out of the limbo line.

That was the Pharisees in Jesus' day. They were all about rules and regulations—they controlled the limbo bar—The problem was, God was not interested in all their outward obligations if He didn't have their heart!

Listen to what Jesus told the people in the limbo line:

"Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.'" Matt 23:5-7

Everything they did was for people to see. Phylacteries—boxes. They wanted to be noticed for how religious they were.

The Pharisees had a heart problem. They made sure they played the game well enough for everyone to see—but God did not have their heart.

They chose FRED THE DUCK instead of the true meaning of why Jesus was there.

There is a great story that illustrates this in Luke 7:36-50—READ.

Luke 7:36-50. New International Version

36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. **37** A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. **38** As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. **39** When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

40 Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

41 "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. **42** Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

43 Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."

48 Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

49 The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

50 Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

[Application overview:](#)

This is an interesting situation: we have all the people that were seemingly always winning at the game of religious limbo—doing all the religious stuff. They had set the bar. They had followed all the rules. They had memorized, studied, and played the part. Most of us would have cowered at the tower of religious power in that room. Then, among them, and uninvited, they have a woman come in who they don't even let play the game because she is such a sinner!

And this Pharisee, (Simon) who thinks he is so important by the religious acts he carries out that he ignores Jesus who was an invited guest—and it was customary for several things to be done in that situation in this culture.

EXPECTATION OF THE ROOM

It was expected when you have a guest to either personally or have a servant:

1st—greeted w/ kiss.

- of equal social rank—kiss their cheek.
- If you are of higher social rank, like a child or student—kiss the hand—expresses honor.
- To not do this—would be rude at best.

2nd—washing feet. Feet were dirty and exposed—not appetizing at the table.

- If the person was a really honored guest—you would do it yourself.
- If the guest was of lower-ranking—you would have a servant do it.
- At the very least—the host would offer bowl to do it themselves.

3rd ---Finally—anoointing w/ oil—usually olive oil.

Jesus was invited as a guest and was given nothing—no kiss, no washed feet, no anointing. This is more than socially rude it was a slap in the face.

Simon the Pharisee—as Jesus noted later—was more interested in his seat at the table than expressing love and kindness to Jesus.

RESPONSE OF THE WOMAN

Then, the woman appears—all it says is she is a sinner—which means that she was a prostitute and well known for her occupation.

- She had heard Jesus' teaching-struck chord in her.
- Jesus had touched her heart and not her body.

She was not invited to dinner but shows up anyway.

- She had Watched as Jesus snubbed by Simon—she can't stand it—so she decides to do something about it herself.
- She knows she can't give Jesus a proper kiss of honor—It may be misinterpreted because of who she is. So, decides to kiss His feet—a sign of complete humility.

Imagine the drama—everyone watching—This woman kneels and kisses his feet. She looks up and sees in Jesus's eyes not judgment or embarrassment—but love and acceptance. She hasn't seen that look in man's eyes in a long time, if ever. Jesus's love for her wasn't as an object of pleasure. She knew her love for Him was not one to be hidden in darkness. As a result, her tears begin to flow, a few at first, but then overflow. Tears of gratitude because Jesus is offering her acceptance at first. He didn't treat her like the others. But then wait..... there is more! Forgiveness. Tears of joy because she sees she can live a whole new life.

Now Jesus' feet that were unwashed by Simon are drenched in her tears.
"How do I dry them?" There is no use asking Simon for the towel—so she lets down her hair.

This was shocking because, in that culture, a woman never let down their hair in public especially in mixed company. It would have been considered too provocative. She knew that everyone there knew her profession. They all knew she had let her hair down many times for many different men for money.

Now, she does it one last time, overcome with emotion; she doesn't want anyone to misconstrue her action. This time she gets it right! She lets her hair down as an act of devotion and dries his feet. She thinks, "I'll anoint him."... She had an alabaster jar of ointment that was probably her most expensive possession. She emptied it all on Jesus.

Can you see her in that room and imagine her beginning to wonder how her life ended up like this—because no little girl ever dreams of growing up like that. She remembers that she was the pride and joy of her parents at one time, but now everyone knows her simply as a sinner.

But Jesus seemed to communicate to her that even in the midst of her sin, she was loved by God. She realized that He knows all about me and still loves me.

SIMONS RESPONSE

Simon can't stand it! He thinks that if he really was all they say He is (a wise man, prophet, rabbi), He would surely know the type of person and who this woman is. He shouldn't touch her with a 10-foot pole!

Jesus knows this woman—Jesus also knows Simon.

JESUS'S REPSONSE

"Simon, do you see this woman?"

- Simon did not see this woman as anything other than a SINFUL WOMAN.
- Simon just saw a theological object lesson of who he despised.
- Simon saw a nobody who was way beneath him.
- She was a SINFUL WOMAN who he wanted out of his house, someone he would rather not even breath the same air as him.
- She was just someone who doesn't perform in HIS LIMBO LINE and follow all the rules he established—he DOESNT SEE HER!

"Simon—did you give me water, much less wash my feet?"

- She bathed in her tears, dried w/ hair.
- Simon, you not even greet me at the door.
- She hasn't stopped kissing my feet since she got here.
- You didn't anoint my head with oil—but she anointed my feet with the costliest thing she could give!

Therefore, I tell you, Simon, Limbo line leaders—her sins—which are many—are forgiven. Imagine what this does for this woman—to know God is ok with her—clean before God.

THIS IS EASTER!

Jesus didn't just atone for our sins. He didn't just cover them like the old testament sacrifices. He removed them from us.

Simon thought of himself as the one who had it all together because he followed all the rules. He looked at the woman and thought—why can't she be more like me? More righteous? More in control?" SIMON is filled with judgment and superiority.

HERE'S THE SHOCKING THING!!

Jesus doesn't say—Woman—you now need to be more like Simon. No, He says—Simon, you need to be more like this woman!

You see, a sin did define the room that day—but it was not the sin Simon thought it was. It was this sin of lips that wouldn't kiss, and knees that wouldn't bow, and tears that wouldn't flow, and eyes that didn't see, and a heart that does not love.

Simon, don't you see it?!

God does not want your religious duty and obligation! He wants your heart! He wants you to absolutely fall in love w/ Him.

If I could give a gift to my kids, my church, myself—that we would fall in love w/ Jesus.

We would see that God does not care how much you attend church or how Baptist you are, or Methodist, or any other “ist”—He wants you to love Him.

And let me tell you something:

—when you love Jesus, all the duties take care of themselves! But it is entirely different because your motivation has changed—doing out of love, not trying to meet the expectations of the limbo line! When you focus on the duties, you have substituted something else for Jesus.

SOME PEOPLE SPEND ALL THEIR TIME GOING THRU THE RELIGIOUS LIMBO LINE—WHEN ALL THE WHILE JESUS IS SAYING—GET OUT OF THE LINE AND COME LOVE ME—FULLY SURRENDER TO ME!

Remember the commercials where the kids would say, "When I grow up, I want to be edged out of middle management."

- If the life you live right now isn't the life you know, God created you to live. It begins with wholeheartedly falling in love with Jesus. He can work with that. It starts with a relationship with Him.
- Many have a religion but no relationship.
- Religion will not get you to heaven nor lead to joy here on earth. A relationship with Jesus will do both.
- We are saved by grace, not works.
- Share my testimony: Summer of 1984, Union Stadium. I had been religious but learned grace. I was transformed by grace.
- Are you willing to fall in love with Jesus so that he can work on the other stuff in life?