

MARY AT THE FEET OF JESUS



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BELOVED CHILDREN—I wish you to suppose that we are in Capernaum, in the house of Simon the Pharisee, witnessing the scene recorded in the 7th chapter of Luke. Suppose that you see Simon reclining at the table, looking and speaking like one who thinks very highly of himself. But who

is this other person near Simon, on whom all the company are gazing so earnestly, and to whose every word they eagerly listen? Who can this be? Is he some great prince who has come to visit Simon? No: that cannot be; for there is no crown on his head, no mark of rank about his person. Nor is he a rich and powerful citizen; for he is not clothed in fine linen and purple. He seems more like a homeless wanderer than a man of wealth; more like a servant than a ruler. Who, then, is this? Let us ask some of those who knew him well.

John the Baptist, who is this?

Answer: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1: 29.

Paul, who is this?

Answer: He who is "the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person." Heb. 1: 3.

Ye Pharisees, his foes, who is this?

Answer: "The friend of publicans and sinners." Luke 7: 34.

If we ask his Father, who knew him from eternity, before time began, Who is this? a voice from the high heavens answers, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased; hear ye him." Matt. 17: 5.

If we ask himself who he is, he tells us, "I am

the good Shepherd; and I lay down my life for the sheep." "I am the door; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved." John 10.

Now, dear children, do you know who he was that sat at Simon's table on whom all looked, to whom all listened? It was Immanuel—God's beloved Son—the living, loving, lowly Jesus. Oh, try to get well acquainted with this real, living Jesus. Go through and through your Bibles searching for him till you have found him. If you once knew Jesus aright, you could not help loving, trusting, and serving him with your whole heart.

Think much, dear children, about this *living* Jesus. Think of the meaning of his beautiful names—Jesus, Immanuel, Christ, Lamb of God, Wisdom, Truth, etc. Think much of his being God, and of his being man; about his power, holiness, meekness, love, and mercy; and about his beauty, glory, and excellence.

Think much of his *words*. Think, too, of his *work*—of his life of well-doing, and his death of agony. Think of his coming quickly. Think much also of *his wrath*. Be constantly putting this question about Jesus to your own heart, Who is this? till you can answer, "This is *my* Saviour and *my* God," the Lord *my* righteousness, and *my* strength. Do not rest till you can say, "This is *my* beloved," he in whom *my* soul delighteth.

But there was another person in Simon's house that night upon whom I wish you to look. She is "a woman of the city, which was a sinner." Mary was a lost sheep; she had gone astray. She had a hard, stony heart, full of all manner of deceit and wickedness, and not one spark of love to God. She loved to sin, and hated the holy law of God, because it condemned her sins, and threatened to punish her. She was a vile, rebellious, and ruined sinner.

But think, dear children, *of Mary's faith*. Mary was sitting in her own house; she hears some one say that Jesus is at meat in Simon's; this makes her heart leap within her; she arises instantly, and is on her way to the Pharisee's house, making all haste. But see, there is a great crowd round Simon's door: how is this weak woman to make her way through them? See, she has entered the noisy throng, and by pushing and striving, she has forced her way up to the door. Nor does she stop to think whether Simon will be displeased with her for coming to his house. She knew well that the Pharisees, when they saw her coming in, would frown upon her; for they all knew she was a sinner. But she heeds not their angry looks; she advances and places herself at the feet of Jesus; she would let nothing keep her from coming to him.

Perhaps some of you are wondering how Mary knew Jesus, and what drew her to his feet. Surely she had seen or heard about Jesus before. Jesus was often in Capernaum where Mary lived, and preached the gospel there. If you had been standing, on a certain day, among the crowd that was hearing Jesus preach, you might have seen this woman among the rest; and you would have seen, from the way she was listening, that the words of Jesus were entering her heart. Mary would, no doubt, hear Jesus say, that he "came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" or similar words. She would hear the Pharisees say, that Jesus was the "Friend of publicans and sinners."

The gospel of Jesus was glad, glad tidings indeed to poor Mary's soul: she had never heard such gracious words before. The words of Jesus entered Mary's heart, for they were words of mercy and kindness. At first, perhaps, she could scarcely believe them to be true. Is it possible, I think she might say in her heart, that the holy Jesus came to seek and to save lost sinners like me? Will he really receive, forgive, love, and save *me*—a woman whom every body knows to be a sinner? But when she saw Jesus receiving other sinners as bad as herself, she felt that this good news must be true; and she resolved to throw herself

at this Saviour's feet. This is where we find her. She heard, and she believed; she believed, and she came to Jesus; she came, and was saved.

Dear young people, come you, like Mary, and cast yourselves at the feet of Jesus. The gospel which was good news to her, is also and as much good news to you. In his word, Jesus is entreating every one of you to come to him and be saved. Why not take Jesus at his word? Come, and you may be sure he will receive you joyfully, for he will not bid you come and then cast you out. His blood is as able to wash every one of you from all your sins, as to wash Mary. Do not forget, that every moment you keep away from Jesus you are within a hairbreadth of hell. It is a dreadful thing for any sinner to perish at all, but it makes it a thousand times more dreadful when he perishes rejecting and despising a full, free, finished salvation. The sinner who *thus* perishes may be said to wade to hell through the blood of God's beloved Son.

Oh, that not one of you, my dear children, may so perish, make all haste to come to Him that "receiveth sinners." Let nothing keep you from coming to him. Do not linger, asking whether you *ought* to come, or whether you are *able* to come, or whether you are *ready* to come; but arise at once, without doubt or delay, and flee to Jesus.

Do not stay away till you have made yourselves ready, or think yourselves ready to come, but come to him just as you are—with all your sin, your blindness, your hardness and unbelief of heart. *Whoever* you are, *whatever* you are, the sin-forgiving Jesus will make you welcome, if you come to him; yea, he is calling upon every one to turn to him and be saved, and promises to cast out no returning sinner. Rev. 22:17.

Children, strive to enter in at the strait gate—strive with all your heart. As there was a crowd at Simon's door, through which Mary had to press her way, so there is always a loitering crowd standing about the door of the kingdom of heaven. Some are ashamed to go in, some are afraid to go in, others wait a more fitting time to go in; but most neither want to go in themselves, nor let others in.

Think, dear children, of *Mary's repentance—of her tears*. Why did Mary stand at the Saviour's feet and weep? Mary knew that although Jesus was full of compassion, he was also holy; and she felt that she was unworthy to touch or look upon him; therefore she stood behind at his feet, and poured out the fulness of her broken heart in weeping. Simon took his place at the table beside Jesus; and despised him for letting Mary touch him. *She is a sinner*, he said; meaning by

that, that *he* himself was not a sinner. Simon did not feel himself to be vile and guilty, and he therefore felt neither shame nor sorrow. He was proud of his almsgiving, his prayers, and his zeal and care for the laws of Moses, and no doubt supposed that Jesus was as well pleased with him, as he was with himself. Poor, deluded Simon! Mary knew herself and Jesus better, and when she thought how vile her soul was, how many and great her sins were, her heart melted like wax in the presence of the holy Jesus. All the reproaches of the Pharisees, all her fears of God's wrath, could not soften and humble Mary's hard heart, but it could not resist the power of the love of Jesus. It was this loving-kindness that brought Mary's sins to mind—it was this that showed her how wicked it was to rebel against such a Lord; and the more she thought of his love, and of her many sins, the deeper was her shame and sorrow, the faster fell her tears. She stood and wept, and wept again. Yea, she wept till her tears washed the feet of the tender, compassionate Jesus.

Think, dear children, which of these two, Simon or Mary, was happiest at that moment? Are you, like Simon, proud and whole-hearted; or, like Mary, broken-hearted and humble? Mary had never been so happy as she was when standing weeping at the feet of Jesus; for there is no joy

like the joy that fills the heart of a returned, contrite sinner. She who stood that night behind Jesus weeping, now dwells with him in glory; while the proud, impenitent Pharisees are gnashing their teeth in outer darkness.

Dear children, lay yourselves at the feet of Jesus, and weep; look upon him whom you have pierced, and mourn. Learn *why* you are to weep—because your sins have wounded, pierced the heart of the loving, holy, and blessed Jesus.

But see *where* you are to weep—at the feet of Jesus, the sin-pierced Immanuel against whom you have rebelled, and from whom you have departed. Mary came to the feet of Jesus, and when she thought of his grace and love, and her own sinfulness, her heart was overcome with shame and sorrow. It was the forgiving love of Jesus that melted and humbled Mary. And it is only this that can melt and humble you. A broken heart is what God delights to see in a sinner; it is the only offering he will receive at his hands, Psalm 51 : 17; but a broken and a contrite heart can only be got by looking on a crucified, dying Saviour. Zech. 12 : 10.

Think, dear children, of *Mary's acceptance by Jesus*. How did Jesus then receive Mary? Did he turn round in anger and rebuke her for coming to him or touching his feet, and push her rudely

away? If Mary had mistaken Simon for Jesus, and placed herself at his feet, what, think you, would he have done? *He* would have frowned on the poor sinner, and shrunk from her polluting touch; the vile, guilty Mary could expect nothing but hard looks and harsh words from the Pharisee. It was not so with Jesus. There was no anger in his heart, no scorn in his eye, no bitter reproach upon his lips. I think I see the sweet, inviting smile that spread itself over the countenance of the holy Jesus when he saw Mary coming in; and the kind, heart-melting look he cast upon her when she placed herself at his feet. Who can tell how the heart of Immanuel filled and swelled with yearning pity and love when he felt Mary's warm tears falling fast, fast upon his weary feet?

Dear children, learn from this the great love with which Jesus loves sinners, and how willing, how ready he is to forgive all that come unto him. If the Spirit of God speaks to you in this story, what he says to each of you is this: "You need not, you should not remain an unforgiven, unsaved sinner another day—another hour." The example of Mary calls upon every one of you, and encourages you, to come immediately to Jesus; it shows you that he receives sinners gladly, that he delights in mercy, and is not willing that one of you little ones should perish.

And must it be said of any of you that Jesus is willing to receive you, but you are not willing to come? Is he ready to forgive, and are you not ready to be forgiven? Remember, that although Jesus now sits on his throne in the heavens, he is the very same Jesus as when he sat at the Pharisee's table; his heart is still full of pity for perishing sinners. Why, then, should you be afraid to come? Why, O why should one of you perish? Turn ye, turn ye, while the arms, the heart of Jesus are open to receive you. If his mercy fails, where will you find mercy?

And not only come yourselves to Christ, but bring every one you can with you. Jesus will receive and pardon twenty or a hundred, if they come to him, as willingly as he will receive and pardon one; for he receives all that come to him. John 6:37. Try to persuade your parents, your little sisters and brothers, your companions, and every one you know, to come to Jesus and be saved. Show them how Jesus received Mary, and tell them he is the "Friend of sinners" still. It would be dreadful to have a tender parent, or a loving brother, burning for ever in the lake of fire. Oh, then, keep always pointing them to Jesus; take them by the hand, and entreat them to come; pray for them, and beseech them, day and night, with many tears, to come to Jesus. Happy, hap-

py the boy or girl who brings a father or mother, or any other soul, to Jesus to be saved; they will shine like stars in the kingdom of glory for ever and ever. Dan. 12:3.

Think, dear children, of *Mary's love to Jesus*. We are told, that Mary washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, wiped them with her long hair, kissed them, and anointed them with ointment. And why all this? It was all done to show how very much she loved Jesus for loving and forgiving such a sinner. She loved much, because she had been forgiven much. Simon had rudely neglected to give Jesus water to wash and cool his wearied feet; the loving Mary thought herself honored in being permitted to bathe them with her gushing tears. Simon gave Jesus no kiss; but Mary thought herself blessed in being permitted to kiss and anoint his very feet. Oh, how Mary loved Jesus! Oh, how unspeakably precious and excellent he was in *her eyes*.

My dear children, if you come to Jesus confessing your sin, and receive from him a full forgiveness, you will then be able to love him who *first* loved you; and loving him, you will keep all his holy commandments. The more you see of your own vileness, your exceeding sinfulness, and the greatness of the love of Jesus in freely forgiving so much, the more humble and holy will you be.

The forgiving love of Jesus will make you hate and forsake all iniquity.

Think, dear children, of *Mary's joy*. We read that Jesus said to Mary, "Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace." These were sweet, sweet words to the ear of Mary: sweeter than sweetest music. They filled this sinner's heart with peace and joy. Mary could now go home and sleep in peace—undisturbed by the fear that she should open her eyes in the place of everlasting torments. God was no longer her enemy, but her friend; she could now look up to him, and say, "Abba, Father." She could live in peace, and die in peace; for her soul was saved. The angels were now singing their songs of praise over Mary's ransomed soul. The heart of God the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, was made glad by her salvation. Luke 15.

Dear children, have you felt any thing like Mary's peace and joy? Are your souls saved? Are your iniquities taken away? I do not ask if you hope to be saved, but *are* you saved *now*? Are you believing and trusting in Jesus at this present moment? If you are, you will have peace and joy, like Mary. I wonder how any man or child can eat and drink, sleep and make merry, till he is sure he is pardoned and saved. Let me earnestly entreat you, my dear children, that not

one of you will be so foolish, so wicked, as to go on from day to day, and month to month, without knowing whether God is at peace with you or not—whether you are forgiven or not—whether you are the children of God or the children of Satan—whether you are running fast to hell, or on the road to heaven. Oh make sure of your salvation; take no rest, no peace, till you can say, “Abba, Father,” and your heart is full of peace and joy in believing in Jesus “the Friend of sinners.” *Cleave to Jesus—cleave only, cleave always to Jesus—cleave to him with full purpose of heart.*

Now, dear children, let me, in conclusion, entreat you to make yourselves well acquainted with Jesus and with Mary. Go often to the house of Simon the Pharisee; that is, read over and over again this story in the 7th chapter of Luke. Never tire gazing on Jesus, the friend that receiveth sinners, till, like Mary, you have been brought to his feet, till you have repented like Mary, till you are pardoned like Mary, till you love like Mary, till you can rejoice like Mary, and until you and I meet Mary at the right hand of Jesus in glory.

That I may not find one of you on the left hand at the day of judgment, with those that perish, is the earnest prayer of your attached friend,

J. DRUMMOND.