

FRESH START

JANUARY 23, 2022

EXPERIENCING GOD'S RESTORING POWER

PRECEPT

LUKE 7:36-50

³⁶ One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to eat with Him. Jesus went to the Pharisee's house and was eating at the table. ³⁷ A woman who lived a sinful life in that city found out that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house. So she took a bottle of perfume (alabaster jar) ³⁸ and knelt at His feet. She was crying and washed His feet with her tears. Then she dried His feet with her hair, kissed them over and over again, and poured the perfume on them. ³⁹ The Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this and thought, "If this man really were a prophet, He would know what sort of woman is touching Him. She's a sinner."
(READ THE REST OF LUKE 7:40-50)

PROMISE

The enemy can often use shame and guilt to slow us down in our spiritual journey and draw us away from the Lord. We might also have a hard time overcoming these feelings of shame and guilt because we dwell on thoughts like "I don't matter," "I will never be enough," or "I cannot do it." These are destructive thoughts that can result to discouragements, insecurity, and us becoming stagnant, and may also hinder us to grow and be effective for His Kingdom.

In the story of Luke 7:36-50, a woman who has lived a sinful life came to see Jesus in the Pharisee's house and washed His feet with her tears and dried it with her hair. She kept kissing Jesus' feet and has even poured perfume on it. Her great love for Him was shown and her sins were immediately forgiven. From this story, we can observe how God does not condemn us of our past sins but restores us fully if we wholeheartedly ask for His forgiveness, listen to His voice, and follow His guidance.

We are to leave behind our past sins and mistakes and learn from all of these lost opportunities, wrong decisions, and past errors. This year, let us listen to God's voice and follow Him. Whatever the world might say about us, let us be reminded of who we are in the eyes of our Almighty and loving God:

YOU ARE MY CHILD. 1 John 3:1 tells us, "*Consider this: The Father has given us His love. He loves us so much that we are actually called God's dear children. And that's what we are.*"

YOU ARE SPECIAL. 1 Peter 2:9 declares, "*But you are God's chosen and special people. You are a group of royal priests and a holy nation. God has brought you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*"

YOU CAN DO IT. Philippians 4:13 proclaims, "*I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who strengthens and empowers me [to fulfil His purpose; I am ready for anything through Him who infuses me with inner strength and confident peace.]*"

Let us entrust to God whatever it is that we desire to accomplish this year. He will empower us to fulfil His purpose for us according to His will and for His glory.

PRACTICE

1. God's Voice. What is one area in your life that you are specifically struggling to hear the voice of God? What do you think makes it hard for you to hear Him? (Unresolved hurt, anger, sin, etc.)

2. Recognize His Voice. The enemy often tries to lure us away from the safety of our heavenly Father. What are some ways for us to better train ourselves in recognizing the difference between God's voice and the enemy's voice speaking lies into our lives?

PRAYER

I. Discipleship

- Pray that the head of each household will disciple and influence their family.

II. Evangelism

- Pray that we will all take part in reaching the lost and sharing the Gospel to others.

III. Nation

- Pray for our nation and our leaders; that we may become a nation that loves God.

IV. Government

- Pray that our leaders will be true servants of the people and be protected from greed.

V. Missionaries

- Pray for protection & wisdom for our missionaries as they continue the Lord's work.

VI. God's Word

- Pray that our church will commit to His Word and walk in His wisdom and humility.

VII. God's Will

- Let us all pray, "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God." (Ephesians 5:27)