

Christ Lutheran Church

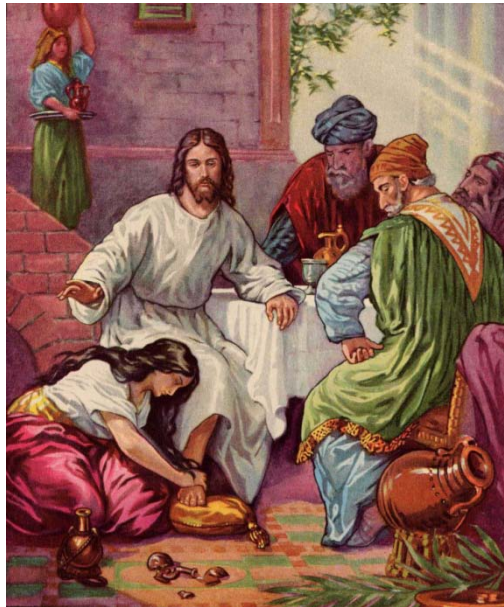
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February 2018

The woman just could not help herself. As the crowd watched with astonishment, she rushed forward with a jar of perfume, fell on her knees weeping, *“and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.”* Some of the onlookers rolled their eyes, muttering. Didn't Jesus know what kind of woman this was, making such a shameful show with unfurled hair and sobs at His feet?

The Savior knew why she showed such love: *“her sins, which are many, are forgiven”* (Luke 7:38, 47). This woman had lived a notoriously sinful and immoral life. She knew she could not help herself. She felt her guilt; she knew her well-deserved condemnation. But the Holy Spirit had changed everything by bringing her to repentance and to faith in the Savior. She could not help herself. She would display her unashamed love and devotion at the feet of this Savior who bore her awful load of sins away from her to the cross.



On another occasion, Mary could not help herself, either. Jesus was dining at the home of her brother Lazarus, *“whom He had raised from the dead.”* To the shock of His disciples, *“Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair.”* Again, criticism arose at such a show of unfurled hair and emotions – and waste. Judas objected: *“Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?”* After all, it was worth a whole year's wages!

However, the Savior understood why she showed such love: *“Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial”* (John 12:1–7). Mary had experienced the sorrows of living in a fallen world under the curse of sin. She had seen death up close. She knew she could not help herself. She knew her

sin and mortality. But the Holy Spirit had filled her heart with hope as she sat at Jesus' feet, listening to His words of eternal life (Luke 10:39). She had seen what happened when Jesus spoke His powerful Word and called her brother out of the tomb (John 11:43-44). She could not help herself. She would display unashamed love and devotion at the feet of this Savior who had come to reverse the curse and give eternal life.

During the season of Lent, we join our hearts with these women in the same spirit of repentance, love for the Savior, and unashamed devotion to Him.

For who of us can help ourselves with sin? We all know our personal struggle with sin, and we have felt the sorrows of life under its curse. Maybe there are people who know our shameful past and roll their eyes, muttering, *“Who does he think he is, going to church?”* Maybe there are memories that are too painful for us to handle. Perhaps no one

understands why Jesus is so important to us.

But the Savior understands as we wet His feet with our tears of repentance – for He has born the whole awful load of our sin away from us to the cross. He understands as we anoint Him with the rich fragrance of thankful hearts – for He has anointed us with His priceless blood to declare us redeemed and forgiven. He understands as we bow to devote our heads and our whole life to His service – for He has devoted His head and His whole life to serve us with His victory in eternal life.

We just cannot help ourselves. The more we focus on the sacrificial love of our Savior, the more we are moved to respond by loving Christ and living Lent.

In His love,
Pastor Smith

True Love!

February is often referred to as the “Month of Love” – a month filled with roses, boxed-chocolates, special Valentines dinners, and don’t forget Cupid and his quiver of arrows. And while all of these are associated with love, do they really express true love? They might... but again, they might not.

There is a story that comes from the time of Oliver Cromwell in England. A young soldier had been tried in military court and sentenced to death. He was to be shot at the “*ringing of the curfew bell.*”

Unbeknownst to anyone, his fiancée climbed up into the bell tower several hours before curfew and tied herself to the bell’s huge clapper. At curfew time, when only muted sounds came out of the bell tower, Cromwell demanded to know why the bell was not ringing. His soldiers went to investigate and found the young woman cut and bleeding from being knocked back and forth against the great bell. They brought her down, so the story goes, and Cromwell was so impressed with her willingness to suffer in this way on behalf of someone she loved that he dismissed the condemned soldier saying, “*Curfew shall not ring tonight.*”

I don’t know if the soldier was truly guilty or not. But I do know that we are... every one of us! “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23).

But we also know of an amazing love where another innocent one was willing to die for the guilty.

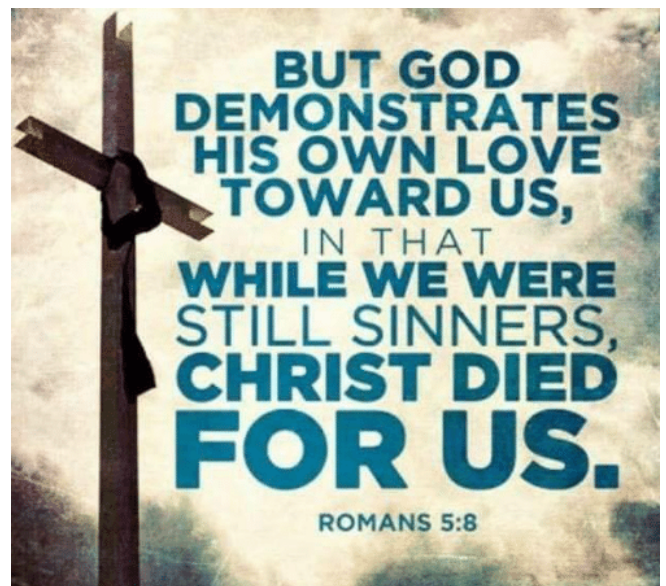
Jesus once said, “*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends...*” (John 15:12-14).

That’s exactly what Jesus did! He gave up His innocent life for the guilty; for you and me. He, who was without sin, was nailed to the cross, and

there, weighted down with the incredible load of everyone else’s sins, He became sin for us! He then paid the debt of those sins, in full, through His own death. And when He rose from the grave, His victory song declared, “*Because I live, you also will live!*” Now we know what true love is! The very love that Jesus has shown to us!

But it doesn’t stop there. With faith in our forgiven hearts, we are called to let that faith shine brightly to others! We have the love of Jesus living in our hearts; a true love that is to be reflected in our daily lives. Remember, it was our Savior, who said: “*Love one another. Just as I have loved you, so also you are to love one another. By this everyone will know you are My disciples...*” (John 13:34-35).

As forgiven sinners, and ambassadors for Christ, we know true love beyond compare... and it’s a love, we WANT to share!



(A newsletter of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod’s Board for Home Outreach.)

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>“In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.”</i></p> <p>1 John 4:9</p>				1 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	2 Jesus Cares Ministry 2:00 PM	3
4 <i>Epiphany 5</i> Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	5	6 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Eva Brumble Council Meeting 5:00 PM	7 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Rob Shepard Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	8 CLWMS Meeting 3:30 PM	9	10
11 <i>Transfiguration</i> Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	12	13	14 <i>Ash Wednesday</i>  Midweek Lent Supper – 5:30 PM Service – 6:30 PM	15 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	16	17
18 <i>Lent 1</i> Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	19	20 Circuit Pastors' Meeting Myrtle Creek	21  Midweek Lent Supper – 5:30 PM Service – 6:30 PM	22 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	23	24
25 <i>Lent 2</i> Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	26	27	28  Midweek Lent Supper – 5:30 PM Service – 6:30 PM	<p><i>“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends.”</i></p> <p>John 15:13-14</p>		

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