

**JUNE 13 2010**

**ON SYMPATHIES AND ANTIPATHIES**

**LUKE 7:36-8:3**

**WE CAN'T HELP OURSELVES. IN SOME WAYS, WE ARE BUILT TO BE JUDGMENTAL. BEFORE WE CAN ENTER INTO A PERSON'S STORY OR THE DEEP MYSTERY OF ANOTHER PERSON, WE HAVE OUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS TO CONTEND WITH. IT IS PART OF OUR SELF-PROTECTIVE BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS TO MAKE SNAP JUDGMENTS. IS THAT A NICE PERSON OR A DANGEROUS PERSON? SHOULD I TALK TO HIM OR NOT? WE HAVE OUR INSTINCTS TO DEAL WITH AS WE MOVE ON THE ROAD THAT BRINGS US CLOSER TO CHRIST.**

**THEN WE HAVE TO CONTEND WITH OUR EXPERIENCES. I ONCE KNEW A WOMAN WHO JUST DIDN'T LIKE ME. (BELIEVE ME SHE WAS NOT THE ONLY ONE!) I STILL REALLY DON'T KNOW WHY. NO MATTER HOW MUCH I TRIED TO BE NICE TO HER, NO DICE. I DID GET A SMILE ONE DAY, THOUGH, WHEN I SAID TO HER, "DID A BALD GUY WITH A BEARD KICK YOU WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG?" FOR SOME REASON THAT DID IT. SHE REALIZED THAT HER ANTIPATHY CAME FROM SOMEWHERE WITHIN HER.**

**SO IT IS WITH ALL OF US. FROM VERY YOUNG, OUR PREJUDICES ARE FORMED BY THE CULTURAL CONTEXT WE LIVE WITHIN. I WAS TAUGHT TO BE SUSPICIOUS OF ALL PEOPLE THAT WERE DIFFERENT---IF THEY WEREN'T MY COLOR, IF THEY WEREN'T MY RELIGION, IF THEY WERE OTHER THAN BLUE COLLAR WHITE, IF THEY WERE POORER—YOU NAME IT, I WAS TO START WITH DISLIKE. I BECAME A DISAPPOINTMENT FOR AWHILE TO MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY, BECAUSE I TURNED OUT THE COMPLETE OPPOSITE.**

**THEN WE HAVE TO CONTEND WITH OUR OPINIONS THAT ARE ENTRENCHED AND BASED ON ALL THESE THINGS. WE ARE ALWAYS SIZING OTHERS UP. WE LIVE WITH SUSPICIONS EVEN WITH THOSE WE ARE CLOSE TO. DOES SHE REALLY EMAN WHAT SHE IS SAYING? IS HE REALLY AS NICE AS HE APPEARS? IT IS AMAZING THAT WE HEAR CHRIST AT ALL.**

**IN THIS LUKAN PASSAGE TODAY, JESUS' PURPOSE IS TO MAKE US BECOME THE STORY. WHO ARE WE MORE LIKE, THE PHARISEE WHO THINKS HE IS GOOD IN GOD'S EYES AND CAN'T BE FORGIVING OF THE SINNER? OR ARE WE MORE LIKE THE SINNER, WHO KNOWS DEEP WITHIN THAT WE**

**CANNOT CHANGE OR LIVE WITHOUT GOD'S FORGIVENESS? THERE ARE GENDER, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC RAMIFICATIONS IN THE STORY AS WELL.**

**PICTURE THIS WOMAN WITH A TERRIBLE REPUTATION OF BEING USED AND ABUSED BY MEN FOR PROFIT. EVERYONE IN TOWN KNOWS WHO SHE IS. IMAGINE BEING THAT WOMAN, MAKING TONGUES WAG WHEREVER YOU WENT. THESE WERE CLOSE NEIGHBORHOODS IN THOSE DAYS, SHOWN BY SIMON THE PHARISEE KNOWING WHO SHE WAS. WHAT WAS HER CHILDHOOD LIKE? WAS SHE DESPERATE AND POOR? WAS SHE REBELLIOUS AND PRETENTIOUS AND SINNED BOLDLY? WE DON'T KNOW. ALL WE KNOW IS THAT WHATEVER SHE DID, SHE WANTED A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE WITH JESUS CHRIST? SHE WAS READY TO END HER OLD LIFE AND LIVE TOTALLY IN THE LOVE OF THE LORD.**

**TO DO THIS SHE MUST BARGE IN UNINVITED. WIND HER WAY THROUGH A CROWD OF MEN, BECAUSE WOMEN WERE NOT PERMITTED TO EAT WITH MEN, JUST SERVE THEM. SHE LOOSENS HER HAIR, A VERY PROVOCATIVE ACT AS SHE WAS TO KEEP HER HAIR COVERED IN MIXED COMPANY. THEN SHE, CONSIDERED DIRTY AND UNKOSHER, TOUCHES JESUS BY WIPING HER TEARS OFF HIS FEET. THE CROWD OF MEN, I'M SURE, WERE APOPLECTIC. AND THE HOST, SIMON THE PHARISEE, BREAKING ALL RULES OF HOSPITALITY BEGINS CRITICIZING HIS GUEST, JESUS. APPARENTLY THIS GUY IS A PHONY. IF HE KNOWS WHO SHE IS AND ALLOWS THIS BEHAVIOR HE IS A SINNER. IF HE DOESN'T KNOW WHO SHE IS, HE IS NOT A PROPHET.**

**BUT, FRIENDS, JESUS IS MORE THAN A PROPHET, BECAUSE HE TURNS THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN FOR GOD. THE TRUTH COMES OUT. WHO NEEDS GOD MORE---THE RELIGIOUS PERSON OR THE SINNER? IT'S A TRICK QUESTION JESUS POSES—THEY BOTH DO! THE RELIGIOUS SIMON BECAUSE HE CANNOT BELIEVE IN HIS LIFE THAT SOMEONE CAN CHANGE AND BE SAVED.**