

The Danger of Familiarity

by Chip Brogden

The sermon warns against the danger of familiarity with Jesus, and emphasizes the importance of ministering to Him and showing Him reverence and awe.

Scripture: Matthew 25:40, Luke 7:44, John 13:14, Colossians 3:23, Hebrews 13:2

Topics: "Reverence For God", "Spiritual Complacency"

Description

Chip Brogden emphasizes the danger of taking the presence of Jesus for granted, highlighting how familiarity can lead to contempt and a casual attitude towards divine things. He contrasts the actions of a sinful woman who showed reverence and ministered to Jesus with a Pharisee who failed to provide basic courtesies to the Lord. Brogden challenges listeners to not overlook Jesus' needs and to minister to Him with anticipation and reverence, rather than seeking blessings for themselves.

Transcript

"I entered into your house, and you gave Me no water for My feet..." (Luke 7:44ff).

How often do we take the presence of Jesus for granted?

Our psuedo-Christian culture is profane. I speak not of the profanity of foul language, but the profanity of treating divine things with a casual, apathetic, flippant attitude. We profane holy things by making them common, ordinary, usual, mundane, and routine.

Interestingly enough, only those who know the Holy are in danger of becoming too familiar with it. Unbelievers, those who are not yet acquainted with the Holy, cannot profane what they do not understand.

The danger of familiarity is in knowing and taking for granted.

This is illustrated for us here in Luke 7. A Pharisee invites Jesus to dinner. This is not an irreligious man who invites the Lord, but a member of the strictest religious order. Jesus accepts his invitation and they sit down to have a meal.

While they are sitting at the table, a woman enters the room with an alabaster box of ointment. We know she is a sinner, because Luke says, "A woman in the city, which was a sinner..." (Luke 7:37ff). This sinner does a strange and wonderful thing. She washes the feet of Jesus with her tears, wipes them with her hair, kisses His feet, and pours the fragrant ointment out on Him.

The Pharisee, of course, is highly offended that this sinner has come uninvited to his home. He is also a bit embarrassed about this display of affection. And he thinks to himself, "If Jesus were a real prophet, He would know that this woman is a sinner!"

But in the mind of Jesus, the real issue is, "Who really loves Me, and who takes Me for granted?"

No one traveled for pleasure in those days, the way we do now. Travel at that time was universally despised as a hot, dirty ordeal to be avoided if at all possible. Most people, Jesus included, traveled on foot. So the ritual of taking care of guests followed a predictable pattern and centered around the feet. Upon entering someone's home, the host would greet his guests with a kiss on each cheek and offer water for their tired, dirty feet. If available, some perfumed ointment would also be offered to soothe and freshen them up a bit.

But the Pharisee failed to provide Jesus with even the most basic, usual, and customary courtesies given to guests:

"You gave me no water for My feet... No kiss of greeting... No oil for My head" (Luke 7:44-46ff).

The presence of Jesus was taken for granted! Was it just a case of forgetfulness on the part of His host, or was it something else? Something deeper?

Perhaps the Pharisee was becoming too familiar with Jesus - just a little bit too casual. From a distance Jesus was pretty amazing. Now that he had Jesus sitting there at his own table, in his own house, he saw that Jesus was a man. Maybe he came to believe that Jesus was someone not too unlike himself. It's only Jesus, so there's no need to get all excited. Let Him get His own water and wash His own feet.

That is the danger of familiarity.

It is said that familiarity breeds contempt. In the beginning we coveted the presence of the Lord, but today perhaps we take it for granted. In the beginning we were awed by Him, but today perhaps we are not so amazed. His visits become more routine, more ordinary, more commonplace. The songs we sing become a habit. The Bible we read becomes dry and old. The testimonies of our brothers and sisters do not move us because we have seen and heard it all before.

The woman, on the other hand, maintained a quiet reverence, a godly sense of awe, a majestic sense of wonder before the Holy. She gave honor to Whom honor was due. She made up for what was lacking. When she arrived she saw that no one was ministering to the Lord, and she made Him the focus of her being there in that moment.

Few people today truly minister to the Lord Himself. They expect that the Lord will minister to them. And indeed, He does. But the nature of the Lord Jesus is such that He will never call attention to Himself. He will never say, "Why do you not minister to Me? Why do you take me for granted? Why have you not washed My feet?" He will remain silent, and wait for someone to notice Him.

Perhaps that is the reason why He is so often overlooked and taken for granted: because He never seeks anything for Himself.

When the Lord first showed me the importance of ministering to the Him, He made no demands upon me to do anything. He simply let me experience how lonely He was in the midst of a lot of religious activity.

There, in the middle of our wonderful church service, I understood that we were taking Jesus for granted. We were too familiar with His Presence. When I understood the pain of the Lord, I knew immediately what needed to be done. That is when I understood that to minister to the Lord was the preeminent thing, the most important thing, and our primary purpose and reason for being.

The best waiters and waitresses are the ones who anticipate your needs and move at once to meet them - without you having to ask. They do not say, "Would you like some more tea?" They watch to see what you need, and if they see that your glass is empty, they move to fill it.

A waiter, a servant, a minister: all three have the same meaning. To wait on the Lord; to be a servant of the Lord; to minister to the Lord; all three describe the same purpose and function. The foremost thing is not to preach, or teach, or travel, or build a big ministry. We are to watch for, anticipate, and meet the Lord's Need so that He is never taken for granted.

The Lord gives all day long. He teaches the crowds. He heals their sick. He meets their needs. At the end of the day He is tired. His feet are dirty. He needs to be refreshed. But as is often the case, the needs of Jesus are completely overlooked as we eagerly stretch out our hands to get OUR blessing.

Certainly, this woman had many needs. Yet she comes to the Lord Jesus, not to receive a blessing, but to be a blessing:

"She has washed My feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair... She has not stopped kissing My feet... She has anointed My feet with ointment..." (Luke 7:44-46ff).

When Jesus enters "our house" - whether it is our place of worship, our home, our workplace, or our heart - do we take Him for granted? Is His Need being met? I pray the Lord will convict us of our profanity and deliver us from familiarity. Let us repent, and rediscover the One Who sits at the table with us.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chip-brogden/the-danger-of-familiarity/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net