



To kiss a king.

Credit to Zach Neese

### **Introduction**

Over the Past two weeks we have been talking about what worship fit for the king looks like in our lives. I'm sure we can agree that there is much to worship that we are constantly learning and discovering primarily because worship in essence is a life-long response to who God is and what he has done.

Following on from Pastor Neil and Pastor Tristan, I am trusting that God will draw us a little closer to himself in our response and understanding of intimacy with him. The title for this morning's message is "To kiss a king" Now... I can imagine some of the men in the room are thinking "disconnect the Wi-Fi! Not my style!" or "that's mushy and I don't do mushy" but before you disconnect, I want to say with absolute confidence that God is not only interested in us acknowledging him as our victor, our savior, our defender and all the other strong descriptions we like to use for him but that he has also revealed himself to us as a comforter and counselor, he is the bridegroom and we are his bride (mutcho men included!). He is also our friend and close companion and it is no way a sign of weakness as our society would have us think... Ladies I have a feeling some you're saying silent amen's right about now!

### **My Journey with God**

I grew up in a lovely Christian home. Both my parents were great models of what it means to live for God and his kingdom for as long as I can remember. Despite all that they had done and modelled to us, I struggled as a young boy to believe that God was interested in me. Part of what brought this on was the fact that I was so immersed in what my parents were doing and could make all the right noises when I

needed to but I had never really experienced God's presence and love in a personal way. I'd say the usual stuff like "God is good all the time and all the time God is good" or the famous "I'm blessed and highly favored" but I dare not approach God with my petty desires and struggles like... "God I really would love to have those soccer boots... God I don't think I really like church that much these days or the most dangerous one of all... "God I don't know if I really know you as I should". In my early teens I decided to go to a youth group that was close by only because my brother was going there but even more because I had heard that some of the prettiest girls were at youth groups!

A year or two later I ended up getting involved with the youth leadership team not knowing that God was about to change the course of my life completely. Our youth Pastor at the time often got us to retreat and spend long times listening to what God wanted to say to us as part of our training and I hated it so much! I just wanted to do things for God and feel good about it but please don't ask me to wait in silence for God because he won't show up for me.

I remember just before my first encounter with him nervously saying something like "God if you are who you say you are show yourself to me and I will never turn back. A few minutes of waiting at one of those retreats and God showed up, he met me in such a special way. There was no preacher, no worship team playing a slow song, no one pleading for God to meet with me, nothing at all but Him and I. His presence was like nothing I had ever experienced and I knew that my life goal from that moment was to live a life of continual intimacy with my father and helping others realize that this is the best thing that can happen in ones life. I've never looked back since.

To *kiss the king* speaks of such closeness and intimacy with God. I don't know about you but we generally kiss people we have deep value and love for. If you're kissing complete strangers randomly please come and talk to me... That's not normal! Jokes aside though... expressing our love for him appropriately is almost impossible if we're not intimately walking with him... It's a love relationship not a performance based relationship as we will see in a moment. The truth is, people who struggle to express their love to God have often lost the love and appreciation they once had for him. If that's you this morning I want to say God is on your side and wants to meet with you in a special way again. I pray that as we journey together through the scriptures this morning that you wouldn't hear a well-crafted sermon but that you would hear the Fathers invitation for a life lived in intimacy with him! Let's look at a story of an amazing example of what it means to kiss the king.

### **Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman Luke 7:36 – 50 NIV**

*36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. 37 A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. 38 As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. 39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." 40 Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. 41 "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii,[c] and the other fifty. 42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will*

*love him more?”<sup>43</sup> Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.<sup>44</sup> Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. <sup>45</sup> You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. <sup>46</sup> You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. <sup>47</sup> Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”<sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”<sup>49</sup> The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”<sup>50</sup> Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”*

## **Background**

Just a little bit of background as we get going. Jesus had started teaching the disciples and all who had been following him about the Kingdom of God. He taught in parables and made time for large crowds to come to him for healing, deliverance, salvation and so on... and often after he healed someone he would teach a kingdom principle. Of course what he is teaching has not yet landed in the hearts and minds of the disciples as it was still very foreign and “upside down” in relation to what they had known.

The women in Luke 7 would have heard about Jesus through other people talking about Jesus’ ministry and would have decided to take a chance to see if he would spare a moment for her. She picks up her alabaster Jar of perfume and goes to the house where Jesus was visiting the Pharisee.

There was a stigma of uncleanness attached to her at this point; scholars believe that she was actually a prostitute... one of the most “unworthy” people to ever be in the house of a Pharisee let alone have a moment with Jesus. It must have been so hard for a person with this kind of reputation to go to a Pharisee’s house, let alone hope that Jesus would have the time of day for her. Her absolute courage and value of Jesus leads her to respond in the most authentic and powerful act of worship; an act we still learn from today! A few key points to learn from this special event.

### **1. Intimacy with God is primarily a result of his Goodness towards us.**

It’s so easy to think that we have to “log in the hours” in order for God to draw near to us... we start to believe that we have to feel a certain way, be in a certain place with certain people or have the right mind set in order for God to meet with us. We live in a world that teaches us to strive and strain towards stuff all the time and if we’re not careful we start to carry this into our relationship with God. We’ll say things like “when I am in the right space God will see me or want to meet with me” “That song just didn’t do it for me” “What I just said or did was so bad God must want nothing to do with me” .Sure... God will never barge into our lives uninvited... but he certainly did not wait for us to be in the right space in order to redeem us from our sin and death. If he did, we’d still be dead (Spiritually) and destined for eternal damnation.

Striving/working for God's approval makes us and what we can do for God the center of worship and undermines God's character; God is good because it is who he is and all he does towards us will always be good! (Discipline included by the way). That's the only reason we're able to approach him... because he allows it.

- John 6: 44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day."
- John 5: "8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
- Romans 8:16 "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."

There is a huge lesson in the way Jesus responds to the lady in Luke 7; While the Pharisee ridicules her and suggests that she is unworthy to be in contact with Jesus and... suggests that Jesus cannot be a representative of God if he is letting this lady touch him. Jesus actually turns around and validates her above him and tells the Pharisee just how much he has missed Jesus' heart completely. Luke 7: 43-46 *"Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet."*

In today's language it would be something like "I know you have a degree, done amazing things in my name, attend every church service, you have an amazing title and come across better than many... but you're actually not worshipping me as you ought to. Ouch!!

Could it be that part the reason we come in and out of church, attend a gazillion conferences and still wonder why we're not having meaningful times in his presence be that we have become proud and hard hearted? Maybe looked down on others because they don't fit our style or agenda? We need to humble ourselves again and rest on who He is and what he has done for us...

A story that always grabs my heart is the story of Martha and Mary in Luke 10:38 "As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "**Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!**" "Martha, Martha, The lord answered, "You are upset about many things, but a few things are needed-or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

There are always things we want and think and must be done. But one thing is the best... sitting in Jesus' presence continually.

## 2. Intimacy with Lord is our lifeline.

There are so many things that we can manage to live without probably because there are alternatives to those things. What are some day to day things that you may feel you can live without? One of the things that we definitely cannot live without is oxygen! As obvious as that may seem... it's scary to think that the absence of this one compound can end our entire existence in approximately 3 minutes; there is no alternative to oxygen, no other combination of molecules can keep us breathing. This is what God's presence for us was meant to be like; the very oxygen of our spiritual life. If you read the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis you will see that one of the consequences of their sin was death. They didn't physically die at the time but that's because the death mentioned here is a result of the absence of God who breathes life into our very being.

Romans 6: 23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of god is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" Adam and eve died because they were no longer connected to the source of all life which is God.

Jesus says in John 14:6 "I am the way the truth and life no one comes to the father except through me" notice the choice of words here I am THE! There is no other source of direction, life and truth.

He further goes on to say in John 14:19:21 when talking to the disciples about the infilling of the Holy Spirit that was to come "19 before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

Some intimate words here! Such an amazing connectedness that we were clearly created to have.

The lady in our passage in Luke 7 realizes that there is no other option but the option found in Jesus. She hears that he is in town and holds nothing back to receive his love, mercy and approval. For her, there is no other alternative to the life that is found in Jesus. Have you ever dived to deep into the ocean or a swimming pool and realized getting back to the top is going to take a little bit longer than you have planned? How desperate you become just get to the top to take a deep breath in. That's what life in Christ ought to be like for us... we were made to move and live and have our whole being in him anything outside of that leaves us spiritually dead.

Are you still alive spiritually? The sad thing is that when going through the "motions" or not prioritizing spending time with Jesus daily becomes our norm, the reality is that we're actually walking zombies. Check yourself regularly for signs of life and death... Am I growing? Do I know Jesus or know of him? Do I mean what I am singing? I pray none of us here the words "get away from me I never knew you"

### 3. Walking intimately with the King is costly.

Kissing someone's feet is one of the most humiliating things you can do... Anyone passionate about kissing dirty and stinky feet? Anyone willing to wipe someone's feet with their own hair? Ladies?

There are so many things that we are called to sacrifice in order to walk closely with Jesus; Sometimes it's our reputation or the approval of those we hold in high regard. The wonderful thing is that God doesn't expect us to live a life of sacrifice because he is mean or wants to see us suffer; he does this because it shows us and him what we actually value; we sacrifice things for people we love and value the most! The entire gospel is centered on this! John 3:16 "For God so loved that he gave...." i.e. God demonstrated his love for us by dying on a cross for something he did not do, for a people who did not deserve it and still don't. We will never have to wonder if he is on our side because of what he DID. How awesome would it be to have the generations after us saying "The people of God at King of Kings so loved God that they sacrificed their time, money, belongings and their whole lives for God and each other? It's so easy to forget how much it costs to follow Jesus; Think of the many accounts in the bible that clearly speak about people leaving businesses, families, security and safety in order to stay true to Jesus. We could spend weeks just unpacking this! But the point here is if you're going to walk closely and intimately with God you're definitely going to continually give up something that hinders your worship to God.

Mathew 16: 24-26 "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?"

Romans Romans 12:1 "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. "

Walking intimately with Jesus has a huge price tag but it is worth more than anything we could own in this life. The beautiful thing is that the more we are willing to let go the more our spiritual hands are free to cling on to God. What are you holding on to? Let it go and cling on to him!

### 4. Intimacy with the Lord is contagious.

There is no doubt that people who are walking closely with the Lord are contagious. Just to take a little bit of a detour from Luke 7, In the book of Exodus after the Israelites had been rescued from slavery by God, Moses goes up to mount Sinai for the first time to meet with the lord and returns to a people that have made idols! He is so furious that he breaks the stone tablet(s) that contained God's commandments to his people.

Moses, with God's guidance, starts the "reconstruction work" of turning the people's hearts back to God. In Exodus 33 Moses is about to go up to Mount Sinai for the second time to meet with God and says something so powerful to God. Exodus 33:14 – 22 "4 The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."15 Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. 16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with

*us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”<sup>17</sup> And the Lord said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.”<sup>18</sup> Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”<sup>19</sup> And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. <sup>20</sup> But,” he said, “You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”<sup>21</sup> Then the Lord said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. <sup>22</sup> When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.”*

What an incredible intimate meeting Moses has with God as a result of saying and I paraphrase “nothing sets me apart from anyone or anything but your presence and I am not going anywhere without you, show me your face”

Later on he goes up to Mount Sinai and this is what happens when he comes back down:

*Exodus 35: 29 “When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord. <sup>30</sup> When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. <sup>31</sup> But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. <sup>32</sup> Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai.”*

People who are walking closely with Jesus are contagious. If the people around us are unsure if we’re walking with God there is a huge problem and we may have to reconsider where we’re at! There is an authority that God gives us when walking closely with him. People weren’t afraid to be in Moses’ presence because he looked “dodge”, they were afraid because there was an “otherness” about Moses that was screaming out God’s authority and presence. Don’t judge people by their titles and good deeds done to impress on lookers but rather look at the authority they carry!

## Challenge

To kiss a king means responding in such love and devotion to Jesus that far outweighs what people say or think about us or how much we stand to lose in this life. The women in our reading responds because of WHO Jesus is and what he is graciously prepared to do on her behalf Luke 7:40 – 43 *“<sup>40</sup> Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to tell you.” “Tell me, teacher,” he said.<sup>41</sup> “Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii,[c] and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup> Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?”<sup>43</sup> Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.*

If we really want to be worshippers who bless the heart of God we need not strive, labor or toil; we need to look at all he is and what he has done for us against the back drop of who we are and we’ll find ourselves so undone and so devoted to him above all else... It just means we have to learn to stop/pause long enough to notice him. There is so much more to unpack on how to “kiss the king” that would keep us here for days but I want to recap what we have covered as I draw to a close...

1. The foundation of all worship is the person and character of God is not us. When last have you made room just to gaze at all he is in your worship?
2. Walking intimately with God (daily) is not an option but is our lifeline. Are you walking in a life giving, intimate relationship with the king? What are the signs of this?
3. Walking intimately with God will always cost you something. What is standing in the way of your unrestricted worship to God?
4. Intimacy with the Lord is contagious and touches far beyond us.

I end off with the story of Isaiah's early encounter with the Lord Isaiah 6:4 - 5 "At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." 8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

You have your opportunity to kiss the king right now. Be vulnerable and humble before him right now. Don't put it off. It's okay to be undone in his presence because he gets more room to rebuild us. Don't miss the opportunity to kiss the king as you offer your whole being as a sacrifice of love to him.