**Journey Out of Bondage Luke 7:26-50**

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| 1 | Title Slide |
| 2 | On a sightseeing trip on Florida’s west coast a couple visited an old mansion. In the exquisitely furnished master bedroom, they were surprised to see signs on the bed spread and curtains reading: “Wash your hands immediately after touching”They admired the furnishing from a safe distance, but their curiosity was aroused so on leaving, they decided to ask the guard if the fabric had been treated with some harmful preserving chemical. “Oh, no,” he said grinning. “There’s nothing on ‘em. We just never did have much luck with the “Do Not Touch Signs!”Experience had taught the museum curator to expect people to reach out and touch the exhibit. People are curious. This clever wording changed the experience and thus, the expectation. In today's world we have several "new" expections we are commanded to abide by: Social distancing - stay 6 ft apart, wash hands with soap for at least 20 seconds (20 sec = singing happy birthday twice, Stay at home, wear masks and gloves, just to name a few! And like the story we are seeing folks that are tired of obeying these rules and want to get back to "normal", want to touch to fabric. I wish we could find a clever reverse psychology phrase that could help us stay true to the instructions that are keeping the virus from spreading as rapidly as it could! |
| 3 | Also In this corona virus time, we celebrate Mother's Day. HAPPY MOTHER’S DAY! The traditional expectations are: taking 1) your mom to lunch, 2) personally giving flowers, 2) spending time with her and 4) giving some type of card or gift. Yet these will not be fulfilled today because In today's world we have had to change as well as the expectations because of this virus. Maybe a phone call, or a zoom chat, or facetime or sending an ecard, or sending flowers will be the expectations you will have.  |
| 4 | Now for a few moments consider the role of expectations in a more general sense.Our job title – whether lawyer or minister, finisher or quality control – places certain expectation on us. |
| 5 | Membership in the church automatically means people expect us to live certain ways.Parents’ expectation for their children can help or hinder their development.Our own expectation of ourselves can be both good and bad for our maturing, learning process. Some expectations are necessary; they prod us on to larger and higher goals. Ex. If you only expect to pass in school, then you are satisfied with that. But if you expect to make As, then you work hard to accomplish that goal and consequently learn more.  |
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| 6 | But some expectation can be damaging; or even petrify us into no action. Bondage in our day comes in many forms. For all of us this COVID 19 Pandemic has put us in bondage like we have never seen before! Freedom to do has we please is no longer possible least we spread the virus to others particularly our older adults and vulnerable people. We have to give up some freedoms to stay at home and suffer the emotional impact of confinement, limited mobility and even the loss of jobs and the damage to our economy.   |
| 7 | But there are other ways we experience bondage. Among them is the bondage we invite as we seek to meet the expectations of those around us when we know they are not the best for usEs. In the movie The River runs through. The older brother is expected to become a minister like his father. He goes to Dartmouth gets his degree and masters degree and returns home. He and his father talk and his father asks about his Call. By his reaction it is obviously a strange question for him. He asks,what Call? As the movie progresses the older son decides to go the Chicago and become a teacher of English. Fortunately for him his father was able to let go of his expectations and let his son do what he wanted. Yet Expectations become a bondage when they keep us from expressing our feeling and our love for one another; when they keep us apart, when they force us into jobs/careers that we are not suited for.Such a bondage can be subtle, sometimes we don’t even realize that meeting others expectations keeps us from acting in the most caring and loving way; That they can keep us from doing God’s work in our lives and even in the church. |
| 8 | One of the themes in our Scripture today is the issue of expectations.The word was out.  Wanted: Jesus, The Galilean from Nazareth. Crime: Threat to society. Does not meet the people’s expectations of a Messiah!The religious leaders are already talking of ways to arrest and perhaps kill him. |
|  | All the people amazed at what Jesus was doing. Jesus healed Jew and Gentile alike. In Luke 7:1-10 he heals the slave of a Roman centurion and says he has not seen such faith in all Israel. That must have upset the religious leaders! Then in 7;11-17, Jesus goes to Nain and there he raise the only son of a widow because he had compassion for her. (A widowed woman without any sons had a destitute life because she had no one to care for her in that society that saw woman is little more than an animal.) So with her son's healing she has hope of a decent life. Then in 7: 18- 35, Jesus explains who John the Baptist was and his purpose. He comments that he was rejected by the religious leaders because eating no bread and not drinking wine was a sign of being demon possessed. Then they reject Jesus saying he is a glutton and drunkard who eats with sinners and tax collectors. So, many followed Jesus because of the healings and bring the man from Nain to life. The religious leaders were furious at Jesus because he certainly didn't meet their expectations of the Messian. His disciples followed him believing him to be the Messiah. But the point is that Jesus had a great variety of expectations put upon him by religious leaders, the Roman gov't, the followers who came because of the miracles and the disciples who had followed him for 3 years. In the mist of these varied expectations Jesus had to choose what he was going to do. Would he give in to any of these expectations? |
| 9 | . Then in our verses today, Jesus is invited to Simon, a Pharisees, home for dinner. Jesus took his place and suddenly a woman named Mary who is known by the residents of the city as a sinner, comes in and does the most unexpected thing! She comes crying with her tears dropping upon Jesus feet and pours pure Nard over Jesus ‘ feet and wipes them with her hair! She continues to dry his feel all the while kissing them.Now, nard is an expensive, fine fragrance. It was used by Solomon as a perfume for his couch. By many brides on their wedding day and by others as a preparation for burying a body.Mary used about a pint of it which equals about 1 year’s wages of that day!What do you think about this act? How does it strike you? |
| 10 | Well, we hear from Simon, the Pharisees! He objected! He objected on grounds that a true prophet would not let a sinner do such to him! How do you feel about what Mary did? What would you have expected her to do? Then Jesus tell the story of 2 men indebted, one by a large sum of money, one a small sum of money. The holder of the loans forgave both of their debts. Jesus asks which one would love the lender more. Simon answered that he supposed the one forgiven the largest debt. Jesus affirms that answer! |
| 11 | Then Jesus explains what just happened, This woman called Mary, a known sinner does the things Simon as the host of the meal should have done for his guests: She washes feet, that even though she had no towel like he should have, she drys his feet. And in that culture the tradition is for the host to greet guests with a kiss on each cheek & he didn;t do so, but she is continually kissing his feet. And lastly Simon did not anoint Jesus and other guests' head with oil, but Mary anointed Jesus feet with pure nard. Thus Jesus is pointing out that Simon did not show any regard for Jesus while this woman shows exceptional love. Simon failed to live up to the culture's expectations and remained in the bondage suffered by all the religious leaders. But **this sinful woman broke out of society's expectations at great risk to her life to show Jesus her love and faith in him**. consequently Jesus forgave her sin! : Breaking through the negative expectations, Mary filled the whole house with fragrance. The sweetness of her action is evident everywhere. With her hair she wipes away the dust and oil from Jesus’ feet and dries them. She broke out of the ghetto of expectation in which she was held captive with the spontaneous act of tenderness. Why? She sensed the reality of who Jesus really is, His call in her life and these allowed her love to flow forth! |
| 12 | These three – reality of Jesus being the Messiah, his Call in our lives and love can be the **strongest motivations for breaking out of the bondages of others’ negative expectations .**So often we stop ourselves from acts of love and devotion or full commitment for fear of what someone else might think! It is interesting that we seldom entertain the thought that we might be better people if we broke through these feeble, cramped and frightening expectations. But of course, as long as we remain self-conscious in our responses, there is little hope of love’s spontaneity and breaking out of our bondage to expectations.  |
| 13 | Shortly before the Civil War, a young lawyer came down from Vermont and settled in Adams County, Pennsylvania. There he saw fugitive slaves escaping from bondage, and as a conductor on the Underground Railroad, he helped them to liberty. The irony of the nation's claim of freedom while enslaving a whole race of people,entered into his soul and he gave himself with all his powers to combat that evil and to deliver the oppressed. When the great crisis to which all those events were pointing, had broken out over the nation, the Civil War, Thaddeus Stephens became perhaps the most powerful influence in the government of the United States.  |
| 14 | When his time to die came, his only attendants were 2 Black preachers. Today in the very midst of Lancaster in a shabby cemetery, you can see his tomb, and on the tomb these words.*I repose in this quiet and secluded spot,Not from any natural preference for solitudeBut, finding other Cemeteries limited as to Raceby Charter Rules,I have chosen this that I might illustrate in my deathThe Principles which I advocated through a long life:EQUALITY OF MAN BEFORE HIS CREATOR.*Thaddeus Stephens realized the injustice of his day and because of his compassion for his fellow human beings he had to break out of the norms and expectations to act. |
| 15 | How **many lost moments** go by because we are paralyzed by what others might think?How many times have we **kept to ourselves** when someone desperately needed a call, or a helping hand or needed someone to stand by them in public? How many times we have **looked the other way** because we didn’t want to care enough to get involved. How often do we not **take a stand** on social and political issues because we are afraid of what people will say? |
| 16 | Jesus and Mary had at least one basic thing in common. They dared to break out of the bondage of expectation because of their love and of their sense of reality. Jesus became the suffering Savior and risked being misunderstood. Mary became the incarnation of spontaneous love risking being put down for her wastefulness and inappropriateness.  |
| 17 | But we are called to do likewise. Following God, in part, by learning to live in the moment – acting in love without thought of how it looks to society is to Journey out of Bondage. Be Like Jesus in spite of others’ expectations!Jesus condones Mary’s act – not as being better than reasoned and sound actions, but as more appropriate given that present reality of knowing he is the Messiah and her deep love.As we continue to look more deeply within ourselves. We must ask – How are our actions and lives bound by negative expectations so that we don’t share the love and gifts of our faith?How will our actions in the coming weeks during the corona virus show our love for others and show we are concerned about the economy and getting back to work? Can we find some responses that meet both expectations? Can we act in such a way that we do not transmit the virus to others? This week the leadership of the church will be putting some plans together as a way to reopen without risking lives to do so.  |
| 18 | In this Easter season, we are reminded Jesus died and rose to new life to free us from the bondage of sin and expectations to serve ourselves But know with confidence that we are free ... to share His Love! Amen |