

## What Kind of Kisser are You?

Luke 7:36-50

**W**hat kind of “kisser” are you?

At the end of their first date, a young man took the young lady back to her home. When he walked her to the door, he decided to try for a goodnight kiss. Trying to look confident, he leaned against the wall of the front porch and, smiling, said to her, "How 'bout a good night kiss?"

Embarrassed, she replied, "Oh, I couldn't do that. My parents will see us!" He argued, "Oh come on! Who's gonna see us at this hour?" She countered, "No, please. I would just die of embarrassment if someone saw us."

"Oh come on, there's nobody around, they're all sleeping!" "No way. It's just too risky! I just can't!"

"Oh yes you can. Please?" "NO, no. I just can't."

"Pleeeeeease?..."

Suddenly, the porch light came on, the door was flung open, and the girl's sister stood there in her pajamas, her hair disheveled. In a sleepy voice the sister said:

"Dad says to go ahead and give him a kiss. Or *I* can do it. Or if need be, he'll come down himself and do it. But for crying out loud tell him to take his hand off the intercom button!"

The story is told of a beautiful English nurse who encouraged wounded soldiers by kissing their hands. One day she was in the hospital, and she asked a wounded soldier, "Did you kill any of the enemy?" He replied, "Yes, Ma'am." She asked, "Which hand did you use to kill the enemy?"

"My right hand," he said, so she kissed his right hand. One soldier told her that he had used his left hand, so she kissed that soldier's left hand.

Over in the corner was a soldier who had been observing this nurse very closely. When she got to his bedside, she asked, "Soldier, did you kill any of the enemy in the war?"

He quickly exclaimed, "Yes, Ma'am. I bit 'em to death."

One little boy about ten years of age, tells us that "You should never kiss a girl until you have enough bucks to buy her a big ring and her own VCR, 'cause she'll want to have videos of the wedding." There's an ancient saying which tells us "Never let a fool kiss you or a kiss fool you."

There are different kinds of kisses. Have you ever had anyone come up to you and ask "Want a kiss?" then hand you a Hershey's chocolate Kiss? The Hershey's Corporation is celebrating one hundred years of the chocolate Kiss, the first one being made in 1907 in the same shape as we know it today. It has been made continuously all that time except for 1942-1949, when because of World War II, aluminum foil was difficult to obtain. If you go to Hershey, Pennsylvania, you will find that all of the street lights are made in the shape of Hershey's Kisses. And in three factories across the United States, 80 million Hershey's Kisses are made every day! That's a lot of chocolate – and a lot of Kisses.

There are many different kinds of kisses, and there are different reasons and motives behind kisses. I remember that my Dad had a very special place right behind Jennifer's ear that he would kiss, and then say, "That's my spot! Don't let anyone else have it." There's the kiss that two lovers share. There's that very special goodnight kiss when you slip into a sleeping child's bedroom and kiss their heads, offering up a special prayer for them while you do so. There's a kiss that is given as a reward by a mother when a child has done something very special – or maybe just because. There's the kiss under the mistletoe at Christmas. There's the precious kiss that a small child gives a puppy. There are so-called "air kisses" when the two people just kiss the air beside the other person's cheek – something I've never quite understood.

And there are different motives. A young man who considered himself to be somewhat of a "ladies' man" was working at the fabric counter of a

department store. As he waited on the customers, he noticed that her had two customers left whom he had not assisted – one an elderly gentleman, and the other a rather attractive young lady. Which one to help first?

Without even thinking about it, the male clerk directed his attention to the young lady! She pointed out a bolt of fabric and said "I want to buy this material for a new dress. How much does it cost?" The smirking, flirting male clerk replied, "Only one kiss per yard."

Not to be taken back by the harassment, the woman said, "That's fine! I'll take ten yards." With expectation and anticipation written all over his face, the clerk hurriedly measured out and wrapped the cloth, then held it out teasingly, leaning forward to receive his "payment."

The woman snatched the package from him, and pointed to the elderly man standing beside her. "Grandpa will pay the bill," she smiled.

One motive of course is to express love. Some people kiss a loved one to get them to stop talking! A little girl might kiss her father to get him to agree to something she wants. They learn early, don't they?

In 1936, Hugh Morris wrote a book called "The Art of Kissing." Toward the end of that book he wrote, "man is the only animal who uses the kiss to express his love and affection. Dogs, cats and bears lick their offspring. Horses and cows rub noses and necks. Birds nestle together. But, only mankind kisses."

Then there are the kisses found in Scripture. In no less than five of the New Testament letters we are told to greet one another with a holy kiss. But before you bolt for the door, this message is not advocating that we begin that practice in our day! But there are two occasions when Jesus was kissed that deserve our attention today. In both of these the word used for *kiss* means "to kiss repeatedly, over and over." In these two we can find examples of our own devotion toward Christ, and we can learn that there are different motives. The first is found in that terrible scene where Jesus is arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane:

*While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and **kissed** him." (Matthew 26:47-49, NIV)*

We sometimes have the image in our heads that Judas merely "pecked" Jesus on the cheek, then stepped back to allow the soldiers to arrest Jesus. But when we peel back the layers and look at the language carefully, we learn that Judas kissed Jesus over and over and over, as if he thought he could completely hide his deception and deceit with a multitude of kisses. His were kisses of betrayal.

*Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913) defines the "Judas kiss," as "a deceitful and treacherous kiss." The term is used in our day to describe an act of deception, whether a kiss is involved or not.*

A Christian band by the name of *Petra* several years ago had a song entitled "Judas's Kiss." Listen to the words:

*I wonder how it makes You feel when the prodigal won't come home  
I wonder how it makes You feel when he'd rather be on his own  
I wonder what it's like for You when a lamb has gone astray  
I wonder what it's like for You when Your children disobey  
It must be like another thorn stuck in Your brow  
It must be like another close friend's broken vow  
It must be like another nail right through Your wrist  
It must be just like, just like Judas' kiss  
I wonder how it makes You feel when no one seeks Your face  
I wonder how it makes You feel when they give up in the race  
I wonder what it's like for You when they willingly disobey  
I wonder what it's like for You when they willingly walk away  
It must be like another thorn stuck in Your brow  
It must be like another close friend's broken vow  
It must be like another nail right through Your wrist  
It must be just like, just like Judas' kiss.*

And if we are completely honest with ourselves, we will have to admit that many times in our experiences with Christ we, too, have offered Jesus the “Judas kiss.” Every time we have disobeyed, or refused to follow, or done anything to grieve the Holy Spirit, we have kissed Jesus the way Judas did – and we, too, have done it repeatedly.

But let’s look at the other time when someone kissed Jesus repeatedly. Who was it, and what did it mean? The story is found in Luke 7, and the scene is a dinner to which Jesus had been invited. A woman whose name we do not know suddenly appears in the room, where she was not wanted. The Scripture says that this woman “*lived a sinful life in that town.*” She stood behind Jesus and because of the overwhelming realization of the dark sinfulness of her life, and the unbounded love and forgiveness of Jesus, she wept so much that Jesus’ feet began to be wet with her tears.

They were reclining at the table, as was the Eastern custom, with their feet stretched out behind them. And even though His face would have been turned away from her, He knew she was there behind Him, and He knew why she was there. Feel what Jesus felt! His feet are hot, tired and dusty, suddenly there was a single teardrop that fell on His feet – then another, and another and another. Can you feel that in your imagination? Then feel what happened next – showing great humility and an open display of her extreme love for Jesus, the woman knelt and began to wipe the tears from His feet with her hair. She had brought an alabaster jar of perfume, very costly, and she poured that perfume over His feet.

But before she did that, she did something profound. She kissed the feet of Jesus, and she kissed them, and she kissed them – over and over and over again. Feel those kisses planted without hesitation or fear of what others might be thinking. Feel those kisses given without reservation, and from the depths of a heart filled to overflowing with love and gratitude for what Jesus had done in her heart.

There is so much that can be said about this passage. Simon the Pharisee saw only the woman and her sin – he did not see her gratitude and love for Jesus. With suspicion and self-righteousness in his heart, Simon thought “*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.*” Knowing what was in Simon’s heart, Jesus told a parable about a man who had a great debt cancelled. Then Jesus turned toward the woman and asked the obvious question, *“Do you see this woman?”* It was a question designed of course to draw attention to her and her loving act. Jesus said of her in verse 45, *“You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet.”* “Simon,” Jesus was saying, “when I entered you extended not even the most basic of greetings. But this woman, whom you consider to be so sinful, has gone far beyond that, and has expressed her love for Me in the most natural way.”

She kissed Jesus because of her own sin. She kissed Jesus because she recognized the Holy One in whose presence she stood. Out of great love and gratitude for the forgiveness He was offering her, she kissed Him. Over and over and over and over did she kiss Him.

So we are forced to face this. Should my love and devotion for Christ be summed up in a kiss, or even a series of kisses, would it be described best by the kisses of Judas, or by the kisses of the sinful woman? Have you betrayed Jesus by your own actions, and by your betrayal have you revealed your true self? Or do you, like the sinful woman, stand broken by the realization of what Jesus had done for you, and in that startling, shocking realization, express your extreme love for Jesus by doing what comes naturally for you?

Hold your life and devotion up for closer scrutiny. Spend this day thinking about how your discipleship for Christ measures and compares. Which is most characteristic of your kisses for Christ? What kind of kisser are you? I asked that question at the beginning of this message, and I ask it again. But it has nothing to do with how good you are at it. It has everything to do with how devoted you are to Christ.