

Introduction: This is our final week of looking at the prayer Jesus taught His followers to pray according to the Gospel of Luke. As noted the first week, it is different from the prayer He taught in the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew. *** The first half of the prayer begins with addressing God as 'Father' in order to re-establish an intimate relationship with THE Perfect Father. After this, followers of The Father's Son need to make two strong petitions. First, they, and all people on earth, must recognize His holiness and worship Him for being righteous and for always acting in righteousness. Second, all must request that His Kingdom will be fully established on earth. *** In the second half of the prayer, God's children in His Son petition God for their needs. Most importantly, they must be forgiven all they have done which falls short of God's holy standards. And, they also ask for their physical necessities and their spiritual wholeness. *** More specifically, Jesus' followers are to implore Father God to forgive their sins. Then they add because also we ourselves are now practicing the forgiveness of everyone indebted to us. *** This is the miracle of being forgiven of sins by Father God: All who have experienced His forgiveness are continually enabled and empowered to forgive others. But those who have not received God's forgiveness struggle to forgive others. All who have been forgiven understand: *Forgiveness is the fruit of God's forgiveness*. Jesus told a parable to a Pharisee that linked being forgiven of a debt by God with loving God. Let's now look at the circumstances that led to Jesus' giving the parable, the details of the parable, and how Jesus pointedly applied the parable to the Pharisee. Let us also be motivated by this parable of Jesus.

I. As Jesus eats with a Pharisee, a sinful woman ministers to Him upsetting Simon His host, so Jesus tells him a parable.
(Luke 7:36-43)

A. While Jesus is eating at a Pharisee's house a sinful woman ministers to Jesus' feet with perfume while weeping, but the Pharisee who invited Him is scandalized. (Verses 36-39)

Setting: One of the Pharisees was asking Him to eat dinner with him, and having gone to the Pharisee's house, He was reclined at the table. (Verse 36)

First century eating: The table was on the floor. They did not use chairs. People would lie on the floor on their sides. A right-handed person would lie on his left side, his left elbow supporting his head so he could reach food with his right hand. This is how Jesus reclined at the table.

1. Behold! A woman, who had been living a sinful life in that town, had known He was eating at the Pharisee's house ... (Verses 37a-b)

Sinful woman: She was a prostitute, and would have been shunned by men, hated by women.

Knew: Somehow she knew where Jesus was eating. She came to Him.

2. ... having brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and having stood behind Him at His feet weeping tears she began to wet His feet with her tears. (Verses 37b-38a)

Three preliminaries: First we are told she brought a stone jar of myrrh, then that she stood behind Him at his feet (which were extended away from the low table), and she is weeping.

Began to wash feet: After showing her respect for Him and weeping over her way of life, she began to wash the feet of Jesus.

3. And with the hair of her head she was wiping and she was kissing His feet and she was pouring perfume on them. (Verse 38b)

Three ongoing ministries: The feet she had wet with her tears, she wipes clean with her hair; she kisses the feet she stood behind; finally she pours perfume on Jesus' feet from the alabaster jar she brought.

Heart: All she was doing for Jesus came from a heart filled with hope that was expressing gratitude for all she had heard about Jesus and His love for people brought low by their sins and mistakes in life.

4. But the Pharisee, having seen, is saying to himself: IF this man is being a prophet and he is knowing what kind of woman she is, she touching Him, that she is a sinner! (Verse 39)

Prophet: The Pharisee is convinced no prophet could ever accept being ministered to by a prostitute, so he is telling himself Jesus is not a prophet.

B. Jesus addresses the Pharisee, named Simon, by telling him of two men who had large and small debts forgiven, and then asks Simon who will love the moneylender more? (Verses 40-43)

1. Having answered (the Pharisee's doubt of Jesus being a prophet) Jesus says to him, 'Simon, I am having something to tell thee'; and he, 'Teacher, thou must tell'; and He is saying ... (Verse 40)

Jesus initiates: Jesus discerns Simon's faulty understanding and begins to address it immediately.

2. 'Two men were being debtors to a certain moneylender, one was owing five hundred denarii, but the other fifty – neither of them having to pay back, to both he cancelled the debt. (Verses 41-42a)

The parable of the moneylender: Unlike the parables Jesus told in His public preaching and teaching, this parable is addressed to one man; but, because it is in God's Word, it is to all of us.

3. So, which one will love him more?' (Verse 42b)

Big question: The answer is obvious, and Simon does not yet realize he is being set up by Jesus to learn an uncomfortable truth about himself and all self-righteous people.

4. Having answered, Simon said, 'I am supposing that (it is) the one to whom the bigger (debt) was cancelled'. (Verse 43a)

Bigger debt: No supposing is needed. Obviously the one with the bigger debt cancelled will love the moneylender more, and be more grateful to the moneylender.

5. But He (Jesus) said to him, 'Correctly thou have judged'. (Verse 43b)

Correct judgment: Jesus now affirms what common sense tells most people.

Bottom line: Before going on with the specifics of Jesus' encounter with a Pharisee and a prostitute, let's start with a general truth:

Those who know forgiveness in Jesus love God the most

II. In contrast to His teaching of multitudes, Jesus pointedly and specifically applies the parable to Simon and pronounces forgiveness to the woman. (Luke 7:44-50)

A. Jesus contrasts the actions of Simon and the woman, concluding that the woman is forgiven of greater sins and so loves Him more than Simon. (Verses 44-47)

1. And He, having been turned toward the woman, to Simon He said, 'Are thou seeing this woman? I came into thy house, water for my feet, thou did not give; but with tears she wet my feet and with her hair, she dried. (Verse 44)

Feet: Unlike a general parable, Jesus now specifically and uncomfortably applies this one to Simon. First, Simon failed on the most basic Middle-Eastern hospitality requirement of foot washing; but, the prostitute went above and beyond to wash Jesus' feet.

2. A kiss thou did not give to me; but, from when I entered she has not stopped kissing my feet. (Verse 45)

Kiss: Simon should have kissed Jesus' cheek; but, she is kissing His feet.

3. Thou did not anoint My head with oil; but, she has poured perfume on my feet. (Verse 46)

Anoint: Jesus brings up a third aspect of Middle-Eastern hospitality Simon neglected; but, again, the prostitute is above and beyond. By now, Simon may have squirmed uncomfortably. It is possible Jesus was preparing the prostitute for the grace He will soon give her by 'earshotting' her in all this.

4. For which sake, I am saying to thee: Her many sins have been forgiven because she loved much; but, to he who is being forgiven little, little he is loving'. (Verse 47)

Sins forgiven: Jesus explains the prostitute's 'over the top' love expressed in service to Him is because she realizes she is a great sinner in need of great forgiveness from God in Jesus. However, Jesus is showing Simon the reason he failed to show Jesus even minimal hospitality is because Simon sees himself as not much of a sinner.

This causes Simon to have little love for Jesus.

Those who know forgiveness in Jesus love God the most

B. Then Jesus tells the woman her sins are forgiven causing all the dinner guests to question Him, then He tells her that her faith has saved her. (Verses 48-50)

1. Then Jesus said to her. 'They have been forgiven, the sins of thee'. (Verse 48)

Declared forgiven: Finally, Jesus declares to the prostitute that her sins are forgiven. She is now free to forgive others out of her being filled with love to God for His great forgiveness through Jesus. His love is in her to enable and empower her to forgive as a result of her being forgiven.

Forgiveness is the fruit of God's forgiveness

2. The others eating with them began to say, 'Who is this being, who even sins is forgiving?' (Verse 49)

Doubt: Their doubt of Jesus is the opposite of faith. These others at the dinner are not able to forgive because they do not believe Jesus has the power to forgive sins. At this time they do not know:

Forgiveness is the fruit of God's forgiveness

3. Jesus said to the woman, 'The faith of thee has saved thee. Thou must be going in peace'. (Verse 50)

Saved: All people must be saved by grace through faith in Jesus and what He has done for them.

This prostitute experienced the amazing grace of God in Jesus

Peace: He sends her away with the peace that comes from forgiveness. Let us all live in the peace of salvation, and bring God's love and forgiveness to others that they too may learn to forgive. All people may be forgiven by the grace of God in Jesus who forgives all who turn to Him in faith. Through God's forgiveness, all may be enabled and empowered to forgive as Jesus taught His disciples to pray.

Forgiveness is the fruit of God's forgiveness

Conclusion: While Jesus was eating at the house of a Pharisee a sinful woman ministered to Him in humility and love, but the Pharisee was offended. So, Jesus told him a parable and made a blunt application to the Pharisee before He forgave the woman and declared that her faith had saved her. He wanted all people to know that when God forgives them they should show great love to Him by showing forgiveness to others in humble service to all.

Forgiveness is the fruit of God's forgiveness