

Valley Bible Church – Parables of Jesus

What is God Like? God expects response to love.

The Two Debtors

Luke 7:36-50

Introduction:

Last week we considered the parable about two creditors. It drove home the lesson that each one of us has received the forgiveness of a debt we could not possibly repay when God sent His Son Jesus to be our substitute sacrifice for our sins. By the very nature of that great forgiveness we have received, we are to forgive others, not once but unlimited times.

Matthew 5:7--*"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."*

Luke 11:4--*"Forgive us our debts, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us."*

Today we will look at a parable that carries that concept one step farther and discusses why our love for God leading to a forgiving spirit is appropriate. (*"We love Him because He first loved us and gave Himself for us."*-- 1 John 4:19)

(Read Luke 7:36-50)

Background *Note: Most of passage is set-up for a short parable.*

A. The Setting

Home of a Pharisee named Simon (v 40)

Pharisees were wealthy, politically powerful, religious rulers of the Jewish community centered in Jerusalem. They were members of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body in the Temple, and the protectors of the Law and Traditions of Israel. By the way, the name Simon means "separated one."

Preparing for a meal (v 1)

There were probably benches around the walls of the room and an open door policy so that others, invited or not, could join to listen or take part in the discussion. This was the custom of the day and region.

B. The Scene

The guests

Jesus had responded to an invitation to dine and had "reclined" on the low couches or cushions around a low table in the center of the room or court-yard.

The other invited guest would be only the elite and important members of society.

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The Purpose

The guests were obviously not friends of Jesus. Nor are they there to hear him teach. In fact, from the conversation it is clear they are there either from curiosity, to make fun of Him, or to test and trap Him.

In our attempts to make Jesus normal, meek, calm, and reasonable we forget what a bombshell He was to their respectable society. He could fit in, as at the wedding at Cana when He provided fine wine for the party, but more often, he would stir up angry emotions. Many more nights like this one and He will be nailed to the cross.

C. The Story

A woman enters into a man's world

Some believe it was Mary called Magdalene, the prostitute from whom Jesus had cast out seven demons because she is mentioned in 8:2. She was definitely a sinner (v 37).

Perhaps she sat on a bench listening for a while, but she came to worship, washing His feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair.

Before Simon could recover from this shock she poured perfume on Jesus' feet and kissing them over and over.

(The Greek work implies continuous action.)

Her actions bring a strong reaction

Simon and his friends stare in amazement as Jesus accepts her acts of worship and love. He has been called Rabbi but a true Rabbi would never even acknowledge any woman in public much less allow this kind of actions. He wasn't even embarrassed when He should be jumping up to go out and purify Himself.

But it's worse than that as we read Simon's thought (v 39). This man has been hailed as a Prophet of God. If He were a true prophet He would know what kind of woman she was and have her dragged out and punished.

The problem is, He's not a prophet, He is God and He knows Simon's heart. Verse 40, *Simon, I have something to say to you."*

And what He says is a parable:

Parable (Verses 41 and 42)

A. Local E-Z Loan Man makes two loans

One loan is for 500 denarii--a year and half wages

Another for 50 denarii--a month and a half wages

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Both loans come due and the borrowed were unable to repay but the lender graciously cancels both debts.

Jesus asks the "give them enough rope" question: "Which one will love the lender more" (v 42)

Simon answers, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more."

And Jesus said, "You have chosen wisely." (v 43)

B. Jesus Drive Home His Point

Look at you, Simon, I came to your house as an invited guest and you:

Gave me no foot washing (A Jewish custom since Abraham's day)

Gave me no kiss of greeting (A common courtesy showing respect, salutation shown even to a heathen--SHALOM)

Game me no anointing (Oil to cool and refresh)

But she:

Washed me with tears, has never stopped kissing me, and

Has anointed my feet. *"Her sins, which are many are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little".* (v 47)

C. Verse 49 is the key

1. The final question: *"Who is this man who even forgives sins?"*

2. The final answer: As Josh McDowell so aptly put it, "He is either a Lunatic, a liar, or He is Lord."

Only God can forgive sin, there fore Jesus must be God in the flesh. An so He says it one more time
"Your faith (evidenced by your proper worship) has saved you; go in peace." (v 50)

Lesson

A. God loves us and forgives cancels our unpayable sin debt

Forgiveness is complete no matter how great the load of sin.

Everyone's sin debt is actually equally as serious.

Did the Pharisees really have less cause to recognize their sin and worship Jesus than the prostitute?
No, they had no less sin (shortfallenness), just different sins (acts of rebellion).

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B. We respond, not based on the amount of our sin, but based on our awareness of that sin.

Must we "sin much" to be "forgiven much"--Heaven forbid.

No, we just need to be aware of our sin and remember that the Bible reminds us that to be guilty of one sin is to be guilty of all.

Because of her faith in Jesus, the woman was constantly aware of her debt to God, while Simon wasn't aware he owed a debt at all.

C. Our love, obedience, and worship of God is never any greater than our appreciation of His pardon.

We cannot be truly grateful for our salvation and treat sin lightly.

Great forgiveness breeds great personal relationships, with God and with other people.