

## **Parable Of The Two Debtors**

### **Luke 7:36-50**

#### **Home Of Simon The Pharisee**

**LUK 7:36 Now one of the Pharisees [named Simon] was requesting Him to dine with him. And He entered the Pharisee's house, and reclined {at the table.}**

1. The name of the Pharisee ,who was hosting the dinner, was “Simon.” (Lk. 7:40,44).
2. We do not know the identity of “the city” where this Pharisee lived.
3. No mention is made of Bethany or any other city. A similar account took place in Bethany.
3. **Note:**
  - a. This account in Luke is not the same account recorded in Matthew, Mark and John. (Matt. 26:6-13; Mk. 14:3-9; Jn. 12:3-8).
    - 1) These writers record Mary anointing Jesus in the home of Simon the [former] leper in Bethany. (Matt. 26:6; Mk. 14:3). John tells us the woman’s name was Mary. (Jn. 12:3).
    - 2) Luke speaks of Simon the Pharisee, not the same as Simon the leper. (Lk. 7:36, 40, 44; Matt. 26:6; Mk. 14:3).
    - 3) Simon was a common name in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. There were at least ten men in the New Testament who had this name: (1) Simon Peter (Matt. 4:18); (2) Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:9); (3) Simon of Cyrene (Matt. 27:32); (4) Simon the tanner (Acts 9:43); (5) Simon the Lord’s brother (Matt. 13:55), etc.
  - b. John does not mention the host’s name, but a study of John’s account shows it is the same account found in Matthew and Mark.
4. Here are some additional differences between Luke’s account and the accounts of a different woman, named Mary, recorded in Matthew, Mark and John.
  - a. The story in Luke occurred early in the ministry of Christ.
  - b. The story of Mary occurred just before Christ made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. (Matt. 21:1; Jn. 12:3).
    - 1) Jesus had arrived in Bethany on Friday, the 8th of Abib (Nisan). (Jn. 12:1).
    - 2) He stayed in the home of Simon the leper. (Matt. 26:6; Mk. 14:3). He spent the night there.
    - 3) He ate in the home of Simon the leper on Saturday, the 9th of Abib.
    - 4) He was then anointed by Mary. (Jn. 12:3).
    - 5) The next day was Sunday (10th of Abib) and He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. (Jn. 12:1,2).
    - 6) Monday was the 11th of Abib, and Friday was the 15th of Abib.

- 7) It was on Friday that Jesus was crucified.
- c. Luke describes Simon as a Pharisee, whereas in Matthew and Mark he is described as a leper. (Lk. 7:37; Mk. 14:3).
- d. Luke gives the woman's character as the reason for the objection, whereas in Matthew, Mark and John the objection was due to the wasting of money which might have been given to the poor. (Lk. 7:39; Matt. 26:9; Mk. 14:4,5; Jn. 12:5).
- e. Luke records no remarks about "the poor" whereas Mark and the other writers do. (Matt. 26:9; Mk. 14:4; Jn. 12:4).
- f. There was a word concerning the poor (Matt. 26:9; Jn. 12:8; Mk. 14:7), but not in Luke's story.
5. There are some similarities between the accounts.
- 1) You have two similar accounts of women anointing Jesus.
  - 2) Jesus defended the woman in Luke and in the story in the other gospels. (Lk. 7:44-50; Matt. 26:10; Jn.12:7,8; Mk. 14:6-8).
  - 3) The host in both accounts was a man named Simon, but one was a former leper and the other was a Pharisee.

**LUK 7:37 And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining {at the table} in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial [flask] of perfume,**

1. The identity of this woman is not known, but she is called "a sinner."
  - a. Tax-collectors, tanners, camel drivers, custom collectors were among those who were considered impure or sinners because of their occupations. The wife of an irreligious person was considered a sinner.
  - b. It is more probable that her sins were of a moral nature. (Lk. 7:37-50).
    - 1) Jesus indicates her sins were "many." (Lk. 7:47).
    - 2) He does not state what they were, but her actions suggest that she was remorseful over her sinful actions.
2. The "alabaster vial of perfume" was a variety of gypsum. "alabastron" [ah **lahb** bah stron]
  - a. It refers to a vase, flask, jar, box holding perfumed ointment. RSV has "alabaster flask." KJV has "alabaster box."
    - 1) The ointment (muron) was contained in a jar of alabaster, a translucent marble like stone.
    - 2) "Muron" [**moo** rahn] often referred to a perfumed ointment.
  - b. See word also in Matthew 26:7 & Mark. 14:3.

## **Humble Actions OF Woman**

**LUK 7:38 and standing behind {Him} at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept**

**wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet, and, anointing them with the perfume.**

1. To the Jews it was shameful for a woman to let her hair down in public.
2. It could even be grounds for divorce. (Matt. 19:3).
3. This woman broke the custom in what was perhaps a spontaneous action motivated by her love.
4. We are not told why she was weeping, but most likely it was due to her remorse over and repentance of sins.

**Note:** Luke does not here emphasize the cost of the ointment (Lk. 7:38), but the other writers do in their accounts of an anointing in the home of Simon the leper. (Matt. 26:6; Mk.14:5; Jn. 12:5).

### **Identity Of Jesus Questioned**

**LUK 7:39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner."**

1. Earlier in this chapter the people had called Jesus "a great prophet." (Lk. 4:16).
2. The Pharisee dismissed this notion because the way Jesus treated this sinful woman and because they refused to accept that a poor, uneducated man from Nazareth could be the Christ, the Son of God.
  - a. The "if" is a contrary to fact condition in the Greek.
  - b. It assumes Jesus was not a prophet.
  - c. This assumption might have been made for several reasons.
    - 1) If Jesus were a prophet, He would not let this sinful woman touch Him.
    - 2) If Jesus were a prophet, He would not have treated her kindly according to their sinful thinking.
    - 3) If Jesus were a prophet, he would have known this woman was a sinner and would not let her touch Him.
    - 4) The fact He did was an indication He was ignorant of who she was and not a prophet.

### **Parable of Two Debtors**

**LUK 7:40 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher."**

1. Jesus knew the thoughts of Simon. See Matt. 9:4.
2. By the parable it is clear He knew the woman was "a sinner."
3. The title "Teacher" is used for the first time in this gospel. (Lk. 7:40; 8:49; 9:38; 10:25; etc.)

**LUK 7:41 "A certain moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.**

1. A "denarius" was about 20 cents or a day's wage for a common laborer. (Matt. 20:2, 4 12, 13).

2. One was forgiven of 500 days pay and the other 50 days pay.

3. These debts were enormous especially the greater one.

**LUK 7:42 "When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more?"**

1. Sin is frequently referred to as a "debt" in ancient times.

2. The analogy in the parable would easily be understood as a parallel to the forgiveness of sins. (Matt. 6:12; Lk. 11:4).

3. Jesus was forcing His objector objectors to agree with His action just as Jesus had forced the lawyer to agree the Samaritan had been the true neighbor. (Lk. 10:36,37).

### **Jesus Agreement With Simon's Response**

**LUK 7:43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose [take it, assume, judge] the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, " You have judged correctly. "**

- "I suppose" is from "hupolambano" [hoo pah lahm bah noh] meaning "to think, suppose." See Acts 2:15.

1. The implication of this story is that forgiveness preceded gratitude.

2. Simon agreed that the one forgiven of more would love more.

3. The woman knew she was a sinner deserving of condemnation and had no thought she could be saved by her own merits.

4. The merciful Jesus forgave her of her sins. Jesus had the authority to do that. (Mk. 2:10,11).

### **Woman's Hospitality Versus Simon's Hospitality**

**LUK 7:44 And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair.**

1. Simon did not extend to him a common expression of hospitality.

2. This act of hospitality was needed because Jesus had traveled in sandals.

3. Simon was not necessarily being rude in neglecting this, but he did not go out of his way to show hospitality to Jesus - the Son of God.

4. He should have shown every kind of hospitality to the Son of God.

**LUK 7:45 "You gave Me no kiss [greeting]; but she, since the time I came in [your house], has not ceased to kiss My feet.**

1. The "kiss" would be a courteous form of greeting.

2. Luke does not give the reason Simon did not render such hospitality.

3. This woman was “poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3), but Simon and his other guests were arrogant.

LUK 7:46 **"You did not [even] anoint My head with [inexpensive olive] oil, but she anointed My feet with [costly] perfume.**

1. Assuming it was like the ointment in Mark, it was worth more than 300 denarii.
2. That was nearly a year’s wages for the common working man.
3. We cannot be sure it was this costly, but it was costly.

### **Jesus Forgives**

LUK 7:47 **"For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."**

1. The reference to "many" sins would certainly represent Simon's opinion of this woman.
2. It appears to be the truth that she had “many” sins according to Jesus’ statement.
3. Again the nature of these sins is not disclosed.
  - a. Being a harlot was certainly evil and this may have been her sin [sins].
  - b. There are virgins and woman who are not harlots who are evil, mean, hateful sinners.

LUK 7:48 **And He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven."**

1. The Greek tense is perfect and denotes a past action with abiding results.
2. We are not told when the woman’s sins had been forgiven and it is useless to speculate.
3. As The Son of God, Jesus could forgive sins. (Lk. 5:20).
4. Her forgiveness is real, but Simon’s was only hypothetical.
  - a. If he were forgiven, he would have little love since he felt little, if any, need for a Savior and forgiveness.
  - b. Nothing in Luke’s text indicates Simon repented or was forgiven or how the parable impacted him.
  - c. There is no record of Simon repenting and submitting to Jesus.
5. Some today love “little” because in their minds they need “little,” if any, forgiveness.
6. Jesus’ statement served as a word of assurance to the woman, “Your sins have indeed been forgiven.”

### **"Who Is This {Man} Who Even Forgives Sins?"**

LUK 7:49 **And those [the other guests] who were reclining {at the table} with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this {man} who even forgives sins?"**

1. Jesus' critics were not courageous enough to express their criticism openly.

2. They thought it blasphemy for Jesus to claim to forgive sins.
3. These words refer to a similar account of Jesus treating a woman kindly, but the wording shows how men understood one forgiving sins who in their minds was not God. (Mk. 2:7).
4. They refused to accept the real identity of Jesus. (Matt. 16:16,17; 17:5; Jn. 6:68; 20:30, 31).

### **Her Faith Saved Her**

LUK 7:50 **And He said to The woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."**

1. Jesus praised her for her "faith." He implied they lacked the saving faith she had.
2. Her "faith" saved her.
  - a. It had not earned her salvation. (Eph. 2:5,8-10; Rom. 6:23).
  - b. She was not trying to earn her salvation.
  - c. It had led her to humbly show her love for Jesus and seek the forgiveness of the Savior.

### **Lessons**

1. Christ came to save sinner and He is willing to receive penitent sinners. (Lk. 19:10).
2. Christ can forgive sins. (Mk. 2:10; Lk. 5:20; 23:43).
3. Jesus showed He was God's Son by knowing their thoughts. (Lk. 7:39).
4. Ours sins are a debt we cannot pay.
  - a. We owed a debt we could not pay.
  - b. Jesus paid a debt He did not owe.
5. The self-righteous have little love for Christ in their own minds because they feel they have been forgiven of little.
6. Christ is not encouraging men to sin much so they can be forgiven of much and love much, but He is emphasizing the self-righteous have little love and gratitude because of their attitude.
7. **Here are some untrue biblical conclusions.**
  - a. Let us sin that grace may abound. (Rom. 6:1,2).
    - 1) This says sin makes God look good.
    - 2) So let us sin that God can extend His grace and look good.
  - b. Let us sin that we might have more love and gratitude.
    - 1) This argument says the greater sinners we are the greater our love and appreciation for God's forgiveness.

- 2) It encourages men to see how far they can fall into the depths of sin that they might have a greater love when forgiven.
  - 3) There is not one scripture that encourages men to sin. See Rom. 6:2; 1 Jn. 2:1.
- c. Christ will forgive those who are not humbly confessing their sins. (1 Jn. 1:8,10). See Lk. 18:9-14.
- d. Those who have little awareness of sin are pleasing to God and stand pardoned.
- 1) This false feeling is created by classifying sins as great and small. "My sins" are "small" or not "too bad."
  - 2) This false feeling comes about by spiritual blindness - unable to see faults.
  - 3) This false feeling comes from a notion that a man's goodness and morality are enough to save him. See Acts 10:1,2; Acts 11:13-15).
- e. Since sin can be forgiven, it is not a serious matter. (Rom. 3:23; 6:23).
- 1) Sin is very serious. (Rom. 6:23a).
  - 2) The fact it can be forgiven does not diminish from its seriousness and consequences.
  - 3) It leads to condemnation if unforgiven.
  - 4) It motivated God to give His only Son that man might be saved.
  - 5) Only the blood of Jesus can atone for sin.
- f. Sinful women or men do not deserve to be saved.
- 1) No one deserves to be saved.
  - 2) All are saved by God's grace. (Eph. 2:5, 8-9).
  - 3) This woman would not be on most peoples prospect list, but she was on Christ's list.

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