

Forgiving a Sinner

Key Verse:
***“Wherefore I say
unto thee, Her sins,
which are many,
are forgiven; for
she loved much:
but to whom little
is forgiven, the
same loveth little.”***
—Luke 7:47

Selected Scripture:
Luke 7:36-50

THE PARABLE CONTAINED

in our lesson should resonate deeply in the hearts of earnest Christians as they realize how much they have been forgiven. In the setting, we find that Jesus had been invited to the house of Simon, a Pharisee, for dinner. (Luke 7:36) Simon may have thought he was doing Jesus a great honor to invite him into his home. This is suggested by the fact that, as the host, he did

not offer customary courtesies like washing Jesus’ feet, giving an embrace of welcome, or providing oil of anointing. Having a high station in life, the Pharisee may have excused himself from these customs, thinking that he was above such obligations.

An uninvited guest, a woman considered a social and religious outcast, took advantage of the opportunity Simon had ignored. Though looked down upon with contempt and judgmental words, her act of love and gratitude has been memorialized for the ages. She is addressed by no name, to respect her anonymity—being only referred to as “a sinner.”—vss. 37-39

This woman was deeply sorrowful for her sins. She realized that, by Jesus, she could find blessed relief from her soul’s aching. Sensing that he could bring healing to her troubled heart, she entered the feast uninvited. As

she approached Jesus, everyone could see that she was holding an alabaster box. It contained sweet perfume to anoint the Savior. She regarded that which the Pharisee neglected to see.

In his contempt, Simon's words as he "spake within himself" are troubling in their arrogance: "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner." (vs. 39) He could scarcely have been more wrong about the situation. Reading the thoughts in Simon's heart, Jesus turned to the woman. Her tears poured out upon his feet, and her hair served to wipe them clean. From her heart she had anointed him with perfume. The blessed moment was nearly broken by the Pharisee's unkind thoughts, but our Lord had mastery of the situation, offering a lesson by parable. He asked who would love a lender more—one who was forgiven a fifty denarii debt, or one who was forgiven five hundred denarii.—vss. 41,42, *New American Standard Bible*

Seeing the obvious logic in Jesus' lesson, Simon was quick to answer, saying, "he, to whom he forgave most." (vs. 43) Although he saw the rationale, he appeared blind to the lesson's personal relevance. We can gain insights from this. The more spiritually mature we become in Christ, the more we realize how fallen we are. The Apostle Paul pointed out this fact in his Epistle to the Romans: "The good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:19,24 NASB) The answer to his question is "Jesus Christ our Lord."—vs. 25

Applying the lesson of our Key Verse, let us love our Lord much, that we may be forgiven much. Let us also love others, being merciful and forgiving despite their weaknesses and shortcomings. May we never be blind to our need of forgiveness. If we practice these things, Jesus may be heard in our hearts saying, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."—Luke 7:50 ■