

## MAIN POINT

*Gratitude is a proper response to the forgiveness God has shown us in Christ Jesus.*

## INTRODUCTION

Without listing them all out, what are some of the biggest debts you carry right now (house, car, student loans, etc)?

What would it mean to you if someone paid off the largest debt you owed? What would you be able to do with your newfound financial freedom?

What would you feel for that person? How would you express your gratitude?

**From all accounts, America is a debt-ridden society. We carry debt on our homes, our cars, our education, and on frivolous purchases through credit cards. Most people understand the amazing amount of gratitude that you would feel if all your debts were forgiven. In this dramatic parable of a moneylender and his debtor, Jesus highlights one of our most common blind spots and shows us how to be released from the trap of resentment and bitterness. The sinful woman in these verses demonstrated that she loved Jesus and desired to serve Him because of the forgiveness she had received. Because she clearly understood the value and identity of Jesus, she humbled herself and gave her all to Him.**

## UNDERSTANDING

### > READ LUKE 7:36-38.

These verses set the scene for the story. Where is Jesus, who are the main characters, and what happens?

What do you find most interesting about the actions of the woman in this text?

What risk was this “sinful woman” taking in coming to the house of Simon, the Pharisee? What does this tell us about her?

**An unnamed woman, whom Luke described as a sinner, came to the banquet at the house of a Pharisee named Simon. In her encounter with Jesus, several social conventions were broken. The woman must have entered the home uninvited—for a woman to approach a man who was not her husband would have**

been unthinkable in Jewish society. Her sinful reputation would have made any contact between her and a religious leader forbidden. Luke does not tell us how she felt about her circumstances, but it is clear that she understood that Jesus had something she desperately needed and could not find from the religious leaders of her day.

> **READ LUKE 7:39-50.**

What does Jesus see in this woman that Simon did not? How did this affect Jesus' actions toward her?

What seems to be Jesus' main concern in this passage? Simon's main concern? How had Simon misunderstood the nature of Christ's ministry?

**Contrasted with the woman's humility and thankfulness, Simon's response revealed the haughty and critical nature of his heart. Because Jesus showed compassion, Simon doubted that Jesus was a prophet and doubted that He knew the woman's background. Simon expected Jesus to fawn over him and be impressed with his religious activity and devotion.**

Jesus led Simon to a clearer understanding of the woman's motives through the use of a parable. What was the point of the parable (vv. 40-43)?

What decision did Jesus' parable and questions help Simon reach (v. 43)? What was he missing in his estimation of the sinful woman?

What would it have cost the moneylender to forgive the debtors? What does this tell us about the forgiveness we have in Christ?

How does gratitude for who Jesus is increase as we grow closer to Him? How does walking with Jesus lead us to continue in a pattern of repentance?

**Jesus' parable helped Simon understand that love grows out of forgiveness. The more a person understands and appreciates his or her debt, the more that person will appreciate forgiveness. The natural response is to love the one who forgives, just as our love for Jesus grows out of having received forgiveness from Him. Jesus showed love in guiding Simon to see both the woman and her extravagant care. Jesus did not stop with emphasizing the rightness of the woman's action. He also prompted Simon to contrast his own lack of gratitude.**

## APPLICATION

Gratitude is a proper response to the forgiveness God has shown us in Christ Jesus. What is one step you might take to cultivate a heart of gratitude to God this week?

What are some ways we can make gratitude to God a more common practice in and characteristic of our group?

The sinful woman's forgiveness motivated her to respond to Jesus. How has your own forgiveness motivated you to respond? Why is the joy of our salvation expressed as we share with others about the forgiveness we have received?

## PRAY

**Pray that you would fully appreciate the forgiveness you have received from Jesus. Allow that forgiveness to motivate the way you act and interact with people. Praise God for forgiving your sin and bringing you into a relationship with Him.**

## MEMORIZE

Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little. – Luke 7:47

## COMMENTARY

**LUKE 7:36-50**

**7:36.** While Pharisees often criticized Jesus for eating with sinners, one member of this sect invited Jesus to a meal at his home. Jesus did not refuse the man, although He surely knew the nature of Simon's attitude toward Him. Willing to offer His love even to those who rejected Him, Jesus entered and reclined at the table.

**7:37.** An unnamed woman who lived in this town came to the banquet. Luke described her as a sinner. Although the nature of her sin is not identified, the term "sinner" and Simon's reaction to her probably indicate she had a notorious reputation. Thus she was known to people at the dinner. Several social conventions were broken in the woman's encounter with Jesus. The woman brought a gift, not for the host but for his guest. An alabaster flask was often used for perfume. Mark 14:5 indicates the value of the fragrant oil at more than 300 denarii, nearly a year's wages for the average person then. Such would not have been used for ordinary purposes.

**7:38-39.** Luke did not address why the woman was weeping. The context suggests love and gratitude motivated her tears. Her tears also may have reflected remorse over and repentance for sin. Not daring to

address Jesus, the woman wiped His feet, cleaning away the dust and the tears with her hair. Her humility and her love for Jesus led her to perform an unthinkable act of servanthood.

7:40. Contrasted with the woman's humility and thankfulness, the Pharisee's response revealed the haughty and critical nature of his heart. The language used here conveys that the Pharisee did not speak aloud. Although the Pharisee did not speak directly to Jesus, Jesus replied to him.

7:41-43. Jesus answered the Pharisee's objection to the woman's act with a parable. The more a person understands and appreciates his or her debt, the more that person will appreciate forgiveness. The natural response is to love the one who forgives, just as our love for Jesus grows out of having received forgiveness from Him.

7:44-46. The contrast of Simon's indifference and the woman's gratitude stand in stark contrast. The woman's act showed she had more than respect for Jesus. She had great love for the Lord and expressed it in an extravagant manner.

7:47-48. The first sentence in verse 47 does not indicate the woman was forgiven because of her act of love, but rather that her love showed she had been forgiven. Because her many sins had been forgiven, she responded with much love. As Jesus noted, the person who is forgiven little, loves little. Addressing the woman, Jesus startled everyone at the table by declaring her sins were forgiven.

7:50. Jesus did not defend Himself, nor did He accuse the guests of hypocrisy. Instead He again spoke to the woman, giving reassurance that her faith had saved her. The Pharisees believed salvation was the result of doing enough good works to earn God's approval. By following the law and thus doing good, Pharisees expected the blessings of God on earth and a place with God in eternity.