

HE FORGIVES SIN

CORE PASSAGE: LUKE 7:37-39,41-50

CONTEXT

Before Jesus entered the Pharisee's home for a meal, He had several interactions with people who showed faith, such as the centurion, and those who did not. He then raised a widow's son from death, and many recognized Jesus as a prophet, but they did not have the spiritual insight to see Him as God. After calling out the faithless generation (Luke 7:31-15), Jesus taught about forgiveness and love at a Pharisee's home.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus forgives sinners who come to Him in adoring faith.

As you examine Luke 7:37-39,41-50:

- Point out that the woman abandoned all propriety to show Jesus love and reverence.
- Reflect upon the fact that when we are graciously forgiven, we love more.



TIMELINE

Jesus Teaches About and Heals on the Sabbath (Luke 6:1-11)

Jesus Teaches About Worry (Luke 12:12-34)

Jesus Raises a Widow's Son
from the Dead (Luke 7:11-17)

**SESSION STUDY: Jesus Forgives
a Sinful Woman (Luke 7:36-50)**

Jesus Delivers His Sermon
on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49)

John the Baptist Seeks Confirmation
That Jesus Is the Messiah (Luke 7:18-35)

Jesus Teaches About Prayer
(Luke 11:1-13)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** Luke 7:31-35

☐ **Day 4:** Luke 7:44-48

☐ **Day 2:** Luke 7:36-39

☐ **Day 5:** Luke 7:47-50

☐ **Day 3:** Luke 7:40-43

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 3



Scan this QR code
to access this session's
Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

LUKE 7:37-39

WE SHOW FAITH BY ABANDONING ALL FOR CHRIST.

Circle the action words detailing what the woman did for Jesus, and underline the response of the Pharisee.

37 And a woman in the town who was a sinner found out that Jesus was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house. She brought an alabaster jar of perfume **38** and stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to wash his feet with her tears. She wiped his feet with her hair, kissing them and anointing them with the perfume. **39** When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would know who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—she's a sinner!"

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

STEWARDSHIP: God's intention for mankind is that we serve Him as faithful stewards of His creation (Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2). We are to invest the time, talents, and material possessions God has given us for His kingdom work (Matthew 25:14-29), knowing that God is the true owner of all we have and that our true treasure is found not on earth but in heaven (Matthew 6:19,21; Luke 12:16-21). Motivated by God's generosity to us made most clear in the gospel, we are to give God the best of what we have (Proverbs 3:9), regularly (1 Corinthians 16:2), sacrificially (Matthew 12:41-44), humbly (Matthew 6:1-4), and cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:6-7), praying that God may be glorified in our stewardship of His provisions.

Key Concept: Jesus forgives sinners who come to Him in adoring faith.



The Pharisee and the woman are contrasting figures in this story, and their actions and heart posture should be compared throughout this passage. First, the two are contrasted by the reason for their presence at this meal. The Pharisee was the host who extended the invitation to Jesus as his guest. The woman arrived as an uninvited and unwelcome intruder to the Pharisee.

One similarity between the Pharisee and the woman was that they both wanted to spend time with Jesus, though for different reasons. Recall that not long before this event, crowds who witnessed Jesus raise the widow's dead son to life declared across the land that He was a prophet. The woman most likely heard this declaration, so she arrived with a humble heart to anoint Jesus with her tears and expensive perfume. A prophet might be able to offer her the forgiveness she desired.

What might the woman's actions have revealed about her understanding of who Jesus is?

The woman humbled herself without even speaking a word to Jesus. In contrast, the Pharisee's inner dialogue in verse 39 revealed the state of his heart. He was not interested in forgiveness because he did not see himself as a sinner like the woman.

Seeing the interaction between Jesus and the sinful woman, The Pharisee developed an argument in his head that discredited Jesus, and his argument was based on the word "if." He thought, "If Jesus were a prophet, then He would stop this woman immediately because no real prophet would let a sinner touch Him." The Pharisee concluded that since Jesus allowed the sinful woman to anoint Him, Jesus was immediately disqualified from the title of "prophet."

How does this woman's boldness challenge our understanding of what is required to come before Jesus?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

LUKE 7:41-50

JESUS'S MISSION IS TO FORGIVE SINNERS, AND IN RESPONSE, WE LOVE HIM MORE.

Circle each time Jesus uses the words “sins” and “forgiven/forgave.”

41 “A creditor had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. **42** Since they could not pay it back, he graciously forgave them both. So, which of them will love him more?” **43** Simon answered, “I suppose the one he forgave more.” “You have judged correctly,” he told him. **44** Turning to 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, with her tears, has washed my feet and wiped them with her hair. **45** You gave me no kiss, but she hasn’t stopped kissing my feet since I came in. **46** You didn’t anoint my head with olive oil, but she has anointed my feet with perfume. **47** Therefore I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; that’s why she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little.” **48** Then he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” **49** Those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this man who even forgives sins?” **50** And he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“If our Physician is almighty, our disease cannot be desperate; and if He casts none out that come to Him, why should you fear? Our sins are many, but His mercies are more: our sins are great, but His righteousness is greater: we are weak, but He is power.”¹

—John Newton (1725–1807)

Key Concept: Jesus forgives sinners who come to Him in adoring faith.



Jesus knew Simon, the Pharisee, was appalled by this woman; Simon's silent comment within his heart was not a secret to the Son of God. Instead of shaming or rebuking Simon directly, Jesus wanted to tell him something. While Simon respected Jesus enough to call Him "teacher" and allowed Jesus to speak (v. 40), the next words out of Jesus's mouth showed Simon that he did not respect Jesus to the degree that He deserved.

Jesus told a parable about two debtors, with one debtor being forgiven of a larger debt, to illustrate the point He wanted to make with Simon. Jesus then asked Simon which debtor would love the forgiver more. Not realizing he was about to see himself in the parable, Simon said the one with the greater debt would love the forgiver more. Simon's answer was correct, but his understanding and application of this truth was not as clear.

What are some ways you struggle to apply Scripture personally?

Jesus then revealed the true lesson of the parable: The actions of the woman were honorable, kind, and most of all loving, while Simon did not treat Jesus with the honor and love He deserved. Simon was

self-righteous and ignorant regarding his own sinful shortcomings. The woman, on the other hand, knew how sinful she was, so she humbly put herself at Jesus's feet so that He would be lifted up and honored.

Because of her bold outpouring of love, Jesus acknowledged the woman's faith and humility and told her she was forgiven. As the parable illustrated, because her debt was so great, she loved Jesus more. But in reality, the difference between her and the Pharisee was she acknowledged her sin, whereas Simon ignored his. The woman understood that only Jesus was worthy of her worship, and because of her loving faith, Jesus forgave her of her sins.

Why do you think an awareness of our own sin makes us more grateful and more loving toward Jesus?

GOSPEL CONNECTION

✕ ————— ✕
Jesus came to forgive sinners, and He did so through His death and resurrection, saving those who love and trust Him.

DEBT AND DEVOTION

Read Luke 7:37-39,41-50. Record ways we minimize our sin ("Little Debt"), and record insights about the seriousness of sin ("Great Debt").

LITTLE DEBT

GREAT DEBT

What happens to our love for Jesus when we forget the depth of our sin and our forgiveness?

What practices can help us remember the "great debt" Jesus paid to reconcile us to God?

Key Concept: Jesus forgives sinners who come to Him in adoring faith.



HEAD

How do you need to reevaluate your perspective on and interaction with sinners in light of Jesus's example?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

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Pray through Psalm 3 and confess your fears, struggles, and sins honestly before the Lord. Thank Him that He is your shield and deliverer. Ask Him to bless you as He sees fit, trusting that He is mighty to save.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

What sins do you need to confess so you can be forgiven and love the Lord with your whole heart?



HANDS

How should your forgiveness in Christ shape your interactions at home, church, and work?

