

# Love Community Baptist Church



## Wednesday Night Virtual Bible Study

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### THE PARABLE SERIES

#### “The Parable of the Two Debtors” – Luke 7:36-50

[Luk 7:36-50 KJV] - 36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. 37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that [Jesus] sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, 38 And stood at his feet behind [him] weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe [them] with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed [them] with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw [it], he spake within himself, saying, 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. 40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. 41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? 43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that [he], to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped [them] with the hairs of her head. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 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. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? 50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

### CONTEXT OF THE PARABLE

This familiar story is a contrast between traditional religion and a personal, intimate relationship with God through Jesus. It's one that a Pharisee was confronted with but not able to comprehend. As with all parables, the meaning is hidden from those who do not have the Spirit to reveal the deeper message.

Obviously, Jesus paid the debt for all of our sins at the cross. But if there was a scale that could be used to measure the number or magnitude of sins that you committed during your life –how would you compare with other people? It's crucial to understanding this parable.

Religious leaders in Jesus' day formed societies where men (and it was always men) sat in the evenings, ate meals, and debated theology. There were also many Jewish people who lived on the margins, not living by the law, and rejected by these religious leaders as “sinners.” In the parable of the Two Debtors, Simon, a Pharisee, has invited Jesus to a dinner at Simon's house. Like all cultures, there are certain

“rules” when someone comes to your house. In Jesus’ day, three rituals were common: a kiss of greeting, washing of feet, and anointing with oil.

Simon, though, does not do any of these rituals. Simon has called Jesus – whose fame was widespread – to a social gathering with the town’s intellectual and religious leadership. And Simon offends Jesus. Simon has set up Jesus for social shame. No Pharisee who liked Jesus would have done this.

Suddenly a woman appears at the dinner table. This was possible in those days because the dinners would be held in a courtyard, with the gate open so that the rest of the town could look in on the festivities. The woman is described by Luke as a ‘sinner.’ The verb implies that she was actively known as a sinner, someone who ‘was sinning’ with some regularity. As the story unfolds we can surmise that her reputation turns on sexual activity of some sort. We know this because she lets her hair down, which in that time period was only done by prostitutes. She has an illicit reputation – but something has happened in her life (beyond the scope of the story). Something – or someone – has transformed her life, and she goes to see Jesus. Notice that Luke 7:37 says that when she “learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume” to anoint him.

The woman sees that Jesus has been offended by Simon’s lack of greeting. And she takes a tremendous risk. She pushes into the gathering of men, runs to the table, and grabs onto Jesus’ legs. She anoints his feet with perfume; she weeps and wets them with tears, and she kisses them repeatedly. All of this is risky. But she has greeted Jesus properly, something which Simon did not do. She has honored Jesus, whereas Simon had shamed him.

After this event unfolds, Jesus tells a parable. Jesus refers to two debtors, one forgiven 50 denarii (about a month’s wage) and another 500 denarii (about 1 ½ years wage). And remarkably a moneylender forgave them both. Now, Jesus asks simply, which debtor would be more grateful? Simon must make a judgment. The woman – who is supposed to be a sinner – has acted more graciously than Simon – supposedly a righteous man. Jesus then announces that “her many sins have been forgiven— as her great love has shown” (Luke 7:47). It is important to understand that she was not forgiven because of her “works,” because Jesus then added, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace” (Luke 7:50).

Do you relate more to the religious leader Simon, or to the sinful woman? If you think like Simon, you might think that there are people who are beyond hope of finding life and forgiveness in Jesus. The good news of this parable is that sinners can find forgiveness through faith in Jesus. There is no one who is too far gone, too sinful, too bad. All it takes is to go to Jesus in faith. May we be more like Jesus, who accepts all who come to him in faith.

## **References:**

The Bible, King James Version

The Deeper Meaning in the Parable of the Two Debtors <https://wp.me/p3gfPC-1Rz>