

L 5 ... Loving Jesus More

[Luke 7:36-50](#)

Do you love Jesus as much as you should? Of course not! No one does. Therefore, you need to love Him more, which is part of the lifelong process the Bible calls “**sanctification**” ([Rom. 6:22](#); [1 Thess. 4:3](#)). In the parable of the two debtors, Jesus reveals how to love Him more. This parable is found only in the book of Luke. Luke records twenty-eight of Jesus’ parables. Seventeen are not found in the other gospels, including some of His most famous: The Good Samaritan, The Prodigal Son, and The Rich Man and Lazarus.

Jesus tells the parable of the two debtors early in His Galilean ministry. Because of His growing popularity, Jesus is experiencing hostility from the Pharisees. They try to discredit him with accusations.

For example, of what does Jesus say He is accused in [Luke 7:34c-e](#)?

(Note: The anointing that initiated this parable is not the same anointing that occurred at Bethany, in Judea, when Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, anointed Jesus just before His crucifixion ([Jn 12:1-11](#)).

From this parable, we find that **loving Jesus more** requires **three** actions.

Recognize Your Sinfulness (7:36-38)

With ulterior motives, Simon, one of the *Pharisees*, wants to know more about Jesus. Therefore, he invites Jesus to have dinner with him. Jesus goes to Simon’s home and takes His place at the table ([7:36](#)). In the ancient East, people did not sit while eating, as we do in the West. They reclined on couches, with their heads near the table.

Simon is a Pharisee, which means “separated one.” The Pharisees are a group of Jews committed to keeping Mosaic Law. In [Luke 18](#), Jesus describes the self-righteous attitude of the average Pharisee. When one Pharisee went to the temple, he prayed: *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican* ([18:11](#)).

What else does Jesus say a Pharisee would pray ([Lk 18:12](#))?

Today, we have a very low opinion of Pharisees. However, in Jesus’ day they were highly respected because they were considered very religious and moral.

As Simon’s group of distinguished friends are having dinner, a woman in that city, a *sinner* (probably a prostitute), hears Jesus is eating at Simon’s house. So, she comes to his house, bringing an expensive *alabaster box*, which is a white, or transparent, form of gypsum with decorative carving. The *box* is filled with very expensive perfume ([7:37](#)). At Jewish dinners, when a rabbi was present, people were allowed to

come in and listen. Because of this woman's reputation, she is not necessarily welcome among such respected people. Therefore, her coming requires great courage.

The woman stands at Jesus' feet and begins to weep. She then kneels, washes His feet with her tears, and wipes them with her hair. Next, she kisses His feet and puts her expensive perfume on them ([7:37-38](#)). Not only does she bring Jesus the most precious possession she has, she also brings the only sacrifices God desires.

What are they, according to [Psalm 51:17a-b](#)?

Perfume was typically used for anointing the head. However, this woman apparently feels unworthy to touch the head of the Lord Jesus because she knows she is a sinner. Yet, many people who go to church every Sunday are worse sinners than this woman because they will not admit their sinfulness. To love Jesus more, **recognize your sinfulness** and...

Refuse to Be Self-Righteous (7:39-43)

The room is filled with silence as Simon's distinguished guests sit stunned that such a woman would touch a Jewish man, making him unclean. Simon thinks to himself: *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* ([7:39b-d](#)). Not only does Simon feel superior to this woman, but to Jesus as well. Jesus knows who is touching him, as well as what Simon is thinking, because He is God in flesh and blood.

What does [Psalm 139:2](#) reveal about God?

At this very moment, the Lord knows where you are sitting (or standing) and what you are thinking. Are your thoughts like the sinful woman's or the prideful Simon's? I don't know—no one does; but the Lord knows.

Knowing his thoughts, Jesus tells Simon He has something to say to him. Simon arrogantly tells Him to say it. Then, Jesus tells a parable about a moneylender who had *two debtors*. One owed him *five hundred pence* (about two years' wages), while the other owed him *fifty* (about two months' wages), or one tenth as much. When neither could pay, the lender kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts ([7:40-42b](#)).

What does Jesus then ask Simon ([7:42c](#))?

Seeing the point, Simon begrudgingly answers, *I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most.* With his answer, Simon is placed in the position of judging himself. Therefore, Jesus responds, *Thou hast rightly judged (7:43).*

Simon couldn't admit his sinfulness because he was self-righteous, a result of pride and arrogance.

What does God declare in [Psalm 101:5b](#)?

Self-righteous people cannot have a relationship with God, much less love Jesus more. To love Jesus more, **recognize your sinfulness, refuse to be self-righteous**, and...

Reflect On the Meaning of Being *Forgiven* (7:44-50)

Jesus turns toward the woman still kneeling at His feet and tells Simon to look at her. Jesus then points out Simon's rudeness by refusing to extend to Him the common courtesies of the day when He entered his house. Simon intentionally offered *no water* to wash the dust from Jesus' sandaled feet. He did not give Jesus the customary *kiss of greeting* on His cheek, nor did he *anoint* Jesus' head with oil. In contrast, Jesus says the sinful woman washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. She also kissed His feet repeatedly ([7:44-46](#)). Then, Jesus says to Simon, *Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much (7:47a-c).*

Loving Jesus more results from understanding how much we *are forgiven*. A young lady in our church use to have a personalized car tag that read "4GIVN." That sums up what it means to be a Christian. The degree to which we understand the word *forgiven* determines our love for the Lord Jesus.

In contrast, what does Jesus say in the last phrase of [verse 47](#)?

Simon and his group of dignified guests are even more shocked when Jesus says to the woman, *Thy sins are forgiven (7:48b)*. The word translated **forgiven** (**aphiēmi, uh-fee'-ay-mee-**) means "to send away" or "cast away."

How does [Micah 7:19d](#) describe what it means to be forgiven?

The deepest part of the ocean is the Mariana Trench in the western Pacific Ocean. At its deepest point, it is about 36,000 feet (or 6.8 miles) deep. If Mount Everest, the highest mountain on earth at 29,030 feet, were dropped into the deepest part of the Mariana Trench, there would be almost 7,000 feet (more than a mile of water) left above it. The pressure at the deepest part of the Mariana Trench is over one thousand times the standard atmospheric pressure at sea level. No one can go to the bottom of the Mariana Trench because

of the tremendous pressure. When we are forgiven, God casts our sins where no one can ever retrieve them. They are forever “sent away.”

It wasn't her tears, her perfume, or her loving display that caused this woman to be completely *forgiven*. What did Jesus say saved her ([7:50b-c](#))?

Her tears and loving acts simply demonstrate her saving *faith* by God's grace ([Eph. 2:8](#)). Jesus' final words to the woman are *go in peace* ([7:50c](#)). **This means *go in peace with God*.** Jesus wants her to know she no longer has to bear the burden of guilt for her sins. The result of experiencing God's forgiveness through *faith* is *peace*.

Therefore, what does Peter write in [2 Peter 1:2](#)?

The more you reflect on and understand the meaning of being *forgiven*, the more you will love Jesus and *peace* will be multiplied to you.

To love Jesus more,

RECOGNIZE YOUR SINFULNESS,

REFUSE TO BE SELF-RIGHTEOUS, AND

REFLECT ON THE MEANING OF BEING *FORGIVEN*.