



Sermon Series: Mysteries: The Greatest Stories Jesus Told, part 7

Sermon Title: A Debt Forgiven

Speaker/ Date: Armin Sommer, October 18, 2020

Luke 7:36–50

Big Idea: Your only appropriate response to grace-canceled debt is deep gratitude.

Jesus is a dinner guest at the home of a religious leader identified as “Simon” (not Peter) who hopes to find a religious flaw in Jesus. In the midst of dinner, in walks a woman with a bad reputation. She brings with her a jar full of expensive ointment used to anoint important people. The woman is weeping uncontrollably. She then breaks the jar and pours its aromatic contents over his feet. Simon and his guests regard the woman’s behavior as scandalous. Even more shocking, Jesus unflinchingly accepts her behavior. Simon complains that Jesus clearly has no idea what kind of person has been touching him - but Jesus knows exactly what she is; he also knows exactly the kind of person Simon is.

He then tells a story. **Luke 7:41–43**

The embrace of grace involves two realizations.

Realization #1. What You Are

Jesus’ story is simple: 1 man owes 500 denarii (a denarius was a day’s wage for a typical working man). Another owed 50 days’ wages. Both were large amounts, which neither could pay. The money-lender cancels the debts of both men. He essentially “gifts” to them what they owe.

And Jesus allows it to sink in.

Then we read...**Luke 7:44–50**

Jesus’ point was to diagnose the condition of Simon’s heart, which was full of pride and entitlement. Simon had denied Jesus the standard courtesy of a basin of water in which to wash his feet. In contrast, the woman had offered her hair as a washcloth, as well as the most expensive deodorant you might see in Tiffany’s in Manhattan.

“Do you see this woman?” Jesus asked. Simon doesn’t see a person of value, a fellow bearer of God’s image. No. Simon sees someone defined by her past. But Jesus sees a human being fully in touch with who she is, and what she needs... Grace... canceled debt.

Realization #2. What Grace Costs

Luke 7:48–50

Something to think about: Some sins may be directed personally at you or me. But all sin is directed against God. David, king of Israel, committed adultery, lied, and murdered the husband of the woman he seduced. Yet he says this in a prayer to God *Psalm 51:4*

I may forgive someone for what he does against me, but it's really "on the cheap." But for God to forgive the totality of my sins is far more expensive. And the sins of the whole world? The price of it staggers the imagination. *1 Peter 1:18–19, 1 John 2:2*

Jesus' declaration "your sins are forgiven" was a proclamation of emancipation paid by His blood. The forgiveness Jesus offers is costly!

And it's final. The word used in *vs 42*, that says the money lender "forgave" the debt of both debtors is qualitatively different from the word used in *vs 47-48* which says, "her many sins have been forgiven." Two different words. In *vs 42* the idea is that the debtors were "gifted" a sum. In *vs 47-48* it carries the idea of cancellation. The forgiveness of the woman is comprehensive and final. Not some of her sins, but all of them. Not for "a time," but for all time.

Forgiveness changes the way we see ourselves... the way we see God... the way we see others.

Your present gratitude says more about you than your sordid past. Ponder the price Jesus paid for the debt you owed and which He cancelled finally and forever.

Discussion Questions:

- *What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?*
- After David murdered Bathsheba's husband, David prayed to God and said *Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; ... Psalm 51:4*. Did David sin against Bathsheba and her husband? Why did he confess sinning only against God?

- Can a person know Jesus and be ungrateful? Explain
- What is the biggest offense that you have ever forgiven? How did that process happen, and what was the result?
- Explain how someone forgave you when you didn't expect it. Did that change your view of forgiveness? Explain.
- When we forgive someone, is that a one-time choice or do we need to make the decision to continue to forgive them every day? Can it be both?