

5-Day Advent Devotional: Much Forgiveness, Much Love

Day 1: Recognizing Our Debt

Reading: Luke 7:36-50

Devotional: Before we can truly understand God's love, we must first recognize the weight of our debt. Like the woman in Simon's house, we must come face-to-face with our sinfulness—not to wallow in shame, but to comprehend the magnitude of what Christ has done. The Pharisee saw himself as owing little, so he loved little. The woman knew her debt was enormous, and her love overflowed in tears and worship. How big is your debt? Don't hide from this question. Your capacity to love Jesus is directly connected to your awareness of what He's forgiven. The greatest worshipers are those who remember they were once the greatest sinners.

Reflection: What sins are you still trying to hide from God that He already knows about? How might acknowledging them deepen your love for Christ?

Day 2: The God Who Seeks Sinners

Reading: Luke 15:1-10

Devotional: Jesus was called "a friend of tax collectors and sinners"—and He wore that title proudly. While religious leaders kept their distance from the broken, Jesus pulled up a chair at their tables. He didn't wait for people to clean themselves up before approaching Him; He pursued them in their mess. This is the scandalous love of Christmas—God didn't send a prophet to the righteous, but a Savior to the lost. You don't have to have it all together to come to Jesus. In fact, your brokenness is your invitation. He's not waiting for you to be worthy; He's already declared you worth dying for.

Reflection: Are you trying to "clean up" before coming to God? What would it look like to bring your mess directly to Jesus today?

Day 3: Forgiveness That Changes Everything

Reading: Psalm 103:8-14

Devotional: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." This isn't partial forgiveness or probationary grace—this is complete, irreversible forgiveness. When Jesus looked at the weeping woman and said, "Your sins are forgiven," He wasn't offering a payment plan or conditional acceptance. He was declaring her debt cancelled, her shame erased, her identity transformed. This is the same forgiveness available to you today. Not because

you've earned it, but because Jesus paid it all. The question isn't whether God can forgive you—it's whether you'll receive it and let it transform how you live.

Reflection: Is there a sin you believe is too big for God to forgive? Bring it to Him today and receive His complete forgiveness.

Day 4: Love's Proper Response

Reading: 1 John 4:7-21

Devotional: "We love because He first loved us." The woman's extravagant worship—tears, perfume, kisses—wasn't manipulation to earn forgiveness; it was the overflow of having received it. When you truly grasp how much you've been forgiven, your life becomes an offering poured out at Jesus' feet. This is why your theology matters. If you think God barely tolerates you, you'll serve Him grudgingly. But if you know you're a debtor forgiven of \$110,000, gratitude will fuel everything you do. Your response to God's love should be a life fully devoted to His purposes—loving Him completely and making Him known everywhere you go.

Reflection: Does your daily life reflect someone who's been forgiven much? What would change if you lived with constant awareness of God's love?

Day 5: Go in Peace

Reading: Romans 8:1-11

Devotional: Jesus' final words to the woman were, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace." She didn't leave with a list of rules or a probation period—she left in peace. This is the freedom of the gospel. There is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. You're not defined by your worst moment or your deepest shame. You're defined by whose you are. As we celebrate the advent of love this Christmas, remember that the baby in the manger grew up to die for your sins and rise to give you life. Your response isn't to earn His love but to rest in it and live from it. Go in peace, beloved. You are forgiven. You are loved. Now live like it.

Reflection: What would it look like to truly "go in peace" today, resting in your identity as God's forgiven child rather than striving to earn His approval?