

The World Famous Woman - Luke 7:36-50

I. The purpose of this study.

1. Identify this world famous woman.
2. Show that repentance and loving God is the result, not the cause, of eternal forgiveness of sin.
3. Show that repentance brings *temporal* forgiveness and salvation.

II. Who was this woman?

1. By comparing the parallel accounts given in the Gospels, it can be shown that the woman was Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

Matthew 26:6-13	Mark 14:3-9	Luke 7:36-40	John 12:1-8
<p>6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,</p> <p>7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat <i>at meat</i>.</p> <p>8 But when his disciples saw <i>it</i>, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose <i>is</i> this waste?</p> <p>9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.</p> <p>10 When Jesus understood <i>it</i>, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.</p> <p>11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.</p> <p>12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.</p> <p>13 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, <i>there</i> shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.</p>	<p>3 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured <i>it</i> on his head.</p> <p>4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?</p> <p>5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.</p> <p>6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.</p> <p>7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.</p> <p>8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.</p> <p>9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, <i>this</i> also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that <i>Jesus</i> sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,</p> <p>38 And stood at his feet behind <i>him</i> weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe <i>them</i> with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed <i>them</i> with the ointment.</p> <p>39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw <i>it</i>, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman <i>this is</i> that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.</p> <p>40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.</p> <p>41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.</p> <p>42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?</p> <p>43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that <i>he</i>, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.</p> <p>44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into <u>thine house</u>, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped <i>them</i> with the hairs of her head.</p>	<p>1 Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.</p> <p>2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.</p> <p>3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.</p> <p>4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,</p> <p>5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?</p> <p>6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.</p> <p>7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.</p> <p>8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.</p>

2. "(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)" - **Joh 11:2**.

- III. Which comes first: the loving or the forgiveness? the repentance or the mercy?
1. The bulk of the professing Christian world says that a sinner must first repent and love God in order to obtain mercy and forgiveness of their sins.
 2. As this story of Mary and the corresponding parable show, the most of the Christian world is only half right.
 3. The parable of the two debtors that Jesus told (**Luk 7:40-43**) is essential to a proper understanding of the story of Mary who was a great sinner who obtained great forgiveness.

IV. The Parable of the Two Debtors.

1. To illustrate to Simon why Mary did what she did, Jesus tells him a parable of two debtors (**Luk 7:40-43**).
2. The debtors both had a sizeable debt, but the first was under water, owing 500 pence.
 - A. Pence - a. collective plural of penny,
 - B. Penny - A coin....
 - C. There are numerous ideas as to what a penny was in the first century, but the best definition is from the Bible itself.
 - D. A penny was a fair wage for a day's work in a vineyard (**Mat 20:2**).
 - i. This was a 10-12 hour day that the labors agreed to (**Mat 20:1,9**).
 - ii. Since laboring in a vineyard would be considered unskilled labor and at today's wages would pay \$7.25/hour, \$72.50/day (10 hours). Therefore by Biblical example, 1 penny = approx. \$72.50 in today's Federal Reserve Notes.
 - iii. Therefore, the debtor would have been owed approximately \$36,250 (500*\$72.50) in today's equivalent.
3. Even the debtor who owed 50 pence would have owed the equivalent of \$3,625 (50*\$72.50).
4. Despite all that was owed him, when the creditor found that the debtors had nothing to pay he *frankly* forgave them both (**Luk 7:42**).
 - A. Frankly - 1. Freely; unrestrictedly, without restraint or constraint. 2. a. In liberal or abundant measure, bountifully, lavishly. b. In a liberal spirit, generously; unconditionally, unreservedly. (OED cites Luk 7:42)
 - B. The creditor didn't forgive them based on any condition, nor did he only forgive them partially, but rather fully and freely.
 - C. Even though one man owed more than the other, the creditor forgave them both entirely.
5. This parable shows us the abundant mercy of God.
 - A. Where sin *abounds* God's grace does much more *abound* (**Rom 5:20; 2Co 9:8**).
 - i. Abound - v. 1. To be present in overflowing measure; to be plentiful; to prevail widely.
 - ii. Plentiful - 1. Full of plenty; furnished with or yielding abundance; copiously supplied; opulent.
 - iii. This is no excuse to sin though (**Rom 6:1-2; Rom 3:8**).
 - iv. Don't turn the grace of God into lasciviousness (**Jud 1:4**).
 - B. God's mercy is plenteous (**Psa 86:5,15**).
 - C. God's mercy and grace is abundant (**Rom 5:17**).
 - i. Abundant - 1. Overflowing, more than sufficient; existing in great plenty, plentiful, ample;
 - ii. We are born again according to God's abundant mercy (**1Pe 1:3; Tit 3:4-6**).
 - iii. God's mercy is not just abundant, but *exceeding* abundant (**1Ti 1:13-15**).

- iv. Jesus came that we may have life *abundantly* (**Joh 10:10**).
- D. Like the man in the parable, God *frankly* and *freely* forgives His children (**Rom 3:24**).
 - i. God's entire salvation package is free (**Rom 8:28-32**).
 - ii. God's grace is a free gift (**Rom 5:15-16,18**).
- 6. It is obvious that the man who was forgiven a debt of ten times the magnitude of his fellow would naturally love the creditor more (**Luk 7:42-43**).
 - A. Debt is bondage (**Pro 22:7**).
 - i. Debt - 1. That which is owed or due; anything (as money, goods, or service) which one person is under obligation to pay or render to another: a. a sum of money or a material thing.
 - ii. Obligation - 1. The action of binding oneself by oath, promise, or contract to do or forbear something; an agreement whereby one person is bound to another, or two or more persons are mutually bound; also, that to which one binds oneself, a formal promise.
 - iii. Bound - 1. a. Made fast by a tie, confined; fastened down; bandaged: also *fig*.
 - B. Sin is called debt in the Bible (**Mat 6:12 c/w Luk 11:4**).
 - C. Jesus showed by way of the parable that Mary loved God much because she had a huge debt of sin that had been forgiven (**Luk 7:47**).
 - D. Those who repent are to bring forth fruits meet for repentance (**Mat 3:8**).
 - i. Mary brought a great sacrifice to Jesus to show her love and gratitude (**Luk 7:37-38**).
 - ii. She used very precious spikenard that was worth 300 pence (**Joh 12:3-5 c/w Mat 26:7**).
 - 1. Spikenard - 1. An aromatic substance (employed in ancient times in the preparation of a costly ointment or oil) obtained from an Eastern plant, now identified as the Nardostachys Jatamansi of Northern India.
 - 2. Precious - 1. Of great price; having a high value; costly.
 - 3. Pence - a. collective plural of penny,
 - 4. 1 penny = approx. \$72.50 in today's Federal Reserve Notes (see above).
 - 5. The spikenard would have been worth approximately \$21,750 (300*\$72.50).
 - iii. Those who were converted to Christ in Ephesus repented of their occult practices and burned their books that were worth 50,000 pieces of silver (**Act 19:18-19**).
 - 1. If those were 1oz pieces, today they would be worth \$844,500 (50,000*\$16.89).
 - 2. That is what truly renouncing sin is all about.
 - iv. Zacchaeus promised to give half his goods to the poor and to restore fourfold anything he took by false accusation (**Luk 19:8**).

V. The application of the parable to Mary.

- 1. As the parable showed, the forgiveness by the creditor preceded the loving by the debtor (**Luk 7:41-43**).
 - A. In other words, the forgiveness came before the love.
 - B. The love of the debtor was the evidence, not the cause, of his debt being forgiven.
 - C. Likewise, Mary's love for Jesus was the evidence, not the cause, of her sins being forgiven (**Luk 7:47**).

2. Notice that before specifically addressing Mary, Jesus first stated to His audience that her sins were forgiven (**Luk 7:47**).
3. It was only after stating that her sins were forgiven that Jesus then tells Mary personally that her sins are forgiven (**Luk 7:48**).
4. Lastly, Jesus tells Mary that her faith saved her (**Luk 7:50**).
 - A. This was not eternal salvation, because her forgiveness came before her faith (as was just proven) which was shown by her works (**Jam 2:18,22**).
 - B. Eternal salvation, in which a sinner is given eternal life through regeneration, is an act of God which comes as a result of the forgiveness of sins (**Tit 3:5 c/w Col 2:13**).
 - C. Because Jesus previously declared that her sins were forgiven (**Luk 7:47-48**), it is evident that she already had eternal salvation and forgiveness.
 - D. Her faith saved her temporally by giving her the knowledge and assurance of her salvation.
 - E. Her faith saved her by relieving her of the burden and the guilt of her sin.

VI. The application of the story of Mary to us.

1. Like Mary's forgiveness and salvation were declared to her and to men, so has God declared ours to us and to men (**Eph 1:4-7; 2Ti 1:9**).
2. Like Mary, we are also brought to the knowledge of our salvation and eternal life when we believe in Jesus (**Joh 5:24; Joh 6:47**) and prove our faith by our works (**Jam 2:22-23**).
3. Like Mary, when we obey the call of the gospel and repent, our faith saves us temporally (**Act 2:40**) and we can go in peace (**Isa 26:3; Rom 15:13**).