



Jesus Forgives a Sinful Woman Luke 7:36–50 (NIV)

Background of the Story

- The story takes place in the “adopted hometown” of Jesus, known as the town of Capernaum.
- Capernaum is located on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee.
- Capernaum is the hometown of Andrew, Peter, James, John and Matthew.
- Jesus had been living in Capernaum for more than a year. His popularity among the common people was significant, and the Pharisees were looking for ways to stop him.
- Jesus was invited to dinner at the home of a Pharisee named Simon. Simon believed that he had figured out a way to catch Jesus in an embarrassing situation and could use it to discredit Jesus among his followers.

The Story

When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table.

Luke 7:36

- During that time tables were constructed only a few inches off the floor. There were no chairs around the table. Everyone reclined on a mat on the floor.
- NOTE: There is no mention of Simon the Pharisee offering Jesus rabbinical hospitality. Tradition required that the host’s servant wash the guest’s feet and anoint his visitor’s head with oil. The host himself was required to greet his guest with a kiss on the cheek. None of these courtesies were offered to Jesus.

A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

Luke 7:37–38

- I believe the unnamed woman did not show up at Simon’s house by chance. She was told that Jesus would be there either by Simon or one of his guests.

- Simon hoped that her actions would provoke Jesus to do something or say something that he could use to discredit him among his followers.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.” Luke 7:39

- Not only did Jesus know exactly what Simon was thinking, but he knew that the woman was a prostitute. Moreover, he knew the woman’s heart.

“Simon, I have something to tell you.”

“Tell me, teacher,” he said.

“Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” Luke 7:40–42

- Five hundred denarii was approximately 1½ years of wages.
- Fifty denarii equaled approximately two months of wages.

Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said. Luke 7:43

The Rest of the Story

Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”

Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”

Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” Luke 7:44–50

- Simon thought he knew God, but it is clear that he completely misunderstood the very heart of God.
- All Simon saw was a prostitute. Jesus looks behind the “aqua colored film” to see the beauty underneath.
- The unnamed woman left forgiven and redeemed.

**The forgiveness of Jesus
is always
MORE THAN ENOUGH!**