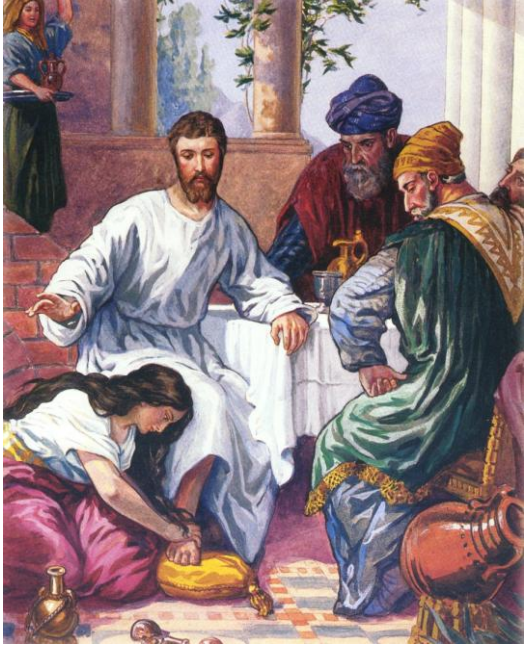


# SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

## LESSON 11



## AN EXAMPLE OF GOD'S GRACE

*Scripture Text: Luke 7:36-50*

Today we study one of the many instances when Jesus, while on earth, saved a sinner. A sinful woman showed her repentance and her faith in Jesus by washing His feet with tears, wiping them with her hair, and anointing them with ointment. It was not goodness or works that earned salvation from sin for the woman. Jesus forgave her by grace, or as a free gift. He will still do the same for any person who repents and believes in Him.

Possibly the woman had heard Jesus preach and had been thrilled by His assurance of forgiveness for the sinner. The religious leaders made it quite evident that they considered such as she to be accursed and eternally alienated from God. Probably the woman felt she could get nearer to Jesus at the feast than she could in the temple, as He was preaching.

**MEMORY VERSE:** *But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.—Romans 5:20b*

### An Uninvited Guest

**Luke 7:36-38** We are told that at an Oriental feast, anyone is perfectly free to enter the dining room while the feast is in progress, but he is to occupy one of the seats over against the wall. **Woman ... which was a sinner** – She was bad, lost, in need, and because of sin, could not help herself. She boldly pressed into the banquet hall on this occasion, carrying with her an expensive bottle filled with precious ointment. **At his feet behind him weeping ... wash his feet with tears ... wipe ... with ... hairs ... kissed his feet ... anointed.** Does not this speak of a deep attitude of the heart, of confession, of sorrow, of repentance, of love and gratitude? No doubt she had bought the perfume with which the bottle was filled for the purpose of anointing her own body and increasing her seductiveness. Her new life now indicated a new and exalted use for this ointment. It had been bought for an evil purpose; it was now dedicated to a heavenly purpose. As her tears fell upon the Master's feet, she unloosed her hair – a shameful thing for an Oriental woman to do in public – and wiped the tears from Jesus' feet. That hair which had probably been a chief factor in her evil attractiveness was now dedicated to the glorious use of wiping the Master's feet.

**Luke 7:39** **When the Pharisee ... saw it, he spake within himself.** But Simon was deaf to all of this. He thinks his life is blameless. He is so indifferent to the plight of the woman that he makes himself an even worse sinner than the person he scorns. He thought that she had no right to touch Jesus. What he did not know was the love of God. He did not know why Jesus came to earth. Where there is no right, no merit, there grace can work. Simon was attracted to Jesus, yet not enough to become a disciple. He was conscious of the woman's sin, but not of his own. Simon's sin was eating at his soul like a cancer, and he was entirely unaware of it.

Simon was a Pharisee who kept the ceremonies of the Law. He was respectable. He made a dinner to honor Jesus. He knew he was not guilty of such sins as this woman. Therefore, there was no sorrow for sin in his heart. The woman knew she was bad. She also knew that Jesus was good. In her heart was a longing for such goodness. Her longing, mixed with sorrow for her sins, caused her to act. **Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled (Matthew 5:6).** She hungered. She was filled. Simon hungered not. He was left empty.

### Our Lord's Rebuke

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**Luke 7:40-46** Jesus knowing of Simon's criticism tells a parable of **two debtors**. One owed much, one little, but both were treated alike – forgiven. All sinners, big or little, need forgiveness. All have **nothing to pay**. Much forgiveness brings much love. Simon loved God little because he had no sense of divine deliverance from sin. The woman's sins had been many, but she had forsaken them, and God had forgiven them. She could not describe the change in her being. She could only show forth great love, appreciation, and joy for the One Who had brought to pass this glorious work of God's grace.

Salvation is always given on the same basis. That basis is God's mercy and grace, not on what we deserve. The greater debtor loved the most. The person with many sins was saved before the one with less. Virtue lies not in sin, but in sorrow for sin, in repentance, in the transfer of dependence from oneself to Jesus Christ.

Jesus rebuked His host for his poor manners. Simon had provided no water for the feet of Jesus, a courtesy extended to dinner guests when they entered the house; but the sinful woman had washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Had Simon been greeting another Pharisee, he would have embraced him and kissed him; but Jesus had not been considered worthy of such honor. Yet the woman had covered the feet of Jesus with her kisses. Simon had failed to anoint the head of his Guest with oil – a courtesy which no one trained in the etiquette of that time would have neglected in receiving a guest of any distinction – yet the woman had anointed Jesus' feet not with oil, but with precious ointment. Christianity involves good manners. In the brotherhood of Christ, discrimination between persons shows disrespect to God.

### Forgiveness and Peace

**Luke 7:47-50** As Jesus contrasts Simon's and the woman's treatment of Jesus, we are reminded of His words in **Luke 5:32, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance**. That is grace. How mercy must have leaped and shouted against justice at the outpouring of grace when Jesus said, **Her sins, which are many, are forgiven**. Praise God!

The Pharisees murmured within themselves, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" This should have convinced them that Jesus was God's Messiah. Jesus said to the woman, **Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace**. It was not her love that saved her, but her faith. Her love had opened her heart and allowed faith to bring in God's grace. The woman gave Jesus three precious things – repentance, faith, and love. He gave her three divine gifts in return – forgiveness, salvation, and peace. She walked now into the heavenly realms of life and light. She was at peace with God, with her own soul, and with the world.

### JUST A THOUGHT

**To be ready to die is to be ready to live.**

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