

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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OF THE
FORGIVING GOD

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Living Stream Ministry

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THE INCARNATION OF THE FORGIVING GOD

The Christian life begins with the forgiveness of sins through our faith in the Savior. [Luke 7:36-50](#) gives us a vivid description and an affectionate account of a sinful woman experiencing the forgiveness of sins.

A PHARISEE AND A SINFUL WOMAN

[Luke 7:36](#) says, “Now a certain one of the Pharisees asked Him that He would eat with him. And entering into the Pharisee’s house, He reclined at the table.” In this verse Luke does not say that the Pharisee prepared a feast and invited the Lord Jesus to eat with him. Instead, Luke tells us that the Pharisee asked the Savior to eat with him. This may indicate the Pharisee asked the Lord in a rather cold manner; that is, he did not give Him a warm invitation full of affection. Nevertheless, the Man-Savior went into the Pharisee’s house to eat with him.

For whose sake did the Man-Savior go to the Pharisee’s house? Did He do this for the sake of

the Pharisee or for the sake of the woman? I believe that He did this for the sake of both the Pharisee and the woman. In His omniscience the Man-Savior knew that the woman would come into the house. We may say that by accepting the Pharisee's request that He eat in his house, the Lord afforded the woman an opportunity to contact Him. Otherwise, this woman who was sinful and who was known for her sinfulness may not have had a way to contact the Savior. By accepting the Pharisee's request to come to his house to eat, the Lord gave an opportunity to this saved sinner to express her love for Him.

In [7:36-50](#) Luke does not tell us what the host did to the Lord. There is nothing to indicate that the Pharisee was polite and loving toward Him. Actually, Luke does not say very much about the host. However, he has much to say concerning what the woman did to the Lord Jesus.

[Verses 37 and 38](#) say, "And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a sinner, and learning that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster flask of ointment; and she stood behind Him at His feet weeping, and she began to wet His feet with her tears, and to wipe them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet affectionately

and anointed them with the ointment.” The hair is the glory of the woman (1 Cor. 11:15), the top part of her body. With her top part she wiped the Savior’s feet, the lowest part of His body, loving Him with her glory.

The woman kissed the Lord’s feet affectionately, that is, in love, and she anointed them with the ointment (v. 38). This ointment indicates the valuable worth and sweetness of the Savior in the appreciation of the woman. Even the Savior’s feet were worthy and sweet to her affection.

In verse 39 we see that the Pharisee criticized the woman and despised her: “But when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said within himself, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, because she is a sinner.” A considerable crowd in Nain, having witnessed the Man-Savior’s power of resurrection, recognized Him as a great prophet (7:16). Yet the Pharisee wondered if He were a prophet. He not only doubted concerning the Savior, but also despised the woman as a sinner.

By His divine attribute of omniscience, the Man-Savior knew what His host was saying in his heart. Because He is God, He knows what is in man’s heart. Verse 40 says, “And Jesus answered

and said to him, Simon, I have something to say to you. And he says, Teacher, say it.”

A MONEYLENDER AND TWO DEBTORS

In [verses 41 and 42](#) the Man-Savior said to the Pharisee, “A certain moneylender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. But having nothing to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more?” The Lord’s word here indicates that both Simon and the woman were sinners. Simon considered the woman a sinner, but did not consider himself a sinner, and he doubted that the Savior knew that she was a sinner. But the Savior’s parable indicated that both Simon and the woman were sinners, debtors to Him.

According to [verse 42](#), when the two debtors had nothing to repay the moneylender, he graciously forgave them both. This indicates that all sinners have nothing to repay their debt to God their Savior. The Lord’s word here also indicates that the Savior had already forgiven them both.

In [verse 42](#) the Lord Jesus asked Simon which of the debtors would love the moneylender more as a result of having been forgiven by him. This

indicates that love to the Savior is the issue, not the cause, of His forgiveness.

In [verses 44 through 46](#) the Lord went on to say to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered into your house; you did not give Me water for My feet, but this woman has 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 affectionately. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with ointment.” The Savior’s word in these verses indicates that Simon should take the woman as an example and learn of her.

In [verse 47](#) the Lord said, “For this reason I say to you, her sins which are many have been forgiven, because she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, he loves little.” The great love of the woman was a proof that her many sins had been forgiven. Simon’s little love testified that he had experienced forgiveness only a little.

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In [verse 48](#) the Man-Savior said to the woman, “Your sins have been forgiven.” Both this case and the case of the widow’s son in Nain

([Luke 7:11-17](#)) are found only in this Gospel. This shows the Savior's tender care for the dead and sinful, and it conveys the principle of morality as the unique characteristic of this Gospel.

[Verse 49](#) says, "And those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say among themselves, Who is this who even forgives sins?" Simon did not realize that this Man-Savior was the very God, the One who has authority to forgive man's sin. The Man-Savior was the incarnation of the forgiving God.

In [verse 50](#) we have the conclusion of this incident: "But He said to the woman, Your faith has saved you; go in peace." The forgiven woman had not only love toward the Lord but faith in Him, a faith that operated through love ([Gal. 5:6](#)) and issued in peace. The faith which saved her brought her to the Savior in love and resulted in her going forward in peace.

FAITH, LOVE, AND PEACE

Faith, love, and peace are three crucial virtues in experiencing and enjoying the Savior's salvation. Faith is brought forth by knowing the Savior in His saving power and virtue. Love comes out of this faith and issues in peace to follow the Savior.

Do you know Luke's purpose in presenting such a picture of the forgiveness of sins? His purpose was to portray the Man-Savior with His highest standard of morality. This should be regarded as the underlying principle in the writing of the Gospel of Luke. Especially in this case we can see this governing principle. Here we have a portrait of the Savior's highest standard of morality. According to the emphasis in the Gospel of Luke, the highest standard of morality is a matter of the human virtues of the Man-Savior expressing His divine attributes.

FAITH COMING BEFORE FORGIVENESS

In this case we need to pay attention to the three matters of faith, love, and peace. When as a young Christian I read this chapter, I thought that the woman's love for the Savior was the cause of the forgiveness of her sins. I thought that He forgave her because she loved Him. This understanding is not correct.

In [verse 50](#) the Lord said to the woman that her faith, not her love, had saved her. Furthermore, regarding the two debtors who were forgiven by the moneylender, the Lord asked, "Which of them therefore will love him more?" ([v. 42](#)). This indicates clearly that love is the issue

of forgiveness. Concerning this, we need to pay attention to the word “therefore” in [verse 42](#). This word proves that love comes after forgiveness instead of preceding it.

What, then, is the cause of the forgiveness of sins? From [verse 50](#) we see that the cause is faith. It was the woman’s faith that saved her. Her sins were forgiven not because of her love but because of her faith. Therefore, faith comes before forgiveness, and love follows faith.

LOVE COMING OUT OF FAITH

It is very important for us to see that forgiveness comes before love. We should not think that our love is the cause of the forgiveness of our sins. On the contrary, love is the issue, the outcome, of our faith. When we believe in the Lord, our faith becomes the cause of the Lord’s forgiveness of our sins. Then as a result of having our sins forgiven, we begin to love the Lord. Hence, love comes out of faith.

LOVE ISSUING IN PEACE

Love issues in peace. First we believe in the Lord Jesus, having faith in Him. Then we are forgiven of all our sins, and this brings in love for the Lord. As we love Him, this love issues in peace.

We, then, may walk in peace. To walk in peace means to live in peace, to have a life of peace. When we walk in peace, we have our being in peace and live a peaceful life. This means that when we believe in the Lord, we love Him and live a life in peace. This is the Christian life.

In [7:36-50](#) we see faith, love, and peace. We have faith in the Lord, we have love toward Him, and we have peace in following Him. Because we have believed in Him, we have been forgiven of our sins, and now we love Him. This love issues in a life of peace. As those who love the Lord, we live, walk, and have our being in peace.

AN ATMOSPHERE OF AFFECTION

The atmosphere in [7:36-50](#) is an atmosphere of affection. There is affection both on the side of the Man-Savior and on the side of the sinful woman. The Lord's affection is an aspect of His human virtues. Once again in His human virtues we can see His divine attributes. In particular, we see the attribute of divine authority to forgive a person's sins. According to [verse 49](#), those who were reclining at the table with the Lord said among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" This One is the very God, for He alone has the authority to forgive sins.

The Man-Savior's divine attributes are also shown in His giving peace to the forgiven sinner. Only God can give peace to a forgiven sinner. Are you able to give peace to others? It is not in our hand to give others peace. Peace is in the almighty hand of God. Only He can forgive sins and give peace. Therefore, the forgiving of sins and the giving of peace are two attributes of God. Here these attributes are expressed in the Savior's human virtues.

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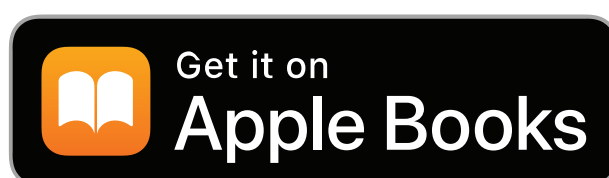
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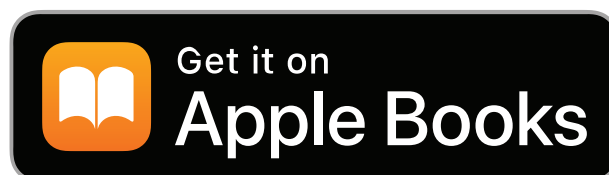
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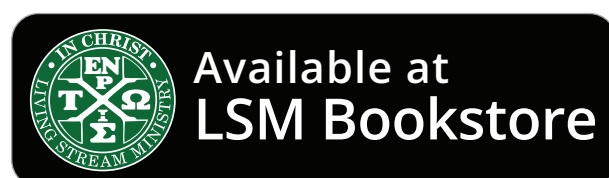
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