



*Teachings of the Teacher – A study in the parables of Jesus*  
*The Two Debtors*

**Luke 7:36-50**

**Lesson 3**

*Debt* = Something owed to another; a liability or obligation to pay or render. How do you view your debt owed to God? Do you see it as more than others; less than others? Luke 7:36-50 tells us a story of a Pharisee who didn't understand his debt and a woman who understood hers. The effect of their understanding was revealed in how they loved. Jesus' response to sincere love expressed to Him was forgiveness and peace. How do you view your debt owed to God?

**OBSERVATION: Read Luke 7:36-50**

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of this parable. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. As you mark key words, mark any personal pronouns or other words that refer to the key word which represents a person (*Jesus, Pharisee, woman, and debtors*).

Mark words that are similar in the same way. Example: the text contains words similar to the key word *forgave*. They are *forgives* and *forgiven*.

Key Words: *Jesus, Pharisee, woman, debtors, forgave, and love*

- a. Terms of conclusion also aid in understanding a passage. Jesus used the term of conclusion *therefore* in Luke 7:42 and 47. Mark the word *therefore* in these verses.

b. The contrasting word *but* is used four times. Mark each time this word is used.

1.) Complete the chart below to expose the contrast between the *Pharisee* and the *woman*.

<u>verse</u>	<u>Pharisee</u>	<u>Woman</u>
44	<i>gave Jesus no water for His feet</i>	<i>washed Jesus' feet with her tears</i>
45		
46		
47		

Challenge: Read the text and record other differences between the *Pharisee* and the *woman*.

### CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. What is an unusual way someone has expressed appreciation towards you or you have expressed appreciation towards another?
2. How do you tend to respond when someone does something "out of the ordinary"?
3. Describe a time when someone made you feel especially loved while you were visiting them in their home.

### THE INTRUSION: Read Luke 7:36-39

1. *Simon, the Pharisee asked Jesus to eat with him* at his house. Jesus accepted the invitation. Using verse 37, describe the uninvited guest.
  - a. According to verses 37 and 38, what did the *woman* do?

2. Placing the four gospel accounts together, we discover that just before this event, Jesus spoke words that we have learned to cherish. What are they? Matthew 11:28-30.
  - a. If the *woman* in this story heard those words, considering her background, what thoughts do you think she might have had?
    - 1.) What are your thoughts as you personally apply these words?
  - b. *Pharisees* did not even speak to *sinful women*; certainly they did not *eat* with them. How might the words of Jesus embolden this woman to enter the *Pharisee's house* and *come to Jesus*?
3. Notice (Luke 7:39), *Simon* did not verbally express his thoughts. Rather, we are told that he *spoke to himself*. What was he thinking?
  - a. What does Isaiah 65:5 teach us about God's attitude towards attitudes like this *Pharisee's*?

**THE PARABLE: Read Luke 7:40-42a**

1. Jesus, being so much more than a *prophet*, not only *knew what manner of woman was touching Him*, He knew the thoughts of *Simon, the Pharisee*. Rather than rebuke him, Jesus told him a story. We find it recorded in less than two verses. Summarize what Jesus *had to say* to *Simon*.
2. Let's identify the characters in the story. Who is represented by the:  
*creditor:*                      *debtor who owed 500 denarii:*                      *debtor who owed 50 denarii:*

3. There were two *debtors*. What resources did they have to draw from to repay the *creditor*?
  - a. Many believe they can do something to repay God to make amends for their actions. What does this parable teach us about that?

- 1.) What does Ephesians 2:8,9 teach us?

4. Neither *debtor* could repay their *debt*. What did the *creditor* do?

- a. Behold the word *freely*. The *creditor* *freely* forgave them both. List some synonyms for the word *freely*.

- 1.) *freely* is an awesome word when applied to God's actions towards believers. What great news do these verses proclaim for us?

Romans 3:24

Revelation 21:6

- a.) Who has the power to *freely* give these to us?

### **THE LESSON: Read Luke 7:42b-50**

1. In concluding the parable, Jesus asked Simon a question. What was it?
2. Consider a very wealthy creditor. How do you think he views a debt of \$50 and a debt of \$500 when he has billions and billions?
  - a. Yet, from the debtor's side, we see a vast difference – in money and in sins. Therefore, because we have this viewpoint, who tends to appreciate most the forgiveness of a debt?
    - 1.) According to Luke 7:42b, what is the response of one who appreciates forgiveness?

- a.) Review the *woman's* actions towards Jesus. How did she express her *love*?
  
  - b.) Jesus did not rebuke her for her choice to express her love as she did. She did not allow the fear of man's rejection or opinion to intimidate her. How might you express your love to Him today?
3. Record Jesus' conclusion as stated in verse 47.
- a. Read Luke 5:27-32. We discover the same self-righteous attitude. Record the words of Jesus in verses 31,32.
    - 1.) The problem was not that the *scribes and Pharisees* had no need of a *physician*, but that they saw no need for one. The problem was not that they were *righteous* and others *sinner*s, but that they did not see their *sin*. What do we miss out on when we are blind to our sin and our need for forgiveness?
4. Record the bold words of Jesus to the woman in Luke 7:48.
- a. Jesus had proved that He was at least a *prophet* by being able to know Simon, the Pharisee's thoughts. What does Jesus claim by making the statement he did in this verse? See Luke 5:21.
5. Read the words of *those who sat at the table* in Luke 7:49. Now, read the words of Jesus to the *sinful woman*. What did He say to her?
- a. *Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith* (Habakkuk 2:4). Who was the *just* one in this story – the *Pharisee* or the *woman*?

**REVIEW:**

1. With whom do you most identify: the *Pharisee* or the *woman*? Why?
  - a. What have you learned about your *debt* to God?
2. In what ways do the *woman's* actions encourage or challenge you?
3. What do you appreciate about Jesus' comments and responses in this story?
4. If you were the *woman* in this story, how would the words and touch of Jesus make you feel?
  - a. We are that woman, aren't we? How do the words and touch of Jesus make you feel?
5. In what ways have you been challenged by this lesson?

*'Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him;  
But the just shall live by his faith.  
- Habakkuk 2:4*

## Observation Worksheet

### Luke 7:36-50

Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. <sup>37</sup>And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, <sup>38</sup>and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. <sup>39</sup>Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." <sup>40</sup>And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." <sup>41</sup>"There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup>And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" <sup>43</sup>Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." <sup>44</sup>Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. <sup>45</sup>You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. <sup>46</sup>You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. <sup>47</sup>Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." <sup>48</sup>Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." <sup>49</sup>And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" <sup>50</sup>Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."