

A PHARISEE'S IGNORANCE OF JESUS' DEITY

BIBLE TEXT : Luke 7:36-50

LESSON 43 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:8).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

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.

³⁷ And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

³⁸ And stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

³⁹ Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

⁴⁰ And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

⁴¹ There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

⁴² And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

⁴³ Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

⁴⁴ And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Anointing of Jesus in a Pharisee's House

1. The Pharisee invites Jesus to his house and Jesus responds, Luke 7:36;

Luke 5:27-32

²⁷ And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

²⁸ And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

²⁹ And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

³⁰ But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

³¹ And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

³² I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Revelation 3:20

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

2. A woman, who was a penitent sinner and not a guest at the feast, came to worship Jesus, Luke 7:37;

Luke 19:2, 3

² And, behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

³ And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

3. Taking a lowly place behind the Saviour, she gave evidence of deep contrition, Luke 7:38;

Psalms 34:18

¹⁸ The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Psalms 51:17

¹⁷ The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.;

II Corinthians 7:10

¹⁰ For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

II The Unbelieving Pharisee and the Parable of the Debtors

1. The self-righteous Pharisee, ignorant of the deity of Jesus, perhaps thought he was doing Jesus a favour, considering Him an inferior, Luke 7:39, 40.
2. The Pharisee correctly answers Jesus' questions about the debtors, Luke 7:41-43.

III The Saviour's Rebuke to the Pharisee, and Christ's Pardon of the Sinner

1. Jesus rebukes His host for failure in showing common courtesies, Luke 7:44-46;

I Peter 3:8

⁸ Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:

2. The woman, in her penitence, unwittingly supplied the Pharisee's lack of hospitality, Luke 7:44-46;

Romans 13:10

¹⁰ Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

3. Christ gives pardon and peace to a hungering soul, Luke 7:47, 48, 50.

for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

⁴⁵ Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

⁴⁶ My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

⁴⁷ Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

⁴⁸ And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

⁴⁹ And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

3. Not only the host but the other guests as well were ignorant of Christ's deity and authority, Luke 7:49;

Mark 2:10, 11

¹⁰ But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,

¹¹ I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

5. Jesus reveals why the woman was forgiven and the others were not, Luke 7:50;

John 3:14-21

¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

¹⁵ That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

²⁰ For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

²¹ But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Romans 10:9

⁹ That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

I John 5:1

¹ Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

NOTES

Where, in all the realm of literature, can a person find a story that has the equal of the touching episode with which our lesson deals? This woman, who came to Jesus as He dined in the home of the Pharisee, was a sinner who longed for relief from a heart and conscience made heavy with remorse and sorrow. She took the right course to rid herself of that torment -- she came to Jesus. How few people in the world follow her example! And how few find the rest and peace that she found!

In the first place we see Jesus at the festive table, reclining on His side (on a couch, as was the custom in those days), with His feet behind Him. The streets and roads were dusty; and a good host always provided water for a guest to wash his feet, along with a welcome befitting the personage being entertained. But Simon, the Pharisee, did none of this. He apparently was curious to know what kind of person Jesus was; but, by his attitude of neglect, he proved that he did not regard Jesus as a particularly important guest. He probably thought that it would not matter, on this occasion, if some of the customary courtesies went by default. "After all," he might have said, "he is only from Nazareth and they are not acquainted with the better ways of living that we are accustomed to in our city.

But God will be glorified and honoured in the hearts of men. If some who have great opportunities do not follow Him, others, with far fewer natural qualifications, will do so. Simon missed a great opportunity, but this poor woman took advantage of an opportunity! She came in and stood behind Him, her sins troubling her. She began to weep with sorrow for her sin; and as she did so, her tears fell on the feet of the blessed Son of God.

One can almost see her, finally blinded by a rush of tears,

falling to her knees, embracing the feet, which were to be pierced with cruel nails for her pardon and cleansing. She realised the impropriety of her intrusion and, as though she would also repent and atone for it, began to wipe His feet with her hair, kissing them as she did so. It has been pointed out that she brought her womanly glory and laid it at the feet of Jesus by doing this. The original language gives us a deeper and richer insight into this impressive scene. The literal rendering tells us that she kissed Jesus' feet not once, but again and again. When this part of her act of contrition was over she opened the earthen box of ointment she had brought with her, and, taking its contents, anointed her Lord and Saviour.

Simon saw the whole act and began to reason that if Jesus were even so much as a prophet He would have known that this woman was a sinner of the deepest dye and unworthy of performing any act of kindness or courtesy upon a respectable person. Simon did what the great majority of professing Christians are doing in one way or another today. He doubted that Jesus was the Christ. He denied the divinity of our Lord. He believed the spotless Lamb of God was only a man of no appreciably greater standing than himself. He did not even give Jesus the credit for having ordinary human discernment of people's character.

But Jesus "heard" that proud Pharisee thinking, because God can see the real condition of the heart of man, and nothing is hid from His searching eye. To show this man his true condition, Jesus spoke a parable about two debtors whose debts were forgiven. When asked a question regarding the debt of gratitude these forgiven men owed their former creditor, Simon answered correctly and thereby brought condemnation upon his own head.

Simon, armed with self-complacency, was not conscious that he needed to be saved from anything. He was filled with his own self-righteousness; consequently he had little love to give to the Master. But the woman, steeped in sin and guilt, knew that she needed help no ordinary man could give; so she came to Jesus -- repented, believed, was saved, and showed her gratitude by performing courtesies of the household to the neglected Guest. Someone has said that true courtesy springs out of a heart filled with love for all mankind. But only God can give that love! The demonstration of this poor woman's love shows, beyond all doubt, her change of heart.

Jesus spoke wonderfully reassuring words to this -- and every other -- penitent soul. "Thy sins are forgiven. ... Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." She puts us to shame with her penitence and humility, but she showed a far more wonderful quality than these. She possessed a faith that the Pharisee or any of the other guests at the meal did not have. She demonstrated the truth of the then unwritten words that "whosoever believeth" in Christ shall have everlasting life. The unbelieving Pharisees murmured, but the believing penitent rejoiced! Everyone present at that feast had the same opportunities of salvation; but she alone, as far as we are told, received the promise of that "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, ... that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for all who come repenting and believing.

QUESTIONS

1. What purpose did Jesus have in accepting this invitation?
2. What was the obvious condition of this woman's heart when she stood behind Jesus at the feast?
3. What attitude toward Jesus did the Pharisee take that is common in the world of nominal Christianity today?
4. Would the Pharisee's attitude help or hinder him, if he, too, had been seeking salvation?
5. Relate the parable of the two debtors and give the answer that Jesus said was correct.
6. What common courtesies of the day were denied Jesus by the Pharisee and who supplied the need?
7. What would you say the Pharisee was saying, in substance, by neglecting Jesus in this manner?
8. Why did the woman -- and apparently none of the guests -- receive salvation?