

**TEXT** Luke 7:36-50

**OBJECTIVE** The students will be able to explain that forgiveness is extended to all, and when God forgives sin He forgives much. When they have been forgiven by the Lord, there should be much love in their hearts for Him.

**KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER** But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity. — Psalm 78:38

**KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH** Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. — Psalm 85:2

**ANSWER TITLE:** **A Place of Forgiveness**  
**SEARCH TITLE:** **The Two Debtors**

**REFERENCE INFORMATION**

According to Webster's dictionary, *forgive* means, "1. to give up resentment against or the desire to punish; stop being angry with; pardon. 2. to give up all claim to punish or exact penalty for an offense; overlook. 3. to cancel or remit a debt."

We find some form of the word *pardon* mentioned twenty times in the Old Testament and the word *remission* used ten times in the New Testament. These are often used as the equivalent of forgiveness.

The Bible tells us that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. It further states that the penalty

for sin is death-eternal death. But God in His mercy gave His Son to pay that penalty for the sinner. We read that God is angry with the wicked every day, but He will stop being angry and will abundantly pardon the sinner who will repent. However, the forgiven sinner must also be willing to forgive those who have wronged him.

An outstanding example of God's forgiveness was the sparing of Nineveh when they repented at the preaching of Jonah. God decreed that in forty days Nineveh would be overthrown, but upon their repentance the city was spared.

**YOUR OPENER**

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# The Two Debtors

**TEXT:** Luke 7:36-50

**KEY VERSE:** Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin.

— Psalm 85:2

Visualize, if you can, the disdain of the outwardly "righteous" Pharisee, Simon, when a sinful woman enters his home uninvited and seeks the company of Jesus. Consider his contempt as Christ allows this woman to wash His feet with her stream of tears and wipe them with the hairs of her head. But Jesus knew why she came and she received forgiveness for her sins. Jesus said to her, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

## RESPONSES

1. Your students will bring out that to *forgive* is "to pardon, to give up resentment or desire to punish, to cancel or remit the penalty due." With your class, share some thoughts about why they as humans find it difficult to forgive; what offenses are especially hard to forgive; why forgiveness is important in their human relationships. Then compare each of these aspects of their forgiveness with God's, showing what a far greater scope His forgiveness encompasses. Bring out that when God forgives sin and iniquity, He promises to remember them no more (Hebrews 8:12).

2. Sins of commission could include lying, stealing, murder, fighting. Sins of the heart could include hatred, envy, pride, jealousy, deceit. Sins of omission could be to neglect God's offer of forgiveness, to know to do good but not do it, to fail to show forgiveness. The point of this list is to help your students see that all of these sins are equally damning in God's sight, and to realize that His forgiveness will extend to cover all types of sin. We do not know exactly which types of sin the woman in our text had committed, but we do know that she was forgiven.

3. Allow time for students to discuss their answers. By her actions, the woman showed her contrite spirit, and Christ recognized this. The Pharisee may have offered the best of dinners, maybe even put Jesus at the head of the table, yet his good deeds were not enough to have his sins forgiven because he evidenced no spirit of contrition or seeking for forgiveness.

1. To seek for forgiveness and to forgive others are necessities in one's life in order to find favor with God (Matthew 6:14-15). Write your own definition of what it means to forgive.

2. Sin could possibly be divided into three categories: sins of commission, sins of the heart, and sins of omission. Give examples of each.

3. Jesus' forgiveness is offered to all, but that forgiveness must be sought. Contrast the attitudes of the woman and Simon the Pharisee.

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## ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

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4. What do you think is meant by the following words?

Repentance

Contrition

Humility

Godly Sorrow

5. In reference to question four, how do these words relate to our finding God's forgiveness?

6. What were the actions of the woman in our text that showed she was seeking forgiveness?

7. Give in your own words the meaning of Jesus' saying: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

8. That the sinful woman loved Jesus much was obvious by her actions. How can we show our love to Christ as well as saying we love Him?

4. Discussing the meanings of these four words will likely bring out some of these thoughts:  
Repentance — the resolve to amend one's life as a result of sorrow for one's sins, by coming to the Lord with a sincere heart.

Contrition — a sorrow for sin, growing out of a love toward God.

Humility — the act of submission, a state of lowliness or meekness.

Godly sorrow — a sincere feeling of sadness in one's life for past deeds, causing one to change his attitude toward God.

5. All of these are necessary if a person sincerely wants forgiveness. Ask your students to consider these attitudes and discuss why receiving God's forgiveness is not possible unless each is manifested by a penitent heart.

6. As your students share their answers, they will probably conclude that she showed humility by standing behind the Lord and anointing His feet and not His head, as was the custom. Her tears were evidence of her inner prayer of contrition and godly sorrow. That she realized her need, is seen in the fact that she sought the presence of the Lord by going where she was not invited, risking the displeasure of those high in society. We know she had faith in Jesus because her sins were forgiven. Jesus said to her, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

7. Give the students opportunity to express their answers. Then guide them to conclude that every pardoned sinner has been forgiven much. Rebellion against God is not a small sin, and the unsaved are guilty of this sin. The more a person realizes that it is the grace of God that has brought salvation to him, the more love he should have for God. If a person belittles God's grace by thinking he has been forgiven little, that person will love little, and what a pity!

8. Your students will be able to offer various suggestions. They may include: being willing to work for Him, striving to fulfill His will, denying self, giving freewill offerings, doing one's best to aid those in need.

## YOUR WRAP-UP

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## SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How did the Pharisee, in our text, react when he saw what the woman was doing to Jesus? Why?

In the parable, two people were debtors to a lord. How are we debtors to God?

Why does God forgive us?

What must a sinner do to receive forgiveness from God?

The sinful woman had a remarkable way of showing love to Jesus. How can we show love to the One who has forgiven us much?

Is it possible to love someone without forgiving him? Explain.

If a person doesn't ask for forgiveness, do you still have to forgive him? Explain.

In our ANSWER story, describe how Josh felt about the accident that nearly took his little brother's life. How did his brother's attitude help Josh?

Make a character comparison between the Pharisee and the woman who anointed Jesus' feet. How did the Pharisee feel toward Jesus? How did the sinful woman feel toward Jesus?

## THINGS TO DO

Once the principle of forgiveness has been discussed, have the students rewrite the parable in a modern setting. After they have shared their contemporary parables, discuss how these parables differ from the original and how they are the same. Possible settings: a local banker cancels the debts of two loan customers; a teacher forgives two students for handing in homework late; an employer forgives two employees for the time they have taken off from work.

Have each student make up a "bill" for all the debts he owed God, as a sinner. Take each one's bill and write on

it, "Paid in full with Jesus' Blood," or "Forgiven by God, with love."

Bring to class a nickel and a five-dollar bill. Offer the nickel to one student, the five-dollar bill to another. Discuss with your class the depth of appreciation each felt, comparing this to the parable. Bring out that when the Lord has forgiven them of their sins, they should have a deep, lasting appreciation and love for Him.

Take an eraser to class. Open your class session by comparing God's love and forgiveness to "erasing" our sins.


## Answers for ANSWER

### Forgiveness For All

God's forgiveness is for all people. When we are forgiven of our sins there is great love in our hearts for Him. The words on the list below are from the Bible text. Find them in the word-find and circle them. They read up, down, across and diagonally.

BOX  
OIL  
FEET  
HEAD  
KISS  
LOVE  
MOST  
FAITH  
HAIRS  
HOUSE  
JESUS  
PEACE  
PENCE  
SAVED  
SIMON  
TEARS  
WATER  
WIPED  
WOMAN  
ANOINT  
JUDGED  
LITTLE  
MANNER  
MASTER  
SINNER  
DEBTORS  
FORGAVE  
PROPHET  
CREDITOR  
FORGIVEN  
OINTMENT  
ALABASTER  
PHARISEES

J	X	P	H	A	R	I	S	E	E	S	F	X	F	O	X	W	H	
U	F	R	Q	E	O	X	S	Z	C	A	K	C	Z	F	A	R	O	
D	K	O	Z	F	R	V	I	X	K	V	O	B	X	T	C	Q	U	
G	F	P	O	A	W	B	K	S	F	E	E	T	E	K	D	X	S	
E	O	H	X	I	Q	C	N	Q	D	F	F	B	O	R	N	E		
D	R	E	V	T	S	F	M	X	V	K	Z	E	V	F	V	O	Z	
X	G	T	R	H	F	X	K	A	E	R	B	E	A	Q	X	M	M	
W	T	P	E	D	C	X	Q	O	N	N	F	V	O	B	V	I	A	
F	V	Q	S	K	O	V	I	N	T	M	E	N	T	X	O	C	S	S
Q	E	S	R	X	O	E	R	Z	X	M	S	K	X	X	V	T		
R	N	R	O	F	P	E	A	C	E	V	K	M	R	S	Z	Q	E	
E	X	A	T	T	Z	X	X	C	E	A	J	S	R	I	A	H	V	
N	R	E	B	S	S	K	S	V	Q	E	F	Z	V	O	E	F		
N	O	T	E	O	R	E	A	B	E	T	S	A	B	A	L	A	D	
I	F	C	D	M	B	G	E	Z	N	B	U	K	X	R	V	X	A	
S	Z	Y	R	V	R	V	F	T	E	X	S	O	S	F	B	Z	E	
X	O	T	L	O	B	Q	O	K	S	C	B	V	M	X	C	K	H	
B	K	Q	E	O	Z	N	C	X	C	R	E	D	I	T	O	R	O	
F	X	C	R	M	A	N	N	E	R	F	Q	E	L	T	T	L		



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