

Jesus' Parables in Chronological Order

Parable #5 — Luke 7:41-47 — The Moneylender

⁴¹ “Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?”

⁴³ Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled.”

“You have judged correctly,” Jesus said.

⁴⁴ Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little, loves little.”

Parable #6 — Luke 8:16-39 — The Lamp on a Stand

¹⁶ “No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. ¹⁷ For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. ¹⁸ Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him.”

Parable #5 — Luke 7:41-47 — The Moneylender

1. What options did the moneylender have with people who owed him money?
2. Jesus' parable about the moneylender seems an odd response to the Pharisee who was thinking that it was strange that Jesus allowed a sinful woman to touch him. What was Jesus actually saying to Simon? (a) you can't know grace because you don't think of yourself as a sinner, (b) you are a bigger sinner than the woman but you don't know it, (c) you may have sinned less than the woman, but you still need forgiveness, (d) the more you've sinned, the more your love for God, (e) the more you've been forgiven, the more your love for God.
3. Who do you identify with in the parable (moneylender, small debtor, large debtor)?
4. Parables make you think, but usually have a straightforward lesson. What is the fundamental lesson of this parable?

Parable #6 — Luke 8:16-39 — The Lamp on a Stand

1. In Jesus' story about the lamp, what does the lamp stand for?
2. Have you ever tried to hide your Christian identity or beliefs from other people?
3. What sorts of things would God have you bring "out into the open?" (Vs 17)
4. In light of Verses 16-17, what is the meaning of Verse 18?

Parable #5 — Luke 7:41-47 — The Moneylender — Notes to Leader

The message of this parable to Simon seems to be Jesus' words in verse 47: "Her sins, which are many, have been forgiven; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." Simon was in the position of having been forgiven little, and the message that he also loved little must have been sobering to him. Nolland writes, "... it is possible that the parable was composed to confront the unforgiving Pharisee with the limitless of God's readiness to forgive, now being brought to effective expression in the ministry of Jesus." In the context of the narrative, the woman's lavish actions are the result of her great debt that has been forgiven; in contrast, Simon's stingy actions stem from his failure to realize that he needs to be forgiven.

To Luke's original readers, the parable and the narrative clearly interpreted each other. It would have been very easy for them to identify the sinful woman of the story as the debtor forgiven much in the parable. They would also compare Simon the Pharisee with the debtor forgiven little.

The next step for the original reader would be to see the incredible graciousness, mercy, and forgiveness of God, like the creditor who forgave both debtors. Thus, the theme of the parable is one of God's forgiveness and grace.

To apply this parable to our lives, we also must see the incredible forgiveness of God. For some, seeing God's mercy is easy because their past is like that of the sinful woman or the debtor with the large debt. They know their past made them unworthy to be in relationship with God; and yet out of His great love, they have been welcomed into His presence. Out of incredible gratitude and love, they respond lavishly, honoring Jesus in every imaginable way.

However, some of us have "grown up in the church." We are much more like Simon the Pharisee, who was compared to the debtor with the smaller debt. Like Simon, we too have difficulty seeing that we need forgiveness. Also, like Simon, we fail to honor Jesus. He is simply not a "guest of honor" in our lives.

We struggle to realize that our "little debt" is still beyond our ability to pay, which puts us on equal ground with those with "big debts." We stand in need of a Savior, who is willing to forgive, if only we will accept His grace. Then, we can respond to Jesus in love, out of gratitude for what He has done in our lives.