



The church of Christ at Grandview Pines

April 24, 2011

The Parable Of Two Debtors

Why did Jesus speak in parables? The disciples wondered just that (Matthew 13:10). The Holy Spirit records four answers. First, Jesus used parables because not all would receive the mysteries of the Kingdom by direct revelation (13:11). Further, He did so because many hearts were dull and eyes and ears were closed (13:13-16). Those with faith would accept His teaching, but unbelievers would not understand. Then, He used parables because the prophets foretold that He would (13:34, 35). Finally, He did because there were things hidden from the foundation of the world that He must reveal (13:35).

What relevance, then, do the parables have for the modern Bible reader? Now, the parables exist as part of that written revelation. Through them, one can see prophecy fulfilled. The mystery that has been kept secret for long ages past (cf. Romans 16:25) can now be known. Thus, the parables are of paramount importance as practical instruction today.

Jesus' parables come out of many settings. He spoke them during private talks with the disciples, in public sermons, and on the occasion of miracles and healings, but maybe the most effective parables were borne out of situations where His enemies tested him. The parable in Luke 7:41-42 is such a one. Consider four key words that aid one to better understand the so-called "Parable of Two Debtors."

Content

The actual parable is two verses in length, as man has divided scripture. Jesus expended a total of thirty Greek words (43—NIV; 40—KJV; 34—NAS). The parable is filled with simple images that are easily comprehended. He presents *the characters*, a moneylender and two debtors. He presents *the situation*, that one owes about 500 days wages while another owes 50. He presents *the predicament*, namely that neither had the ability to repay their debt. He presents *the lender's response*, who graciously forgives both of them. He presents *the debtors' reactions*, which is left for the hearers to interpret but is easily discerned.

Two men in debt needed help beyond their ability to resolve. The lender is also the forgiver. Jesus uses financial problems to illustrate spiritual problems. How appropriate, since most people, regardless of time or geography, have suffered financial reverses. One national survey found that seventy percent of all worries involve money (Collins, Christian Counseling, 531). Suppose a person owed a single creditor \$100,000 and the creditor called in the entire debt at once. The debtor is unable to pay, and the creditor sends back news that the entire debt is totally expunged from the record. How would that person feel toward the creditor, compared, say, with one who owed \$1000 but whose debt was also forgiven. The parable teaches the principle of greater debt, greater appreciation, and lesser debt, lesser appreciation.

Context

The setting of the parable gives it its meaning. Jesus uses the parable to illustrate two very different people before His eyes. Consider them.

The **first** person is a Pharisee named Simon. One scholar points out that:

The Pharisees were the largest sect of the Jews. They grew out of an older party, the Chasidim, the Pious ones, and became the "Separatists" of ancient times. They took the name "Pharisee" probably during the rule of John Hyrcanus, BC 135-110. They favored a narrow religio-political policy, in distinction to the Sadducees who wished to see the Jews a nation among the Nations (Robertson, na).

If the Jews labeled themselves "conservatives" and "liberals," it could be commonly agreed that the Pharisees were the former and the Sadducees the latter. While Jesus had no quarrel with their strict interpretation of the Law (cf. Matthew 23:3), He often rebuked their heart and attitude (Matthew 23:3-5). Simon the Pharisee apparently had no glaring, outward sin problems, but was guilty in Luke seven of some severe heart problems.

The **second** person is a woman of the city and a known sinner. Some have theorized that she was a prostitute, but nonetheless not likely to have been on Simon's "A" List. She brings an alabaster vial of perfume, a long neck bottle Jewish women wore as an accessory around the neck and broken when festive occasions called for its use. Simon had invited Jesus for

Welcome to the services of the Grandview Pines church of Christ

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a meal, but she had “crashed” the party. It took a lot of courage for her to come where she was obviously not welcome.

When Jews ate their meals at dinner parties, they would have reclined on low couches. They leaned on their left arm with the head toward the table and the body stretched out away from it. They removed their sandals before taking this position. This is the way the woman would have found Jesus. Her emotions seemingly overcome her and her tears fall on His feet. She wiped His feet with her hair, which means she would have had to unbind her hair. This was a social taboo for Jewish women. By this point, one sees that she cared more about honoring Jesus than pleasing the crowd. She performs a slave’s task, tending to His feet.

After the parable, Jesus asks a remarkable question: “Do you see this woman?” Obviously, Simon knew she was there, but he did not see her properly. G. Campbell Morgan writes, “Simon could not see the woman as she then was, for looking at her as she had been.” There are a lot of Simons in the world who refuse to let those who become Christians forget what they once were (cf. 1 Pet. 4:4). Yet, the worst Simons can be in the church, refusing to let penitent, forgiven brothers and sisters forget their past.

The story ends with Jesus informing Simon that He had forgiven the woman’s sins. In Matthew 9:3, when He forgave the paralytic’s sins, the scribes thought Jesus a blasphemer. Yet, He does not gloss over the woman’s apparent immorality. He calls them her “many sins” (Luke 7:47). In this, He rebukes Simon for “loving little” and implies that He stood unforgiven.

Contrast

One owed much and one owed less. Both of them, however, are sinners and are in a greater debt than they can repay. Such has always been the case, as it is today (cf. Ecclesiastes 7:10; Romans 3:10,23; 1 John 5:19). Yet, the difference between the two debts is obvious.

One was forgiven much and one was forgiven less. The word “forgave” (Luke 7:42) is different from “forgiven” in verse forty-eight. “Forgave” (7:42) is from the same word family as the word translated “grace” throughout the New Testament. The word “forgiven” means “let go” or “release,” and when used in legal terms meant to be freed from an office, marriage, debt or obligation. The forgiveness Jesus offered was an act rather than a nebulous concept. It was a conditional gift she could enjoy eternally. She sought forgiveness, while Simon did not. She received it, but he did not.

One was humble and one was proud. Jesus praises the sinner and condemns the religious leader. Why? In a word, “Attitude.” The parable in Luke eighteen illustrates this well, verse fourteen pronouncing the sinful tax collector justified and the pompous Pharisee not justified. Jesus saw great potential in a “Big S” sinner who knew it than in a “little s” sinner who did not.

One loved much and one loved little. Jesus implies this in the parable and makes Simon explicitly admit it. The natural response of every forgiven person should be “much love” (cf. 1 John 4:19).

Conclusions

Consider some practical lessons one can glean from that parable for today.

No one is worthy of forgiveness. Both debtors in the parable did nothing to merit forgiveness. No one today is worthy (cf. Titus 3:5). To understand God’s grace, one must see himself as a sinner in need of it.

Not all sinners grasp the seriousness of their sinfulness. Simon was no less a sinner, but he acted like he was. Likewise, some of the hardest people to win to Christ are good, moral, but unsaved people (cf. Matthew 7:21-23).

No one can repay his debt. Not just the two fictional characters in the parable. Not just Simon and the woman. Everybody needs Jesus (Micah 6:7).

Sins of attitude are as deadly as sins of action. Ask the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15). Among the lusts of the flesh, wherein is listed murder, adultery, and fornication, one also finds outbursts of anger, disputes, and envy. Sins of attitude will keep one out of heaven as surely as will sins of action (cf. Romans 6:23).

Jesus freely forgives those who seek it. That is the good news and bottom line of this parable. Jesus’ forgiveness is available to everyone (Titus 2:11; 1 Timothy 2:6). Yet, one must seek it like the sinful woman did!

—Neal Pollard

News, Notes & 'Nouncements

Welcome Visitors: We are thankful to be able to gather to worship our God (John 4:24). Please take time to fill out a card and place it in the collection plate. If you have questions about what you see or hear we would be glad to answer them after the service. We hope all leave edified and uplifted.

Barnabas Board: in the foyer for posting notes of encouragement, thanks, etc.

Please Silence cell phones so our worship services will not be interrupted.

Volunteer Sign-up List for preparation of the Lord's Supper for this year is now available. A few months are still available.

Monday Night Bible Study for the month of May will be on the third Monday night (15th). Class will begin at 6:30. Come and study.

Pantry: On the bulletin board you will find a list of needed items. The pantry is low on some supplies at this time. Please check expiration dates when buying canned goods. Thanks.

Guyana Missions: We will be taking a load to the Summerdale congregation. See Glenn Fuller for a list of needed items.

Conyer Family Address:

11 Sunset Drive
Deatsville, AL 36022

Baby Shower: The baby shower for Christina Harvell will be next Sunday May 1st at 3pm.

Vacation Bible School: Our VBS will be May 29—June 2. The theme will be about various dreams in the Bible. See David Howard for more information or to volunteer. We will be having a meeting tonight after services.

Youth Devotional: Our youth devotional for April and May will be next Sunday May 1st after evening services.

Foyer: New Spiritual Sword quarterlies and Words of Truth can be found on the tables in the foyer.

Easter Egg Hunt: Thanks to all who helped make yesterday great. All the kids had a great time.

Prayer List

(in alphabetical order by last name)

Lee Bowren (A. Sadler's mother)-in nursing home in Heber Springs, AR

David Brown (Mont. Police officer)-recovering from serious motorcycle accident

Linda Bush- (P'ville Rehab & Nursing Home, RM 212)

Marilyn Bush (Erin Hatcher's mother). She is awaiting results from various tests this past week at MD Anderson hospital.

Amber Conrad (Trey Harvell's cousin) recovering from surgery following an auto accident

Russell Cooper (B. Little's brother)

Joan Cox (extended family of D. Boyd)-lung cancer

Jerry Davidson (Director of Guyana missions)-Parkinson's Disease

Charles Dobbins (friend of the May family) is under hospice care.

Vicki Dobbins (friend of the May family) fell off ladder with lower back pain—in Baptist Prattville

Darla Dorsey (daughter of Doug & Peggy Stabler) had surgery recently

Glenn Fuller-is doing some better.

Sydney Fuller (G. Fuller's bother) has two inoperable aneurisms. Continue to pray for him.

Charlie Gibbs (Kim Cross's grandfather) health issues

Myra Hall--expecting

Christina Harvell-expecting

Hollon family: Three members (Willard, Steve and Cheryl) were killed by a tornado in Marbury. One member is in critical condition in the hospital. Funeral was yesterday.

Katie King-Rm 451, Charleston Place, Old Prattville Hwy.

Tim Johnson (Gwen Shelton's uncle) is undergoing cancer treatments

Rayford Lee (J. Sadler's father-in-law)

Walter & Cheryl May (R. May's parents) - both facing physical ailments

Marvin Rice (Diane Cox's brother) heart procedure

Peggy Rice (Janice Claunch's mother) has suffered a few falls lately.

Tina Tatum-continuing back problems

and ongoing health issues

Mickey Thomas (former member) serious condition, Jackson Hospital.

Kevin Turner--ALS

Juanita Waggoner (M. Stinson's aunt)-advanced stage of Parkinson's Disease

Military personnel & their families

-Matthew Cooper (Basic—AIT)

-Britt Shores (Afghanistan)

-Keith Cleveland (C. Cleveland's grandson, Iraq)

-Keith Golden (Goldens' son)

-Joshua Corey-deployed

-Joel Jackson

-Barry Freeman

-Matthew Martin

-Stewart Burkey

-Ryan Quade (O. Abbott's cousin, Iraq)

-John Drew (O. Abbott's cousin, Iraq)

-Todd Wheeler-being deployed

Changes & Removal of names: Don't forget to let us know if prayer list information needs to be changed..

Congregational Information

Elders:

Terry Claunch.....285-4142
 Glenn Fuller.....365-4923
 Lary Sadler.....285-7455

Deacons:

David Howard.....730-8080

Preacher:

Terry Claunch

Study.....285-6327
 Home.....285-4142
 Cell.....313-1539

Work of Evangelism:

Home Bible Studies
 Bible Correspondence Studies
 Biblical Tracts
 Staton & Tutwiler Prisons
 Sermon CDs & Cassettes
 Gospel Broadcasting Network

Work of Benevolence:

Food Pantry
 Guyana Missions—Summerdale
 Congregation
 1st Sunday singing & devotion-Autumn
 Place
 2nd Sunday singing—Merry Wood Lodge
 Clothes for Panama
 Eye Glasses for Thailand
 Assistance to those in need

Work of Edification:

Sunday
 Bible Class.....9:00 AM
 Worship.....10:00 AM
 Worship.....5:00 PM
 3rd Monday
 Bible Study.....6:30 PM
 Wednesday
 Ladies' Class.....10:30 AM
 Bible Class.....7:00 PM

Internet

www.grandviewpineschurch.org
 contact@grandviewpineschurch.org
Look for us on Facebook!
 (Grandview Pines church of Christ &
 Grandview Pines church of Christ Youth)

Where We Meet

165 Deatsville Hwy, Millbrook, AL, 36054

Privileged to Serve

Sunday Worship Services

	Today: 24th	Next Week: May 1st TBA
Greeters	B. Weldon J. Claunch	—
Nursery Attendant	D. Cox	—
Foyer Attendant	J. Hammonds	—
Shut-In Communion	L. Sadler	—
AM Service		
Announcements	J. Hall	—
Song Leader	S. Girod	—
Opening Prayer	G. Vinson	—
Scripture Reading	R. Abrams Proverbs 4:20-27	—
Lord's Supper	Head: T. Young T. Harvell L. Sadler D. Stabler N. Girod	—
Closing Prayer	J. Woodruff	—
PM Service		
Announcements	J. Hall	—
Song Leader	S. Girod	—
Opening Prayer	C. Prince	—
3rd Sunday Invitation	—	—
Lord's Supper	T. Young	—
Closing Prayer	L. Wright	—
Wednesday Bible Study		
	This Week: 23rd	Next Week: May 4th TBA
Song Leader	L. Sadler	—
Invitation	A. Stinson	—
Closing Prayer	D. Howard	—

* If you cannot meet your scheduled duty & cannot find a replacement, please contact Jim Hammonds or David Howard.

Do You Know Your Bible?

<p>This Week's Question <i>Answer in next Week's Bulletin</i></p>	<p>Answer to Last Week's Question What church had a name that they were alive, but were really dead? Sardis Revelation 3</p>
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