

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
P. Christ's Exposition Of Peoples' Responses To Him
(Luke 7:36-50)

I. Introduction

- A. Though John the Baptist was predicted in the Old Testament to be the Messiah's Forerunner and though Jesus was the Messiah and God Incarnate, the responses of Israel to both of these messengers from God was mixed.
- B. Luke 7:36-50 presents Christ's exposition of contrasting responses to Him in two people, and we view the passage for our insight, application and blessing (as follows):

II. Christ's Exposition Of Peoples' Contrasting Responses To Him, Luke 7:36-50.

- A. Luke 7:36-50 "illustrates the principle Jesus laid down in verse 35," that "(t)he ones who were following Jesus and John were proof enough of the correctness of their teaching" (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 223).
- B. The passage thus contrasts the Pharisee Simon's unbelief in Jesus with the faith that a sinful woman placed in Christ, and the contrasting effects that both responses of these two people had on themselves (as follows):
 - 1. A Pharisee named Simon who considered himself separate from sinners in Israel (cf. Luke 7:36, 40) invited Jesus to dine in his house, and Jesus accepted the invitation, Luke 7:36 (J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 202).
 - 2. At this event, a woman of the city who wore her hair unbound as a typical prostitute, having heard that Jesus was dining there, entered the dining room, Luke 7:37a, 38b; *Ibid.* It was typical for uninvited people of the town to enter such a dining room when a Rabbi was invited so they could hear the wisdom of his teaching (*Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 224).
 - 3. However, when this prostitute brought a flask of costly perfume, stood at the outer part of the room near Jesus' feet and began to weep so that her tears wet His feet, and she stooped to wipe the tears away with her hair and to kiss His feet and anoint them with the perfume, Simon told himself that if Jesus were a true prophet, He would know this woman was a sinner and would not let her touch Him, Luke 7:37-39.
 - 4. Reading Simon's mind, and likely the mind of other Pharisees present (cf. Luke 7:49), Jesus told Simon that He had a message to give him, so Simon gave Jesus permission to speak His message, Luke 7:40.
 - 5. Jesus told Simon a parable of a creditor who had two debtors, one who owed 500 denarii (plural) and the other 50 denarii, a denarius (singular) being equal to a day's wage for a regular laborer (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Luke 7:41). When the debtors had no means to repay the creditor, the creditor forgave both men their debts. Jesus then asked Simon which debtor loved the creditor more, and Simon said that he supposed the debtor who had incurred the greater debt had the greater love for the creditor, v. 41-43a.
 - 6. Jesus replied that Simon's judgment was correct (Luke 7:43b), and then He applied the lesson of the parable to Simon and to the sinful prostitute, contrasting them (Luke 7:44-47):
 - a. Christ contrasted Simon's loveless inactions toward Him with the loving actions of the prostitute, v. 44-46:
 - i. When Jesus had entered Simon's house, Simon had given no water for Jesus' feet to be washed, what was a polite consideration in Christ's era, but the prostitute had washed Jesus' feet with her tears, and then she had wiped them dry with her hair, Luke 7:44.
 - ii. Simon had not greeted Jesus with a typically polite kiss on the cheek, but the prostitute had repeatedly kissed Jesus' feet since His arrival to dine at the meal, Luke 7:45.
 - iii. Simon had not anointed Jesus' head with oil, a typical practice for the guest of honor at a meal, but the prostitute had anointed His feet with costly perfume, Luke 7:46.
 - b. Thus, Jesus said that her many sins had been forgiven as evidenced by her great love for Him, v. 47a NIV. However, whoever is forgiven little, as implied in the case of Simon himself, loves little, Luke 7:47b NIV.
- C. Jesus then addressed the prostitute, declaring that her sins were forgiven (Luke 7:48), and that led the other guests who were likely largely Pharisees to be stunned that Jesus would forgive sins as God, Luke 7:49.
- D. Nevertheless, Jesus added to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace," Luke 7:50 NIV.

Lesson: *Where Simon viewed himself as righteous by his works, he was not forgiven and so he did not love Jesus. However, the prostitute viewed herself as very sinful and believed in Jesus only to be forgiven by the Lord, so she loved Jesus greatly, as seen by her actions. Thus, Simon was not forgiven where the prostitute was saved by faith.*

Application: *(1) May we not trust in our own works but look in faith to Christ for salvation. (2) As believers, may we not become proud for living godly lives, but realize that we live righteously only by God's grace, Romans 8:3-4.*