

STUDY NOTES ON THE PARABLE OF THE TWO

DEBTORS: -

NOTE: - Before we can start to examine this Parable, we need to read what led up to Jesus telling this story, so we can have some understanding of what spiritual lessons Jesus was desiring to impart to Simon.

- Simon the Pharisee, invited Jesus to dine with him. We know from other Scriptural accounts of this story, that Simon had been a leper, who no doubt Jesus had healed of his loathsome disease of leprosy. A woman who was regarded in her community as having been a big sinner, whom we know to be Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, came up behind Jesus, and washed His feet with her tears – tears of deep repentance; and she dried Jesus' feet with her hair, and anointed Jesus' feet with very expensive ointment.

Luke 7:36 - 39: - “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. 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, 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. 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.”

The fragrance of this ointment could not be concealed from the other dinner guests. We find that the disciples of Jesus, being led on by Judas Iscariot, were complaining about the cost of this ointment being expended upon Jesus, claiming that the ointment could have been sold and the proceeds given to the poor. Judas, being the treasurer of the disciples, wasn't truly interested about the poor, because the gospel writer describes him as being a thief. He embezzled the funds that were given to Jesus, for his own personal use. He was merely covetous of these funds, and was using the poor as a screen to cover up his greed.

Jesus rebuked the disciple's complaints against Mary, and exonerated her loving and sacrificial offering to her Lord. He informed His listeners, that Mary had done this act of anointing, in preparation of His approaching burial. Jesus has commanded that wherever the gospel is being preached, her deed of love and gratitude to her Master and Lord, is to be recounted, as a memorial of her. This instruction from Jesus is seldom ever followed by professed gospel ministers.

Matthew 26:6 - 13: - “Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat *at meat*. But when his disciples saw *it*, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose *is* this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood *it*, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did *it* for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, *there* shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.”

John 12:1 - 8: - “Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he

cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

- We know that Jesus cleansed, or healed the lepers throughout His ministry, and no doubt Jesus had healed Simon of his leprosy.

Matthew 11:4 – 6: - “Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.”

- Simon was a Pharisee, and judging by his attitude to Mary’s sacrificial offering and anointing of her Blessed Lord, he was still thoroughly infected with the Pharisaic attitude and mindset, looking down at this repentant woman, as being a great sinner, and considering her as being someone Jesus should not even let approach His Person. Jesus’s Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector, illustrated the self-righteousness mindset Simon had, and how he despised others, whom he looked “down his nose at”, as being **supposedly** great sinners.

Luke 18:9 – 14: - “And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

- The Pharisaic mindset was one without mercy, faith or love. It was a cold, heartless religion.

Matthew 23:23: - “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

- Jesus’ whole mission was to come and save the lost sinners, and to call them to repentance.

Luke 19:10: - “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

1st Timothy 1:15: - “This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”

Mark 2:16 & 17: - “And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

WITH THIS BACKGROUND, WE CAN NOW APPROACH THE PARABLE WITH SOME BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING: -

- Jesus tells the Parable to Simon: - A certain Creditor, had two debtors. One owes him 500 pence; the other 50 pence. Both debtors are unable to pay back their debts to their Creditor. He freely forgives them both their debt. Jesus asks Simon a simple question: -

Which of the two debtors will love the Creditor most? Simon's answer is judged by Jesus to be the correct one – The debtor who has been forgiven most!

Jesus then tells Simon, that this woman whom you despise as a sinner, has bestowed upon Me great attention since I entered your house. Yet, you as a host, have not attended to My comfort.

Jesus then tells Simon, that her sins are indeed many, but they are forgiven. So she loves much, which love she has demonstrated by her bestowal of attention and honour upon Christ. Jesus then rebukes Simon, by saying to him, whoever has been forgiven little, loves little. Jesus then tells Mary – **“Thy sins are forgiven.”**

The other dinner guests start to murmur at Jesus' words concerning the woman's sins being forgiven.

Luke 7:40 – 50: - “And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 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. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

- Jesus had trouble with the Jewish religious leaders, because He claimed to have the power to forgive sins, and He exercised that Divine power, to forgive sins.

Matthew 9:2 – 7: - “And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This *man* blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house.”

- We must take note from the Parable, that both debtors could not pay their debts to their Creditor. Looking at things from the point of view of the gospel, not one of us can pay our debt of sin and death to our Maker and our God – our Heavenly Creditor. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God; we have come short of His glorious Character, which IS His glory!

Romans 3:9 – 12: - “What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

Romans 3:23: - “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

- As Paul has clearly informed us, we have all sinned, and come short of God's glory. In reality, God's Holy, Righteous and Perfect character is His glory, which we, as disobedient sinners have fallen so far short of. We can see this truth revealed in the Biblical Incident, where the Lord appeared unto Moses at Mount Sinai, to proclaim before him His glory and goodness. The Lord then passes by Moses, proclaiming His own character or glory to Moses.

Exodus 33:18 & 19: - "And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

Exodus 34:5 – 8: - "And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped."

- God's Holy Law of Ten Commandments gives us a knowledge of our sins, and in fact, the transgression of God's Law, is defined as being sin. Our Saviour Jesus came to take away our sins.

Romans 3:20: - "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin."

1st John 3:4 & 5: - "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."

- The wages for the transgression of God's Law is death.

Ezekiel 18:4: - "... the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Romans 6:23: - "... the wages of sin is death."

- There can be no remission or forgiveness of our sins, without the shedding of blood. The penalty of the Transgressed Law, being death, has to be carried out, for there to be forgiveness of sin.

Hebrews 9:22: - "... without shedding of blood is no remission."

- Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

John 1:29: - "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

- When the Scriptures portray Jesus as being the Lamb of God, they are referring directly to His being uplifted upon the cross, in His sacrificial death for our sins. This demonstrates the wonderful love of God the Father, in sending His beloved Son to pay the full penalty of death for all of our sins and transgressions.

Romans 5:6 – 8: - “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

1st Peter 1:18 & 19: - “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

- Isaiah in the Old Testament Scriptures, and Paul and Peter in the New Testament, clearly bring out the truth of Christ being the atoning sacrifice for our sins, the just suffering in the place of the unjust ones.

Isaiah 53:5 & 6: - “But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

2nd Corinthians 5:21: - “For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

1st Peter 3:18: - “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

JESUS WAS A SPOTLESS AND SINLESS SACRIFICE AS THE LAMB OF GOD: -

- Jesus lived a completely perfect, sinless life while in our flesh. He was without any sin of any kind. He demonstrated God’s gracious and merciful character under conditions of extreme provocation, especially in the last 18 hours of His earthly life. He perfectly kept His Father’s Commandments. He fully satisfied the righteous obedience requirement of the Law of God perfectly.

John 8:46: - “...Which of you convinceth me of sin? ...”

John 15:10: - “... I have kept my Father's commandments, ...”

Hebrews 7:26: - “... holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, ...”

1st Peter 2:21 - 23: - “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously.”

God’s Holy Law demands 100% perfect obedience for the whole life time. The wages for its transgression is death - “*the wages of sin is death*” – Romans 6:23. Because Jesus was a perfect Commandment-keeper, who did not commit sin, He fully satisfied the righteous requirement of the Law perfectly. But the Law still required the death of those who have transgressed it. Jesus also satisfied this requirement of the Law, when He died upon the cross for our sins. Through this Heavenly arrangement,

God can be both just in maintaining the integrity of His righteous Law, and yet He can also be the Justifier of those who believe in Jesus as the Sinless Lamb of God. This wonderful divine arrangement for our justification excludes all possibility of human beings boasting of their own works.

Romans 3:24 – 28: - “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

- The wonderful merits of Christ’s Perfect Righteousness and Sacrificial Death pays in full our debt to our Heavenly Father – our Heavenly Creditor, who forgives our sins for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:32: - “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

- In the Parable, Jesus taught that the sinner who has been forgiven much, will love the Creditor very much who has forgiven them their debt. We are to trust fully in the merits of Christ’s Sinless Righteousness, and love Him who died for us. Paul tells us, that our future lives should be spent in living for the One who has died for us, and who has risen again.

2nd Corinthians 5:14 & 15: - “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”

- Jesus has told us, that if we love Him we will keep His Commandments. The Apostle John tells us, that the love of God, is to keep God’s Commandments.

John 14:15: - “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

1st John 5:2 & 3: - “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

- The Apostle Paul tells us, that the faith that justifies us, does NOT make void the Law of God, but it establishes the Law within our lives. He also has informed us, that we are not to continue living in sin, because we are walking in the path of grace. We are to be careful to maintain good works after having been justified by God’s grace.

Romans 3:31: - “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”

Romans 6:1 & 2: - “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

Titus 3:7 & 8: - “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. *This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

While trusting fully in the merits of Christ’s Perfect Righteousness and Sacrificial death, we shall be motivated by love to walk in the humble path of obedience to God’s Law. Anything less than this, is not true loving service to Christ.