

Only God Can Forgive Our Sins

International Bible Lesson

Luke 7:36-50

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“Then Jesus said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you; go in peace’” (Luke 7:48, 50).

Many Pharisees condemned Jesus for blasphemy because He forgave people’s sins. They argued that only God could forgive sins, but they did not know all the facts. Since no one but God can forgive the sins of someone who has wronged others as well as themselves or has disobeyed and neglected God, the Pharisees seemed to be right; except for the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and when He came into the world as the Son of Man God had given Him authority to forgive sins. When Jesus healed a sick man, He said, “‘But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.’ So he said to the paralyzed man, ‘I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home’” (Luke 5:24). Radically changed lives prove that Jesus has the authority to forgive sins. After Jesus forgave a sinful woman for her sins, she loved Jesus so much that she was not ashamed to wash His feet in the home of a Pharisee who would condemn her very presence. She wept and washed Jesus’ feet with her tears, dried them with her hair, and anointed them with perfume. Jesus explained to the Pharisees that she showed so much love because He had forgiven her much. Because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, throughout subsequent history Jesus has demonstrated His authority to forgive sins. Those who have turned in faith to follow Jesus, and have repented and confessed their sins to Him have experienced His forgiveness and peace; subsequently, they have expressed much love to Him.

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Thinking Further

1. What are some things that Jesus did and said in the house of Simon the Pharisee that showed Jesus was a prophet?
2. What are some things Jesus did and said to Simon the Pharisee that showed Jesus was claiming to be God (or the Son of God)?
3. What did the woman do for Jesus that showed her deep love for Him?
4. Which comes first, love for God and then forgiveness for sins by God or forgiveness for sins by God and then love for God? Give a reason for your answer.
5. What saved the woman? How do you know?