

LESSON 5

A PHARISEE AND A REPENTANT WOMAN



Scripture Text: *Luke 7:36-50*

This lesson lets us see Christ as One who draws a response from every person who comes to know Him. The response He receives determines the response He gives. When the response is warm, He extends pardon and forgiveness. When the response is half-hearted and self-justifying, His response is a rebuke. He limits His forgiveness to those who prepare their hearts for it. This lesson shows the attitude of a proud Pharisee and a penitent woman. We see two kinds of sin and two kinds of response.

MEMORY VERSE: *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

1 John 1:9

The Sin of Attitude

The Pharisee manifests this kind of sin by neglecting to show Christ, his invited Guest, the tokens of hospitality customarily shown to a guest. Instead, he showed a false sense of superiority in the presence of the penitent woman. He questioned the ministry of Christ. Although his sin was of thought and attitude and he spake within, what he said and his feelings were known to Christ. He questioned Christ's knowledge of the woman. He must have been surprised to find that Christ knew his mind and heart.

The Sin of Action

She was described as a "woman in the city, which was a sinner." Her sins were known in the city, for she had openly sinned there. She did not attempt to cover her sins with a cloak of religious profession. She had lost control of her life so she turned to Christ that her purity and innocence might be restored. She had been a sinner before all, so now she wanted to be a Christian before all.

The Response of Pride

Offended pride always turns a critical eye. The Pharisee's false sense of superiority caused him to assess the other person's value lower than himself. The Pharisee lowered Christ in his estimation to the level of the sinful woman. He failed to realize that he was farther in sin and farther from the kingdom than she was. He felt more comfortable before she came in and did for his Guest what he had failed to do. Her action rebuked his attitude. What he proudly refused to do she did and received the blessing for doing it. His attitude brought him "little" forgiveness, while her action brought her "much" forgiveness.

The Response of Penitence

The woman paid no mind to the Pharisee whose home she had entered, but she gave her attention, time, and personal effects to Christ. No doubt the alabaster box of ointment was all she had to show her love for Christ. She made her way to the only One who is able to help her win the battle against sin. She had given all to sin, now she would give all to Christ and His cause.

Such penitence always brings its reward. When Christ knew that her penitence was complete, He spoke: "Thy sins are forgiven." This is the way Christ deals with all who repent and forsake their sins. The Pharisee was satisfied with his own goodness and refused to repent. This simple contrast made the difference. Whether your sin be of attitude or action, the response you give to Christ determines what you will receive of Him. Why not give Him a full response today?

Just a Thought

"Life makes some people better and others bitter."