

Blessings without Strings

“But those at the table began to say to themselves, ‘Who is this who even forgives sins?’ And Jesus told the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace.’”
Luke 7:49-50

We are all so blessed just as the woman was in this story. She knew she was a sinner and she wanted to be saved from her sins. She believed that Jesus was the one who could save her and so she sought Him out. Maybe it wasn't in a very orthodox way, at least not according to the Pharisees. They kept trying to see if they could trick him and get something he was doing that they could use against him. One Pharisee named Simon decided he would invite Christ for dinner. He wanted to impress this stranger who was wondering about town and performing miracles. He put out a festive banquet and invited the people he wanted to have. But when the banquet was started a woman came in who was known around the town as a sinner.

She entered the home of Simon and was carrying an alabaster box with her with an expensive ointment. She went to Christ and wept. She washed his

feet with her tears and dried it with her hair. Then she anointed His feet with the oil.

Well, the Pharisee wasn't about to go this far! Simon began to doubt if he had really chosen the right person to attend the banquet. After all, if this was a real prophet he would have known that she was a sinner; and he was a Pharisee. He wasn't a common sinner!

“A man without ambition is dead. A man with ambition but no love is dead. A man with ambition and love for his blessings here on earth is ever so alive.”
Pearl Bailey

Christ knew what was going on inside his head and he approached Simon and told him he had something to say to him. Simon told him to speak what was on his mind. Christ told him *“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 said as many of us would that the one who had owed the most would be the correct answer. He was thinking that this sinful woman certainly would not have given much to Christ.

Christ then told Simon that the woman had washed his feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. She had kissed His feet. Simon had done none of these things. He hadn't even given him water to wash his feet.

“The Gospel is about grace and we all know that grace is about us receiving from God blessings that we don't deserve.”

Tony Campolo

Christ then told him *“Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”* Luke 7:47. The lady had given all she had. Simon was putting on a banquet, but with the wrong attitude.

How often we do things for the wrong reason or try to impress people for the wrong reason. We all sin. The best words we hear every day are *“Thy sins are forgiven.”* Luke 7:48. Even the other people eating there began to question and wondered if this man could really forgive sins. We have that same gift today and every day. All we need to do is show God our love for Him in many ways and he will forgive us our sins. We don't have to wash someone's feet and pour perfume on them. He heals us just as we are with all our sins. God has a gift for us each day, but we sometimes don't accept it and think we can “go it alone” until something happens and then we call on God.

What strings have we attached to ourselves? All God's blessings come without strings attached.

Read some of the lyrics from “Count Your Blessings” by Johnson Oatgman.

*“When upon life’s billows you are
tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all
is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them
one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord
has done.
Count your blessings, name them one
by one,
Count your blessings, see what God has
done!
Count your blessings, name them one
by one,
Count your many blessings, see what
God has done.
And it will surprise you what the Lord
has done.”*

Have you taken a minute to count your blessings today. Don't forget a good night's sleep, the sun rising, and the beauty around you. I challenge you that you cannot count them all in a minute!

*“Thank you God for all
your blessings to me and
my family. For the
strength you give me each
day and for all the people
around me who make life
more*

*Feel God
in every gentle touch.
See God
in every happy face.
Hear God
in every caring word.
Receive God's blessings
every day of your life.*

DEAR GOD,

I want to thank you
for all of those things you
do that I never see.
Helping me get through
each day safely, making
sure my family is protected
and all of the other
countless blessings.

AMEN.



Little Church Mouse
© Ged Backland / Hutch 2016

*“Praise be to God who has
blessed us in the heavenly
realms with every spiritual
blessing in Christ. For He chose
us in Him before the creation of
the world to be holy and blame-
less in His sight.”*
Ephesians 1:3-4

Prayer: God, You have promised us abundant blessings. You have promised to forgive our sins and give us eternal life by grace alone without any strings attached. We have all of this because Christ sacrificed His life for our sins when He died on the cross. Please help us to realize and be thankful for all Your blessings. Amen

1. Why did the Pharisee invite Christ into his home?
2. Why did the woman think it was so important for her to meet Christ?
3. Are we willing to go where we are not welcome to tell others about Christ?
4. How do you interpret “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”?



“I’ve got no strings on me.”
Pinocchio