

### **Cancelled Debts**

I read a story several years ago about a businessman who had a good idea about organizing tours to the Middle East. Because it would be an expensive business to start up, he decided to work with an investor, a woman known as a venture capitalist. In the beginning, the plan was to focus on just one country, and a lot of money went into the preparations. If it worked out there, the business could expand to add other countries.

It turned out he chose the wrong country to start with. The businessman had focused all his time and all the investor's money on organizing tours to Iran just in time for the 1979 Revolution. Every penny was lost, and there was no hope of keeping the business afloat, let alone looking forward to expansion. The devastated businessman went to his investor with all his financial records, personal and business. He planned to show how he could sell his house and car, remove funds from his retirement account and work to pay back the money. But he knew that he'd never be able to repay even half what she had invested.

As he pulled out the materials and started to explain, his investor caught his eye and said, "What are you talking about? You brought me a good idea and I decided to back it. It's not your fault this revolution came along. I always know some investments won't work out." A look of disbelief, and utter relief, slowly crept over the businessman's face. "Really," she said, "you don't owe me a thing."

#### **Monday – An Uninvited Guest**

*"Fairest and best adorned is she whose clothing is humility."* James Montgomery, 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> c. British poet

1. Please read Luke 7:36-50. What type of sin would you imagine the woman was known for committing? What type of sin gets people in the news today?

**Text Insight:** The gathering may have a large party with many invited guests. The Bible doesn't say how the woman was able to join the gathering, but it's possible she slipped in with the servants.

2. In Matthew 22:1-10, what did the original guest list look like? What types of people were originally invited to that wedding feast? In the end, who attended? Which guest list would you more likely be on?

**Making it Personal:** None of us deserve to be invited to the wedding banquet. None are deserving of being included. And yet, you have been invited. Take some time today to tell the Lord what that means to you.

#### **Tuesday – Cleansed, Adored, Anointed**

*"Christ by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord!"* Charles Wesley, Hark the Herald Angels Sing

1. Please read Luke 7:36-39. Imagine someone of the opposite sex attending to your feet the way this woman cared for Jesus' feet. What do you think the people around you would be thinking?
2. Imagine the stark contrast between the treatment of the woman in Luke 7, and the soldiers in Matthew 27:27-31. Describe the contrast in your own words. How do you see that contrast expressed today?
3. How did Jesus care for his followers in John 13:1-5? What would you have done if you were there and Jesus had washed your feet (especially in light of having seen the woman's actions at the Pharisee's house)?

**Making it Personal:** God cares for you deeply. Ask him to help you grasp how immense his love for you is.

#### **Wednesday – Cancelled Debts**

*"He came to pay a debt He did not owe, because we owed a debt we could not pay."* Anonymous

1. Please read Luke 7:36-49. When do you think Simon realized Jesus was talking about him? How common is Simon's attitude in our world today? When have you exhibited the same attitude?
2. What is the point of the parable in Luke 18:9-14 and how does it support the lesson Jesus taught Simon?

**Making it Personal:** We each owe God all we have, and more. Spend time thanking him for canceling your great debt through the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus.

#### **Thursday – Paying Attention to God**

*"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* Jesus, Matthew 6:21

1. Please read Luke 7:44-46. Do you think Jesus is focusing more on the woman or on Simon? Why?
2. What did the disciples learn in Luke 18:15-17? Children show their comfort with people in more demonstrative ways than adults. How comfortable were these children with Jesus?

**Making it Personal:** Who are you more like in your relationship with God: the woman, Simon the Pharisee, the soldiers at the crucifixion or the children?

#### **Friday – Forgiven and Free**

*"There are two freedoms: the false where a man is free to do what he likes; and the true where a man is free to do as he ought."* Charles Kingsley, 19<sup>th</sup> c. English pastor

1. Please read Luke 7:47-50. What did the woman receive from Jesus? Why do you think we do not read a similar statement from Jesus to Simon?
2. In Mark 2:1-12, how did the crowd respond? What bothered the teachers of the law?

**Text Insight:** The teachers of the law were correct that only God can forgive sins, so they knew Jesus was actually claiming to do what only God himself can do.

3. Compare Luke 7:50 with Ephesians 2:8-9. How was the woman able to obtain forgiveness and freedom from sin?

**Making it Personal:** Have you received God's forgiveness through Jesus? Turn yourself over to him and give thanks for his wonderful gift.

**For the Weekend:** Re-read Luke 7:36-50. What point in this passage speaks most strongly to you? Why?