



LESSONS FROM A SINFUL WOMAN

# BIBLE STUDY AND PUZZLES

## LUKE 7:36-50

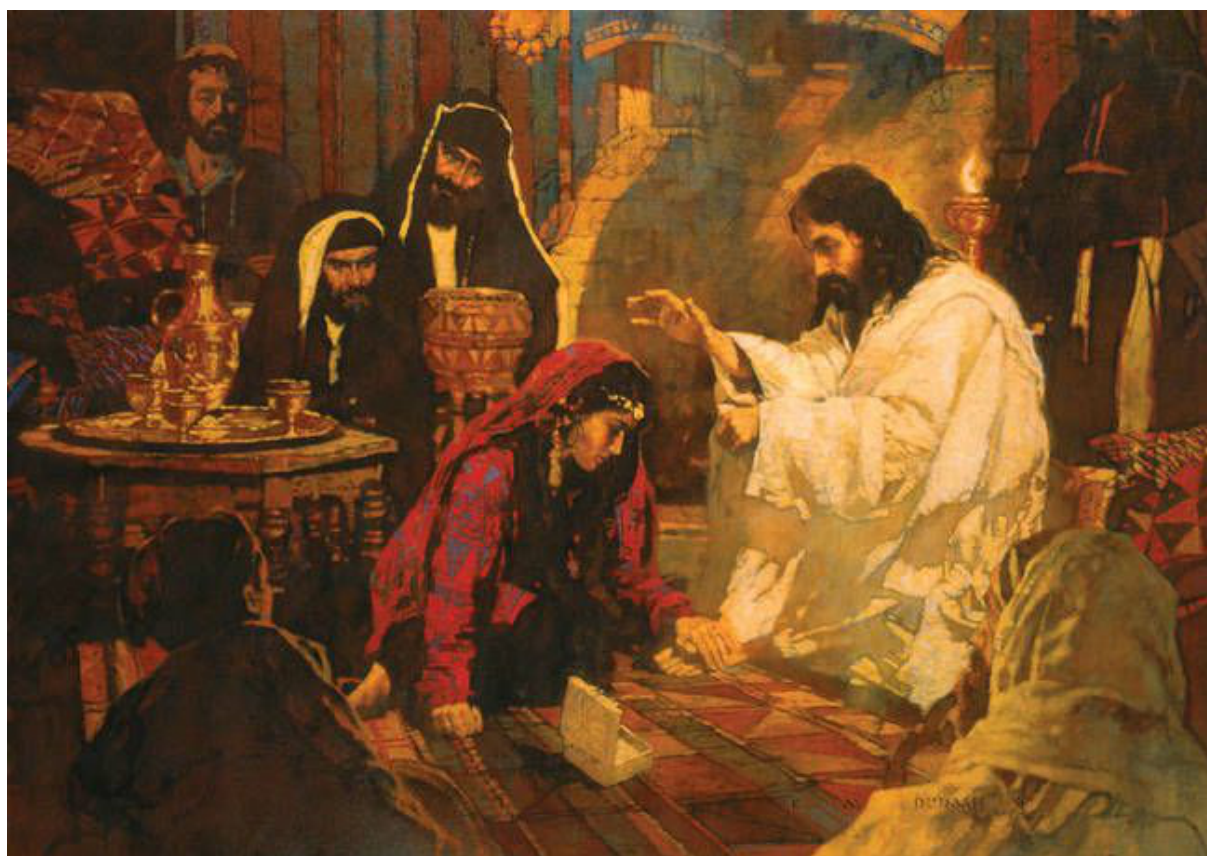


BY MARY WELSH

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LUKE 7:36-50

36 Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house and sat down to eat.

37 And behold a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil 38 and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.

39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

40 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." So he said, "Teacher, say it."

41 "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing with which to repay he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"

43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged rightly."

Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head.

45 You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. 46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. 47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." Then He said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

49 And those who sat at the table with Him began to say, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50 Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."



## LESSONS FROM A SINFUL WOMAN

I love the passage from Luke 7:36-50 where Simon the Pharisee invites Jesus to a meal and a sinful woman, as Luke describes her, comes to Simon's house to see Jesus. With her she brings an alabaster jar of costly perfume. She knew Jesus would be eating at Simon's house and she came prepared to offer this gift to Jesus.

I try to imagine what her emotions would have been that day; surely she was nervous?

*She slips quietly amongst the townspeople who have populated the perimeter of the courtyard where Jesus and Simon are seated.*

People from the town had come in to listen to this visiting guest, as was the custom. She would have been unnoticed at first. She knew she would not be welcome there, certainly, as she had a reputation; people knew her, knew about her, and doubtless she would have seen unfriendly faces staring, perhaps commenting, but she wanted to see Jesus, she wanted to be near Jesus, so she came anyway, regardless of the consequences.

Scholars have noted that the woman may have been either an adulteress or a prostitute. We know from verse 38 she had her hair down. Jewish women at that time would wear their hair up; in fact, some rabbis at the time taught that if a woman's hair was down it was grounds for divorce. Regardless of her exact circumstance, she would not have been welcome in the home of Simon the Pharisee.

*The woman, now trembling, steps out from the shadows of the crowd. She moves towards Jesus. She's close now; if she can only get a few feet further, she will be near His feet.*

In that culture, guests would recline at low tables for meals, with their feet furthest from the table.

*She kneels at His feet. She is exposed now to the reaction of the crowd and their hard gaze. Overcome with emotion, she begins to weep.*

The Greek word used here in the text for the word "wet" is "brecho," which means "rain." Her tears rained down on Jesus' feet; such a heartfelt outpouring of deep affection.

*Having no cloth or other means, she uses her hair and begins to wipe Jesus' feet. Her tears, mingling now with her hair, cleanse Jesus' feet from the dirt of the road. She then begins to kiss His feet and anoint them with the costly perfume from the alabaster jar.*

Simon sees her touching Jesus. He thinks to himself that if Jesus were a prophet, He would know what manner of woman was touching Him.

As a Pharisee, Simon would have been a strict law-keeper. He would have been concerned with ritual purity. To touch someone like the sinful woman had done would have made that person unclean, according to Pharisaical law. Simon would not have wanted to have anything to do with her. And it would have been unheard of for a person of her reputation to come into a Pharisee's home and act as she had.

She was courageous beyond measure. She didn't care what the consequences were going to be, she was going to get to Jesus and she was going to anoint him with this perfume, regardless.

*Simon watches her as she kisses Jesus' feet.*

A kiss was a common greeting in those days. It would have been something that the host would do when you enter his house to greet visitors. Simon did not do this for Jesus, nor did he wash Jesus' feet, another custom of the time. Feet were dirty. People wore sandals. A proper host would have had the guest's feet washed immediately.

Simon neglected both to greet Jesus and to have Jesus' feet washed. The sinful woman, a person Simon would have seen as his inferior, saw that this was not being done. Seeing Simon's neglect and wanting Jesus' needs to be met, she washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

*She listens as Jesus tells Simon the Parable of the Moneylender in which two people owe money and neither can repay the debt. Jesus asks Simon whether the one forgiven little or the one forgiven much will love more, to which Simon replies the one forgiven the greater debt. Jesus tells Simon he has judged correctly. He then turns to the sinful woman and says, "Your sins are forgiven."*

*What joy! What delight! He sees her! He speaks to her! He forgives her. She is shaken to her core by His love and grace.*

In my mind's eye, I see her now transformed; as she leaves, she nearly floats, so glorious has this past hour been. No longer aware of onlookers or mindful of their reproaches, the sinful woman is now the loved woman, the forgiven woman, the transfigured woman -- a new creation in Christ.

What can we learn from the sinful woman?

She was courageous. Facing probable ridicule, perhaps taunts, definitely stares, she went amongst people who would look down on her and despise her in order to reach Jesus.

She used what she had. She used her hair and her tears to wash Jesus' feet in an outpouring of love for Christ, showering Him with gratitude and affection.



She gave what she had. She gave her vial of expensive perfume freely and without reservation, lavishly pouring it on Jesus.

She saw a need and she took care of it. Without invitation or hesitation, she did the things Simon should have done, with little regard for herself.

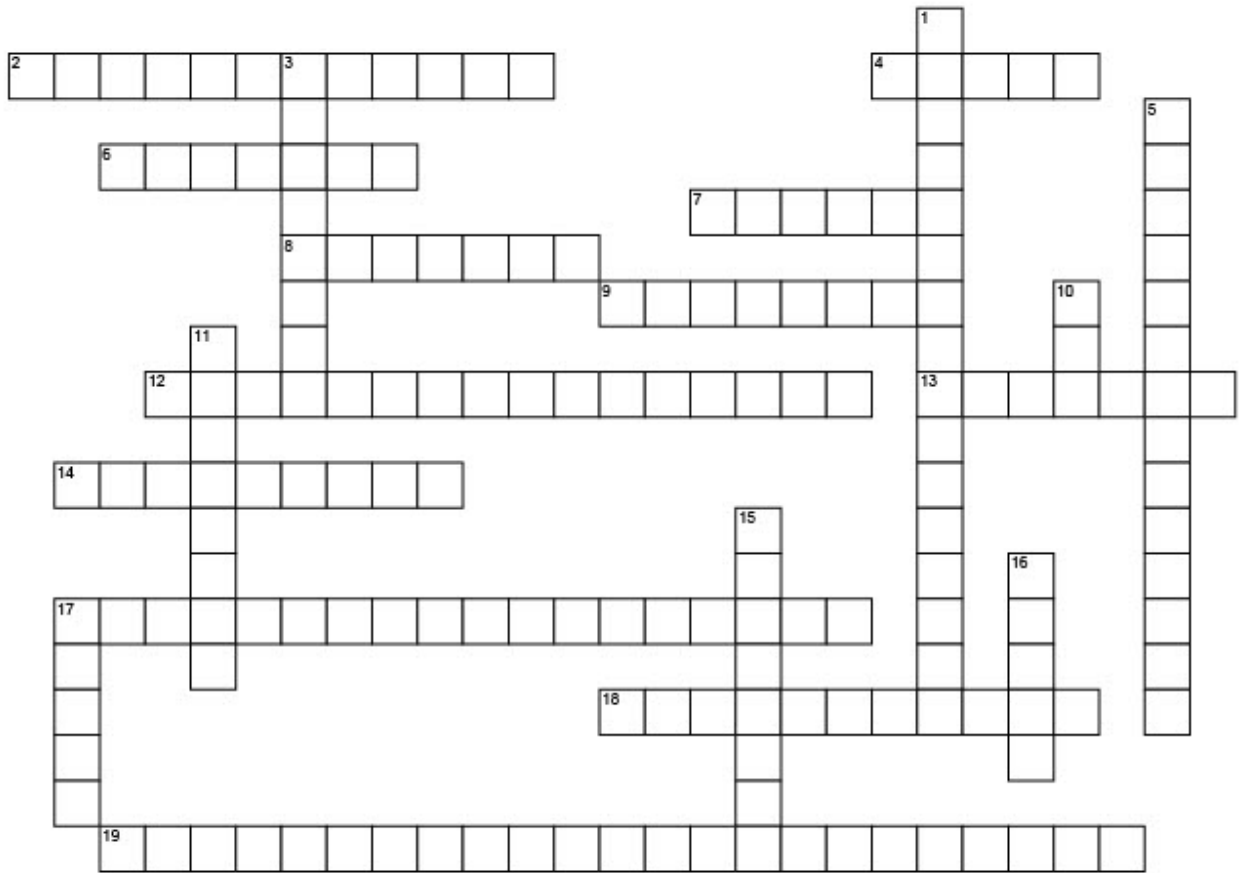
She loved much. Her heart was full of love for Jesus and she let it be shown with abandon.

May God help us to show lavish love, affection and gratitude to our Savior Jesus, using what we have, with courage, regardless of the consequences, regardless of the thoughts and opinions of others, let us recline at His feet that we too might hear Him say to all of us, "She loved much."





# ALABASTER JAR



## ACROSS

- 2 She brought it with her (2 wds)
- 4 He invited Jesus to have dinner with him
- 6 It was in the alabaster jar
- 7 The woman \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus' feet and poured perfume on them
- 8 The woman wiped Jesus' feet with \_\_\_\_\_ (2 wds)
- 9 The woman wet Jesus' feet with them (2 wds)
- 12 Who will love more? (3 wds)
- 13 The problem for the debtors (2 wds)
- 14 Simon judged \_\_\_\_\_
- 17 The greater debt (3 wds)
- 18 Where the woman stood (2 wds)
- 19 What Jesus told Simon (4 wds)

## DOWN

- 1 The woman had done this (4 wds)
- 3 "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is \_\_\_\_\_ him"
- 5 What the moneylender did (3 wds)
- 10 Number of people owing money in the parable
- 11 Simon was one
- 15 The woman's sins were \_\_\_\_\_
- 16 The woman heard \_\_\_\_\_ was eating at the Pharisee's house
- 17 It saved her



Alabaster was a fine variety of marble quarried in Egypt. It was carved into containers for perfume. In Mark's description of a similar event, he tells the value of such a flask at 300 denarii, roughly half a year's wages. This type of container was a common item owned by women of that day. Thousands of these types of vials have been found by archeologists.

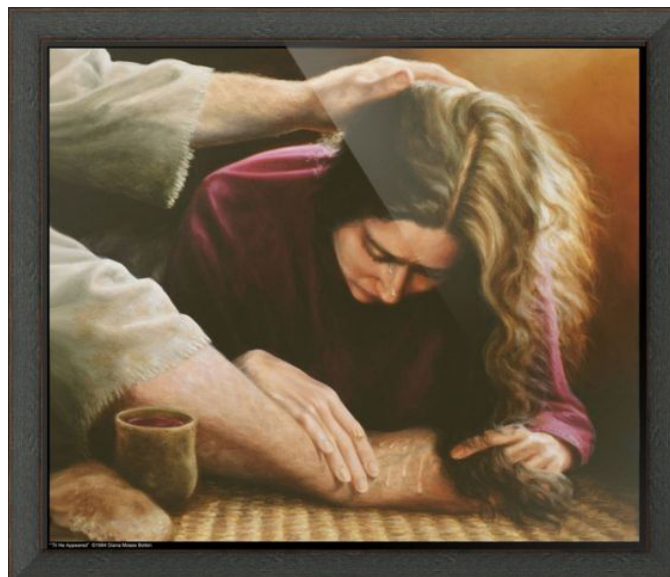
In the gospels of Matthew, Mark and John, a similar incident to the passage found in Luke 7:36-50 is recorded; however, there are details in the Luke 7 passage which set it apart from the other three gospels. Note the differences below:

### LUKE

- Takes place at the home of Simon the Pharisee
- Happened in Galilee during Jesus' Galilean ministry
- The woman was a "sinner," most likely a prostitute, since her hair was down, something only done by prostitutes at that time
- She anointed Jesus' feet

### MATTHEW/MARK/JOHN

- Takes place at the home of Simon the leper
- Happened in Bethany during Passion Week
- The woman was Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus
- She anointed Jesus' head





## IT'S GREEK TO ME

Some of the words used in Luke 7:36-50 can be better understood by looking at their Greek translation. Take for example the word "brecho" in verse 38, which is translated as "wet." It can also be translated "rain." The word "kiss" in verse 38 in Greek is "kataphileo," which is an emotional, intense kissing. This word is also used in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, when the son returns home and the father kisses him. The Greek word used for "sinner," in verse 37, is "hamartolos," a term meaning "harlot."

# ALABASTER JAR

Find the words in the grid. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions.

C L R B L M Q T Z T F L G N E V I G R O F M G  
 X T G K V V K N R M M K H L C R C L Q K V J W  
 M J Y F Z L R E F I L L U F N I S A D E V I L  
 J V F R N K J L P W K I S S E D C K M W Y L Y  
 R E D N E L Y E N O M E H T F O E L B A R A P  
 Y C D W R N L Z T L S J Z K K Y Y F R F V H N  
 M X N C G K F P R U M P T W O N O I A T R H N  
 R C M X B J G P S K H P T N L R N V J V O G T  
 L I G T P T T E T A W N F S G R R E R K T N L  
 H K A M R Y J J R T P B U A F X N H E Y B B Y  
 M W B H B B Y I K Y V S V T I P D U T L E X Q  
 H N D R R K S L R X E E J R P T K N S K D L S  
 C R O D R E Q Z J J T G L H R G H D A W R T R  
 R M J M E V H M D H N T G Q T R K R B J E M A  
 B N R K I D F N E I N K W R Q L L E A N T G E  
 H F R H R S I D H N R O M T M G L D L X A N T  
 L W C K G H E C Z M M D M L Z M T D A P E R R  
 G G P P E B U K J L T L G O Y N T E R E R Z E  
 Q N P B T O J N V N P K B W N R D N V R G M H  
 N Q L H T C O R R E C T L Y K E Y A X F E X C  
 X R R P P R N F L T R K V N W N Y R N U H R Z  
 P M Q K Z W K P J L Y F N Z W L R I N M T Z K  
 K T J L B R D B J R M R J T H G N I M E T C K

From "The Bible Puzzle Book - A to Z Edition"

ALABASTER JAR	KISSED
BEHIND JESUS	LIVED A SINFUL LIFE
CORRECTLY	NO MONEY
FAITH	PARABLE OF THE MONEYLENDER
FIVE HUNDRED DENARII	PERFUME
FORGAVE THE DEBT	PHARISEE
FORGIVEN	SIMON
HER HAIR	THE GREATER DEBTOR
HER TEARS	TOUCHING
JESUS	TWO



A denarius was a coin worth about a day's wages. Both debtors in the Parable of the Moneylender owed a substantial amount to the moneylender. Like the debtors in the parable, we too have a debt, a debt of sin which we are unable to pay. Thanks be to Jesus, for through His work on the cross He has paid our debts and become a surety and guarantor of a better covenant, according to Hebrews 7:22.



## WORD SCRAMBLE PUZZLE

Unscramble the letters below to find a title used in this Bible study, then see how many six- and seven-letter words you can make from the title! Good luck!

A A B D E E E E F H L L M N N O O P R R T Y

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Can you find 30 six-letter words and 20 seven-letter words?

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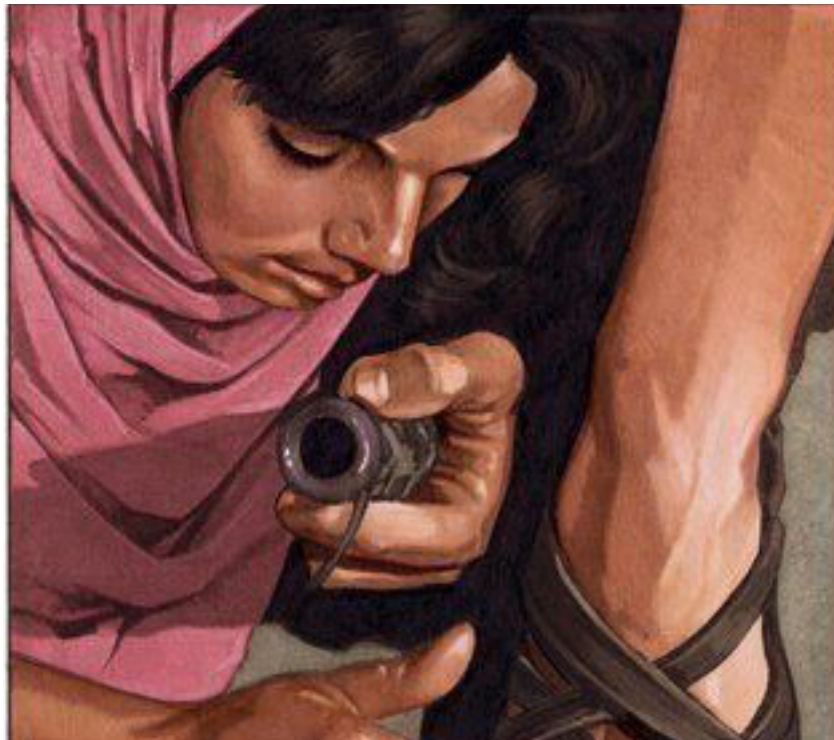
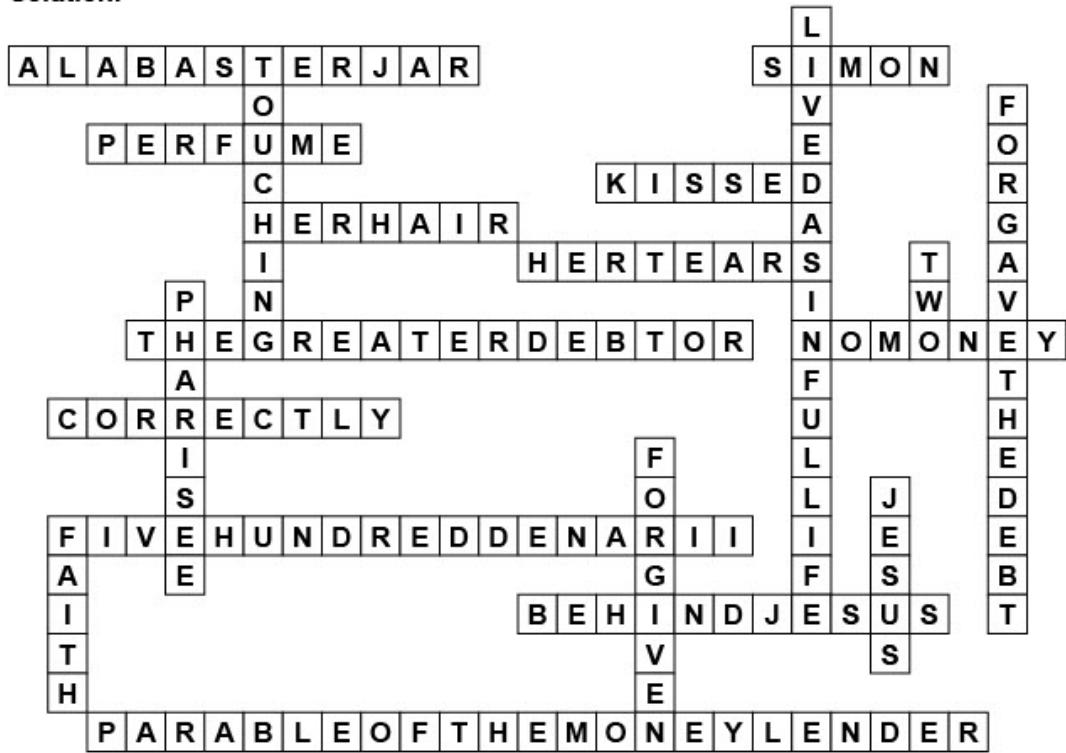
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# ALABASTER JAR

Solution:





# ALABASTER JAR

## WORD SEARCH SOLUTION

C	L	R	B	L	M	Q	T	Z	T	F	L	G	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>F</b>	M	G
X	T	G	K	V	V	K	N	R	M	M	K	H	L	C	R	C	L	Q	K	V	J	W
M	J	Y	F	Z	L	R	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>L</b>
J	V	F	R	N	K	J	L	P	W	<b>K</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>D</b>	C	K	M	W	Y	L	Y
<b>R</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>P</b>
Y	C	D	W	R	N	L	Z	T	L	<b>S</b>	J	Z	K	K	Y	Y	<b>F</b>	<b>R</b>	F	V	H	N
M	X	N	C	G	K	F	P	R	U	M	<b>P</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>O</b>	N	O	I	<b>A</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>R</b>	H	N
<b>R</b>	C	M	X	B	J	G	P	S	K	H	P	T	N	L	R	N	V	J	V	O	G	T
L	I	G	T	P	T	E	T	A	W	N	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>	G	R	R	E	R	K	T	N	L	
H	K	A	M	R	Y	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Y</b>
M	W	B	H	B	Y	I	K	Y	V	S	V	T	I	P	D	U	T	L	E	X	Q	
H	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>S</b>
C	R	O	D	R	E	Q	Z	J	J	T	G	L	H	R	G	H	D	A	W	R	T	R
R	M	J	M	<b>E</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>
B	N	R	K	I	D	F	N	E	I	<b>N</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>E</b>
H	F	R	H	R	<b>S</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>T</b>
L	W	C	K	G	H	E	C	Z	M	M	D	M	L	Z	M	T	D	<b>A</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>
G	G	P	P	E	B	U	K	J	L	T	L	G	O	Y	N	T	E	R	E	R	Z	E
Q	N	P	<b>B</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>H</b>
N	Q	L	H	<b>T</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>C</b>
X	R	R	P	P	R	N	F	L	T	R	K	V	N	W	N	Y	<b>R</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Z</b>
P	M	Q	K	Z	W	K	P	J	L	Y	F	N	Z	W	L	R	<b>I</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>K</b>
K	T	J	L	B	R	D	B	J	R	M	R	J	T	H	G	N	<b>I</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>K</b>

## WORD SCRAMBLE PUZZLE

### SOLUTION

#### PARABLE OF THE MONEYLENDER

##### Six-letter words:

ALMOND	BARELY	BARLEY	BEHOLD
BLONDE	BLOODY	BOTHER	BRANDY
DEALER	DEEPLY	DENTAL	DOLLOP
FENNEL	FONDLY	FROTHY	HOLLER
HYMNAL	LEMONY	LOADER	MAROON
MENTAL	PALTRY	PANDER	PARLOR
PARROT	PARTLY	PLAYER	POODLE
PORTLY	PRAYER	RAMBLE	TRADER
TREBLE	TRENDY	TREMOR	TROPHY

##### Seven-letter words:

BALONEY	BLATHER	BLENDER	BLOATED
BLOOPER	BREEDER	BROADEN	BROADLY
FORBADE	FORLORN	MONTHLY	PORTEND
PROBLEM	PROMOTE	RAMBLER	TREADLE
TREMBLE	TROLLER	TROOPER	YEARNED



## IMAGE INDEX

COVER: "The meal in the house of Simon the Pharisee," by Gabriel Maelesskircher, 1476, German National Museum, Nurenberg

INTERIOR TITLE PAGE: "Feast in the house of Simon," by Frans Francken the Younger, 1630s (public domain)

TABLE OF CONTENTS: "Anointing of Forgiveness," by C. Michael Dudash (used by permission of the artist)

THANK YOU, C. MICHAEL DUDASH!

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PAGE 5: "Forgiven," by Lyn Deutsch (used by permission of the artist) THANK YOU, LYN DEUTSCH!

<http://lyndeutsch.com>

PAGE 8 TOP PHOTO: "Feast in the house of Simon the Pharisee," by Peter Paul Rubens, 1618-1620, The Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg

PAGE 8 BOTTOM PHOTO: "For She Loved Much," by Jeff Hein (used by permission of the artist) THANK YOU, JEFF HEIN! [www.jeffhein.com](http://www.jeffhein.com)

PAGE 12: "Christ at the House of Simon the Pharisee," by Pierre Subleyras, 1737, Gemaldegalerie Altemeister, Dresden



**SHE LOVED MUCH**