

Three stories. One lesson.

Story One (see Luke 7:36-50):

A Pharisee saw the woman and thought, “She is a sinner.” He was right. She had lived a sinful life. But now she loved Jesus. She knelt behind him. Her tears wet his feet. Her hair dried them. She kissed his feet and poured perfume on them.

Jesus told her, “Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

Story Two (see Luke 18:9-14):

The Pharisee prayed, ‘I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else.’

The tax collector dared not lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.’

The sinner went home justified before God.

Story Three (see Luke 23:33-43):

Two men, both criminals, were crucified beside Jesus. One of them hurled insults at him. The other said, “We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

Jesus answered him, “Today you will be with me in paradise.”

The Lesson:

God answers prayer because of who He is, not because of who we are.

It is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).