

A PLACE OF FORGIVENESS

LESSON 170 → Luke 7:36-50

A tragic accident finally led Calvin to pray.

The first thing Calvin remembered was hearing voices. But they seemed far away.

Then there were lights. Faint at first, but gradually growing brighter. And Mom . . . there was Mom, leaning over him. She seemed hazy somehow. And why did she look so troubled?

Where was he? What had happened?

Suddenly he remembered it all. He had talked his brother, Andrew, into taking their raft out on the river, even though he knew Mom and Dad would never have given permission for them to go out alone. The day had been just too beautiful to waste, and when his parents had to be gone somewhere for the afternoon it had seemed like the perfect chance. He had told Andrew that Dad had said it was okay—and at first everything had been just great.

He remembered the fear that had shot through him when he first felt the strength of the current. Dad had always handled the raft before, and it had looked so easy! But in moments the strong pull of the water had them out in the middle of the river. Calvin remembered struggling to keep the raft steady. Then the motorboat had sped by, causing a flurry of white spray, and the raft tipped. Andrew had hollered out . . .

Andrew! Where was Andrew?

Calvin struggled up through the haziness that seemed to surround him. “Andrew,” he managed to say weakly. “Where’s Andrew?”

His mother leaned over him. “Calvin! You’re awake! Can you hear me, Calvin?”

“Andrew.” he managed to get out once more. “Where’s Andrew? Is he okay?”



His mother glanced over her shoulder helplessly. Then she stroked the hair back from his forehead. “Shhhh, Calvin. Don’t talk. Just rest now.”

Mom, tell me. His mind struggled to say the words he needed to get out. I have to know about Andrew. Before his eyes flashed the picture of his towheaded eight-year-old brother. Is Andrew okay?

Troubled thoughts churned through his mind. I lied to Andrew. I told him Mom and Dad said we could go. He’s got to be all right!

But Andrew wasn’t all right. They had found him, limp and unconscious, about half a mile from where the raft had tipped. He was alive, but just barely. And for the next week his life hung in the balance.

Calvin’s own condition was not good, and for a few days the doctors felt it best that he not be told about Andrew. When his parents finally did break the news, he turned his face to the wall. My brother! The anguish of what



JESUS FORGAVE ME, TOO.

But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity. — Psalm 78:38

he had done swept over him. My little brother . . . and I'm to blame!

Calvin couldn't eat that night. He couldn't sleep either. Even if Andrew does get well, he'll never forgive me, Calvin thought. Now he's missed the pizza party with his Sunday school class that he had been looking forward to. He's missed all this time at school, and he hates to get behind on his schoolwork. He didn't even get to celebrate his own birthday on Friday; he was so sick he probably didn't know or care. Who knows when he'll ever get up and around . . . or if? Oh, why did I ever do it?

As the days went by, Calvin's despair didn't lessen, even though Andrew finally began to make steady improvement. It's all my fault—I'm to blame, he thought continually. Misery wrapped around him. Andrew probably will never even want to talk to me again. And he used to like me so much!

Then, one Saturday morning, the nurse came into his room with a big smile. "Calvin, there's a young man down the hall who is asking to see his big brother. How about hopping into this wheelchair and I'll take you down there for a little visit?"



Calvin's heart was beating hard . . . but he went. Could Andrew really want to see him after what he had done?

Andrew did! There was no anger against his brother. Their visit was short, but as Calvin settled back into his own hospital bed, an overwhelming feeling of relief swept over him. Andrew had forgiven him! Did that mean . . . could it possibly mean that God would forgive him too?

The tears that he had held bottled up inside for all these long days and nights began to spill over. And Calvin did something he hadn't been able to do since he came to in the hospital—he prayed and asked God for forgiveness. "Not just for lying and taking the raft out and letting Andrew get hurt," he prayed, "I want You to forgive me for all the things I've done wrong. I know I should have been saved a long time ago. But if You'll forgive me now I promise, with Your help, to live the way You want me to for the rest of my life."

Calvin found forgiveness that day. What a surge of love he felt in his heart as peace and relief came over him! I feel like a different person, he thought in amazement. No wonder everyone always says it is so good to be saved! God has forgiven me and everything is going to be all right now.

**FORGIVENESS
FOR ALL**

God's forgiveness is for all people. When we are forgiven for our sins, there is great love in our hearts for Him. The words on the list to the right of the word-find are from the Bible text. Find and circle them in the word-find. They read up, down, across, backwards, and diagonally.

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

- BOX
- OIL
- FEET
- HEAD
- KISS
- LOVE
- MOST
- FAITH
- HAIRS
- HOUSE
- JESUS
- PEACE
- PENCE
- SAVED
- SIMON
- TEARS
- WATER
- WIPED
- WOMAN
- ANOINT
- JUDGED
- LITTLE
- MANNER
- MASTER
- SINNER
- DEBTORS
- FORGAVE
- PROPHET
- CREDITOR
- FORGIVEN
- OINTMENT
- ALABASTER
- PHARISEES

