

I. Healing the Centurion's Servant (Lk. 7:1-10)

- A. Centurion Implications - A few things are easily missed in this story unless you understand the social culture of that day. The Romans had taken control of the region and had held the Jewish people under heavy oppression and injustice for multiple generations. A Centurion was the title of a major military leader (generally over 100 soldiers or more). He was a Gentile. Worse than that, his people, and more than likely some of his family and friends, were still oppressing the Jews in that city and region. Culturally and religiously, Jews would not enter the house of, or have any type of personal relationship, with a Gentile in that day.
- B. Sent some Jewish Elders (vs. 3) - This speaks volumes of the character, beliefs, and relational dynamics of this particular man. He was the enforcer of Roman rule over the Jews of his region, yet the Jewish leaders of that city cared about him deeply. Here is our first glimpse into the beauty of Jew and Gentile love and respect under the Messiah.
- C. For he Loves our Nation and Built our Synagogue (vs. 5) - This Centurion loved the Jewish people! As this story progresses it becomes more and more clear why Luke included it in his Gospel. A foreign Gentile leader who loves the nation of Israel and believes in her Messiah. Now the Messiah was here and now this Gentile Roman military leader will become the pinnacle example of having faith in the Jewish Messiah.
- D. I am Not Worthy for you to Enter my House (vs 6) - This Centurion understood Jesus' full identity as the Messiah and as such did not believe he was worthy enough to have Jesus even enter his home. This also could have been the Centurion not wanting Jesus to be disgraced for entering the home of a Gentile. The point is that Jesus was going to go in and break the tradition of the Jews.
- E. Authority over Sickness (vs 8) - The Centurion understood that Jesus had authority over sickness. In other words, Jesus did not use magic or had the secret formula to cure illness. He simply had the authority over it. The Centurion believed in a Messiah who had authority over sin and sickness just as the scriptures said.
- F. Jesus Marveled at his Faith (vs 9) - Jesus marveled twice in the Gospels. Here He marveled at the complete confidence of this Centurion concerning Jesus' ability to heal his friend to the point that he didn't need to enter his home, but

rather just speak out of His will to heal. The second time Jesus marvels is at the unbelief He found in His own hometown just a few chapters ago. (Mark 6:6)

- G. Observing Faith (9) - This is our second encounter with faith that Jesus commends or is moved by in the Gospel of Luke. In both instances, the verses are clear that it is the “faith” that he saw. This verse is not talking about something internal that He saw in the spirit. It’s talking about the belief shown by the Centurion by asking Jesus to stay outside of his home and heal his servant by simply speaking a word from a distance. In the same way, in chapter five, Jesus saw the physical actions of the four men who lowered their paralytic friend through the roof. Their bold, determined action to bring their friend to Jesus proved they had real faith for their friend to be healed. (Lk. 5:20)

“Your faith will not murder your humility, your humility will not stab at your faith; but the two will go hand in hand to heaven like a brave brother and a fair sister, the one bold as a lion the other meek as a dove, the one rejoicing in Jesus the other blushing at self.” (Spurgeon)

II. Raising the Widow's Son (Lk. 7:11-17)

- A. The Lord had Compassion on Her (13)- It is important to note that this is the first time that Luke uses the word “Lord” in reference to the person of Jesus. In almost all other instances in this Gospel, the word “Lord” is used only in reference to Yahweh, the God of Israel. Though Luke will use this word many times more to refer to Jesus, I find it significant that He is led to use it for the first time here in reference to the motivations of His heart. His compassion for this widow is in her mourning and in social injustice with no one to care for her. (Lk. 4:8, 12)
- B. He Touched the Coffin (14)- Just as He earlier reached out to touch the untouchable leper, He reaches out again to touch the untouchable. By God's Law and Jewish custom, this is possibly the pinnacle way that you become unclean or defiled—you shall not touch a dead corpse. As we just saw, Jesus does not need to touch this young man's dead body in order to raise it; He simply needs to speak, yet, He touches it. (Num. 5:2, 6:11, 9:6)
- C. Young Man, I say to you Arise (14)- Take a moment to ponder the fact that Jesus speaks to this dead man as if he were alive and could hear Him. Though the body dies, the spirit lives on. This is a clear biblical truth and here Jesus speaks to the still hearing and living spirit and tells him to sit up. (Rom. 4:17)

- D. **Elijah Moment** - Luke has continually set us up to understand deeper truths though the events that He highlights. For example, Simon's belief that he was too wicked and unclean to be in Jesus's presence and then Jesus touches the leper and makes him clean. Here we must see that Luke is specifically highlighting this event to lead us into the next theme in his gospel, which is John the Baptist. There are multiple references here in this event and the event of the raising of the widow's son by Elijah and what is prophesied concerning the Elijah to come. One thing is for sure, Jesus did exactly what He did in order to shadow the Elijah from 1 King 17:19-24. The question is why?
1. Widow with a Dead Son (12)- There is only one story in the entire Old Testament of a raising of a dead widow's son and it is Elijah, the prophet of whom it is prophesied that he will come again before the restoration of all things.
 2. Giving of the boy back to the Mother (15) - Upon raising the boy from the dead, Elijah returns the boy to his mother, Luke specifically uses the same exact language here as Jesus returns the boy to his mother.
 3. A Great Prophet is Among us (16)- The people immediately recognize the prophetic significance of this event and call Jesus the great prophet who was prophesied by Moses to come and restore the people. So, too, the prophet Micah told us that Elijah was going to come again and restore. (Deut. 8:15)
 4. God Has Visited His People (16)- This statement has direct implications in language to the belief that they were in the presence of the "sent one". Whether or not they believed that Jesus was the prophesied "Immanuel", "the prophet", or "Elijah" himself returned from the dead is unclear. However, the clear Elijah references are there and it is very clear that this event and these statements were the catalysts for what happens next with John the Baptist, who partially fulfilled the Elijah-to-come prophecy.
- E. This Report went all over the District (17)- The specific report of the Elijah like incident reaches John the Baptist's ears through his disciples. His response makes up the next portion of our study and there is much debate about what was actually

happening in John's heart as he sends his disciples to ask Jesus if He is truly the Messiah.

III. John the Baptist Sends His Disciples to Jesus (Lk. 7:18-23)

- A. There are two main assumptions of almost all scholars concerning the intention behind the action of John to send his disciples to Jesus in this next section.
1. One, and by far the most common, is that John becomes offended concerning his imprisoned state and Jesus seems indifferent to his suffering. He questions whether or not Jesus is actually the Messiah because he is not ending his own Roman oppression.
 2. Two, John is sending his disciples to Jesus because his disciples need to follow Jesus and not continue to follow John anymore and the longer they are staying faithful to John they are becoming offended with Jesus' lack of deliverance of their Master.
- B. Are you the Coming One or do we look for another (19)- The original Greek language of this passage strongly suggests that of a sincere wrestle or confusion, rather than that of an accusatory statement. Whether it was John himself or his disciples who are asking, they are asking the question with a clean heart. I think it's of note that Jesus does not rebuke them for asking, as he does with some others, who's demanding to know his identity on their terms. There is grace for the confusion and wrestling with who God is and why He does what He does.
- C. Blessed is he who is not offended because of me (23)- Jesus lists many works that the prophesied Messiah would do and then points out that He is doing them. However, He does leave out the setting free of the prisoners from Isaiah 61:1 that He spoke to his fellow countrymen in Nazareth. Jesus wraps up His answer with an additional beatitude, "Blessed" is the one who does not allow the confusion and wrestle with God to turn into offense with God." (Is. 8:14-15, 26:19, 35:5-6, 61:1,11; Mat. 24:9-10)

"The verb rendered "takes offense" is picturesque. It derives from the trapping of birds, and refers to the action that depresses the bait-stick and so triggers off the trap. (Morris)

IV. Jesus's Discourse on John the Baptist (Lk. 7:24-29)

- A. What did you go out to see? (24)- Jesus begins to talk to the crowds about John's character and more importantly his role. He tells us that John was someone who did not live for his own comforts or recognition. He did not live for the praise of men and was completely confident in his prophetic mission and message.
- B. More than a Prophet (26)- Jesus quoted Malachi concerning the coming of John, because the prophets themselves were not prophesied, but John was, and this was one way that he was greater than all previous prophets. He was also greater in mission than any other prophet as He was the forerunner to the Messiah. After Jesus speaks of John's uniqueness in message, mission, and internal character, He tells us that these things taken together made him the greatest man born of a woman. In this way, Jesus declared with boldness to the crowds that John was the forerunner and Jesus was the Messiah (Mal. 3:3)

Yet, John was greater than all the prophets, mainly because he had the privilege of saying of the Messiah "He is here" instead of "He is coming." - Guzik

- C. He who is least in the Kingdom is greater than John (28)- I do not believe that Jesus is saying that John had lost his faith and was not going to make it into the Kingdom. His entire discourse on John was one of validating his identity and mission so that people would place the right weight upon Jesus as the one who would institute the Kingdom. John had prepared them to receive Jesus as the Messiah and if they had, then they were walking in God's will.
- D. Those Baptized by John Acknowledged God but the Pharisees rejected His Will (29-30) - Those who had repented in preparation for the Messiah by receiving John's baptism now had a fresh confidence and stirring of the heart to follow Jesus. However, the Pharisee's hardened their hearts at this statement since they had rejected John, and now in turn had rejected Jesus.
- E. We played the Flute and you did not Dance, we Mourned and you did not Weep (32) - Jesus now points out the general way humanity responds when we are confronted with our own wrong understanding or position. We undermine and criticize the messenger so we can undermine and criticize the message. The truth is there will always be something we can find to criticize the messenger if that is where our heart is.

The point is clear enough. "If the message is unwelcome, nothing that the messenger can say or do will be right." (Maclaren)

V. He who is Forgiven Much Loves Much (Lk. 7:30-50)

- A. Then one of the Pharisee's requested Him to Dine with Him (36)- Every indication of the text tells us that this individual was sincere in his desire to spend more time with Jesus and consider His claims and teachings.
- B. A Woman who was a Sinner (37) - Some suppose this was Mary Magdalene, but we have no evidence of this. Mary of Bethany also anointed Jesus' feet with oil, but this was a separate incident. This tells us more than that she was a sinner in the sense that all people are. She was a particularly notorious and known sinner; most suppose that she was a prostitute. Her presence in the Pharisee's home showed courage and determination.

"It ought not to astonish you that there were two persons whose intense affection thus displayed itself; the astonishment should rather be that there were not two hundred who did so, for the anointing of the feet of an honored friend...Loved as Jesus deserved to be, the marvel is that he was not oftener visited with these generous tokens of human love." (Spurgeon)

- C. She began to Wipe His Feet with Her Tears (38) - Both the container and the contents show that this was an expensive gift she brought to honor Jesus. Her intentions were clearly to express her gratitude, worship, and love for the ministry she had received from him earlier. Whatever He had done caused her to feel totally forgiven and love poured from her heart. This pure and powerful love caused her to abandon all acceptable social norms in order to be with Him and pour her love upon him.

We can assume she had no intention of weeping so intensely in this public setting, and we can imagine the awkwardness and rawness of the moment and actions. Extravagant love and worship is being displayed because it had so welled up inside her that it needed to come out. (2 Sam. 6:13-22)

- D. Jesus Answered with a Question (40)- Through the parable of the two debtors Jesus poses a simple personal question to the Pharisee, "Have you ever felt truly forgiven for you sins?"
- E. Do you see this Woman? (44) - Of course this Pharisee physically saw the woman but Jesus asks the Pharisee to truly see her and what is being displayed. She knew she was forgiven through Him and by Him freely. The question is how could you see this sort of a response from a notorious sinner and not understand that Jesus could truly and fully forgive sin. Your question of who I am and what I can do is being answered loud and clear by this woman in your presence.
- F. Her Sins which are Many have been Forgiven for She Loved Much (47) - I wonder how often this story actually causes us to access our own hearts. I find myself wondering if my lack of extravagant love, thankfulness, and total freedom

from shame and guilt is because I actually haven't reckoned myself forgiven like this woman. Jesus tells her that her belief that she had been totally and freely forgiven has resulted in her salvation and the accompanying perpetual peace in her heart. (Mat. 18:21-33; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 John 4:19)