

Luke 7:1-17

Verses 1-10:

--(1-5) *Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, "for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue."*

--(1) This account is also in **Mt. 8:5-13** and there seems to be a discrepancy in the story. Matthew tells it as if the man himself comes, but Luke explains the centurion's request was by way of Jewish elders.

--Matthew's intent was clearly to emphasize the fault of the Jews in their unbelief, in contrast to the Gentile faith, as he also relays more of Jesus' rebuke to those who would be cast out of the kingdom. Luke is more focused on noting the public details of the account and therefore includes the detail of others being involved in the message.

--(2) Jesus finishes His teaching of the crowds and returns to Capernaum. Then we are introduced to a **certain centurion**. The Roman centurion was typically in authority over 100 soldiers, through the title had begun to expand to those over more or less.

--Either way, the Scriptures mention at least seven centurions, and good things are said about them. They are described as responsible, trustworthy, disciplined men. This centurion is also caring, generous, and full of faith!

--(3) We are told that **he heard about Jesus**. . . meaning he heard that Jesus had returned. No doubt, being in Capernaum, he had heard about Jesus before, and very possibly, had seen Him. It was his job to be aware of public "disturbances" and what he had learned about Jesus lead him to plead with Jesus for mercy.

--Being familiar with Jewish custom, and likely familiar with Jesus' teachings, he wisely sends Jewish elders to plead with Jesus on his behalf.

--(4-5) This centurion must have been a very unique man to have Jewish elders pleading on his behalf. They claim he is **deserving**, because he **loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue**.

--The language gives us the sense that **he himself** built the synagogue. Meaning at his own expense. And if there was only one synagogue in Capernaum, it may have been the very one Jesus ministered in.

--Of course, we should sense some tension here. What will Jesus do in relation to this Gentile and his sick servant?

Verses 6-8:

--Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

--(6-7) Jesus responds and heads to the centurion's house, and when He is not far they are stopped. Very likely the centurion could see the crowd coming, or a servant was sent ahead to say Jesus was coming, and the centurion responds by sending friends from his house to Jesus with a message.

--The Jews opinion of him was that he was deserving, the centurion's opinion of himself is that he was not worthy to have Jesus come into his home. The centurion was poor of spirit. Certainly, he would be familiar with Jewish customs of uncleanness in relation to Gentiles, but there was something more here. This was a man with cultural favor who was not leveraging it. He recognized in Jesus an authority and purity and power beyond his own.

--(8) **For I also am a man placed under authority.** . . The centurion recognized divine authority in Jesus. No doubt he was aware of the miraculous word spoken in **John 4:46-54** to the nobleman's son, who was at the point of death, when Jesus said, **Go your way; your son lives**, and the son was healed. Cana of Galilee was not far from Capernaum.

--The centurion had authority over soldiers and servants, but in Jesus, he recognized One who had authority over fevers, leprosy, disease, fish, water, demons, and over men.

--The centurion understood one under authority also possessed authority. As a soldier of Rome, he walked in Caesar's authority, though in all reality, he might never have seen Caesar in the flesh. Still, Caesar's authority and reality were evident in the response of men. This insight led him to faith in Jesus and His authority.

--and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it. . . But say the word, and my servant will be healed. The centurion's faith recognizes Jesus' authority over him and his servant.

Verses 9-10:

--When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick.

--(9) Faith can be found in such unexpected places! Jesus is so pleased by this centurion's faith. He praises it and responds to it.

--First, He wants this man's faith to be evident to the Jews—the man was not present. *Think of Him praising the faith of John the Baptist or the widow with two mites.*

--We are told that Jesus **marveled at Him**. We are only told that Jesus marvels two times. Once, here at faith. The other time, at His second attempt to approach His own townsfolk in Nazareth, and their unbelief!

Mark 6:6: And He marveled because of their unbelief.

*Tozer (Faith Beyond Reason): *"Unbelief is not just a mental attitude. It is a moral thing. Unbelief is always sinful because it always presupposes an immoral condition of the heart before it can exist. Unbelief is not the failure of the mind to grasp truth. It is not the unsoundness of a logical premise. It is not a bad conclusion drawn from a logical premise. It is a moral sin."**

--A moral sin that shocks the heart of God.

--This man has the opposite. A moral trust that shockingly delights the heart of God! This Roman soldier had faith in Jesus' authority, Jesus' mercy for an unworthy Gentile, and Jesus' care and compassion for a slave!

--So we find three opinions of this man. The Jews say he is deserving. He says he is unworthy. Jesus says he has marvelous faith!

--**(10)** First, Jesus praises faith. Second, Jesus responds to faith. The centurion finds Jesus to be who he believed Him to be. *The authority of a pure throne Vs. corrupt throne as Rome became*

--It is also worth noting that God is blessing the faith of the centurion regarding *others*. I don't know how it all works, but I do know it *only works* by faith!

Verses 11-17:

--**(11-12)** *Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her.*

--This account is only found in the Gospel of Luke.

--You never knew what would happen following Jesus! Jesus rebukes cities like Chorazin and Bethsaida (**Lk. 10:13**) about the miracles done in them that we know nothing of.

John 20:30: And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;

--Yet in everywhere Jesus went, everything He did, and everything He said there was always a divine purpose. Sensing that, a large group of disciples and general crowds were following Him into Nain.

--As they approach the gate of the city, Luke says **behold**, and describes this second crowd exiting to meet the approaching crowd. Two figures lead either crowd. The humble Savior and the desolate widow. A crowd of disciples meeting a crowd of mourners. *These are the places of Scripture where I have an artists sympathy without an artists skill!*

--Luke tells us that the dead man was ***the only son of his mother***. There is something in the heart of God that recognizes “only” children. *Jairus’ daughter is an only daughter (8:42), and the man with the demon possessed son, brings him as an only child (9:38).*

****Romans 8:32: He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?****

--(13) When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.”

--This crowd of mourners exiting the city was a regular sight in that city, as it is in our city today! Yet the regularity of death does not diminish the grief of loved ones.

--We are told ***the Lord saw her***. . . He saw the widow. A woman who had lost her husband the same way. Who had walked the same path outside of the city in grief. He knew the heart of this widow, overwhelmed and broken.

--In Lamentations (1:1) the grief of a widow’s heart is compared to the desolation of Jerusalem, broken and burned by Babylon, empty of people and life.

--In Jeremiah (15:9) the grief of widows is described like this: ***Her sun has gone down while it was yet day.***

--What is Jesus’ response to seeing her? To knowing her? ***He had compassion on her!***

--Jesus takes in the whole scene in a way no one else can. He takes in the widow, the only son, the crowd, the death, and the sin. He is truly alive in the moment.

--The crowd has no hope in the face of death. The crowd can grieve and sympathize but they can offer no hope to the widow or the son. Sin has entered the world.

****Romans 5:12: Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned--****

--Why should this matter? Because the dead will also be carried from our homes, if they haven’t already. Because we will be no different than this widow, this crowd, or this son. Because every day, the same crowd walks in our city, and we are just as powerless and hopeless.

--But what do we see in Jesus Christ?! Compassion! Notice, there is no request from them.

There is no marvelous faith that Jesus will praise. There is no hope for them with the dead.

Jesus’ compassion comes without any effort on their part. ****Jn. 3:16****

--Jesus’ compassion moves Him. Jesus is strong and good and living. He is *the only* hope in this world to deal with the sin and death that has spread to all men.

--It is not an accident, that for the first time in his gospel, Luke, as the writer, calls Jesus ***Lord***. . . ***the Lord saw her***. The Son of Man and Son of God comes into contact with hopeless sinners enslaved by the power of sin and death—and He has compassion.

--What does the Lord say? ***Do not weep***. A small prequel to the ultimate act of eternally wiping away every tear of death, sorrow, crying, or pain.

--(14-15) Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still.

And He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” So he who was dead sat up and began to speak.

And He presented him to his mother.

--(14) We are told Jesus moves from the mother to the **coffin**, which was typically a plank with slightly raised edges. Which would mean the body, wrapped in a shroud, would be clearly visible. He touches the brier, and the carriers stand still.

--Then Jesus speaks and says, ***Young man, I say to you, arise.***

--The body is dead, but the soul isn't. In all three cases where Jesus raises the dead, He speaks to them respectfully, personally, as if they consciously hear. The Eternal Word, who gave all life, and in whom all life consists, spoke life anew. *No one is beyond His voice!*

****Revelation 1:18: I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.***

Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and Death.*

--In the last miracle, Jesus, as the Great Physician, preserved life. In this miracle, Jesus, as the Resurrection and the Life, gives life.

--(15) Luke describes the scene in a wonderfully strange sentence: ***So he who was dead sat up and began to speak.*** The sitting and speech were evidence of life—life from beyond the power and authority of all men.

--What happens next? Does Jesus demand service of this young man? Does He claim authority over his life? No. *Though we should gladly give our lives back to Him **(Rom. 12:1-2 + 2 Cor. 5:14-15)**!*

--We are told, ***He presented him to his mother.*** God cares about family bonds—an only son, daughter, and brother. Of course, this was again a lesser version of the great sequel He has in store for the family of God.

--We tend to think of the widow's joy, but what of the joy of Jesus Christ!?

Saphir (The Compassion Of Jesus, pg. 21): "Oh, if poor and suffering men and women only thought of the compassion of Jesus! Sin needs forgiveness; grace through redemption can save the guiltiest; but our misery, whatever it may be; our sorrow, however deep-seated; our heart woe, however connected with our own fault of sin, touches the compassionate heart of Jesus. There is One that pities you with an unspeakable, infinite tenderness. Lift up your eyes to Him!

--Jesus' compassion is greater than we know or realize. As is His joy. *You can see a reflection of God's heart to heal the widow's heart in **Isaiah 54***

--(16-17) ***Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.***

--The people recognize a divine work among them and both fear and praise. They can only compare Jesus to a great prophet like those of the Old Testament, but Jesus is greater still.

--In other resurrections, like those of Elijah **(1 Kings 17:17-24)**, or Elisha **(2 Kings 4:8-37)**, or even what we see with Peter later in the book of Acts, **(Acts 9:40)**, they all prayed to God. The Lord Jesus Christ doesn't pray to His Father. He speaks to the dead as God.

--And so He is. The report going out about Him tonight is still the same. In fact, we have even greater clarity about Him who died, and now lives forever with the keys of death and Hades.

--We can wonder why this doesn't happen to us. To our dead loved ones. Doesn't He still have compassion? Doesn't He still have power?

--Yes. And yes. But His plan was never to come and raise the dead to die again. His plan was to come so that we could believe in Him and know eternal life in an immortal resurrected body like His, in a world without Satan, sin, or death, and in the eternal family of God that will never know an empty seat.

****John 5:28: Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.****

****John 11:25-26: Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?****