

'Luke' - Extra Teaching Points #11

Luke 7:1-50 (NASB95)

Luke 7:1-10

When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum. ² And a centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. ³ When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave. ⁴ When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, "**He is worthy for You to grant this to him; ⁵ for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue.**" ⁶ Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof; ⁷ for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." ⁹ Now when Jesus heard this, **He marveled at him**, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "**I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.**" ¹⁰ When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

Jesus marveled at this gentile's faith, just as He marveled at some Jews' unbelief.

- [Mark 6:6](#) And He **wondered** at their unbelief.
- The fact that Jesus sometimes "marveled" at people's faith—or lack thereof—raises questions about the Calvinist claim of predestination.

Extra Info On Centurions:

Centurions were commanders of 100 soldiers.

- Centurions were chosen from a certain character and class of men.
 - They were not to be "seekers of danger" but rather men who could command, who were steady and reliable, who wouldn't be looking for a fight, but wouldn't run from one either.

Centurions are mentioned several times in the Bible, and are always talked about in favorable ways.

- 'Cornelius'
- 'This centurion'
- 'The centurion at the foot of the cross'
- 'The centurion who protected Paul on his journey to Rome'

This centurion was kind to the Jews, though most were not.

- The Romans were an occupying force, and were usually cruel and racist toward those they conquered... but this man was different.
- He had built a synagogue for the Jews, likely paying for it himself.

Gentiles are usually described in one of 3 ways in the Bible:

- Pagans – dismissed the Jews and their God
- Proselytes – became Jews themselves
- God Fearers – respected the Jews and their God—maybe even more so than their pagan gods—but wouldn't go so far as to become Jews themselves.

Luke 7:11-17

Soon afterwards He went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large crowd. ¹² Now **as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out**, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. ¹³ When **the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her**, and said to her, "**Do not weep.**" ¹⁴ And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, "**Young man, I say to you, arise!**" ¹⁵ The dead man sat up and began to speak. **And Jesus gave him back to his mother.** ¹⁶ Fear gripped them all, and they began glorifying God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has visited His people!" ¹⁷ This report concerning Him went out all over Judea and in all the surrounding district.

This is one of only 3 stories we have in the gospels, of Jesus raising people from the dead; Lazarus ([John 11:43](#)), and Jairus' daughter ([Luke 8:40-56](#)) are the other 2.

- Luke is the only gospel to mention the raising of the dead son of the widow of Nain.
- John is the only gospel to mention Lazarus.

[Vs. 12](#) “...as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out.”

- These were two very different processions of people meeting at an intersection.
- As death was being carried out, Jesus was bringing life back in!

Q: [Vs. 13](#) is the first time Luke calls Jesus “Lord.” Luke uses the word “lord” elsewhere, but this is the first time Luke calls Him Lord. Is there any significance to why Luke calls Jesus Lord here?

- “Lord” means owner or master of something. Jesus showed Himself to be the master over even death itself!

Nobody asked Jesus to do anything. He was moved by compassion.

- A widow without a son, was in trouble.
 - Jewish women had no real legal status in Jewish society. They couldn't own property or sue for divorce.
 - Without a husband or family to care for her, she would have been reduced to begging or prostitution.
- First Jesus addressed the weeping widow, and told her to dry her tears; then He approached the coffin.
 - She would have been walking in front of the bier so that Jesus would have encountered her first.
 - This would have been an unthinkable act. Nobody would have thought to tell a widow not to cry or to touch a coffin during a funeral procession.
 - Touching a coffin would have made a person ceremonially unclean.

[Vs. 14](#) Jesus told the corpse, “*Young man, I say to you, arise.*”

- Jesus never prayed and asked God to raise any of the dead people He raised... He always just spoke to the person and commanded them to get up.
- Apparently death had to respect Jesus' authority!

Q: Jesus did not have to touch the centurion's slave in order to heal him; so why did Jesus deliberately touch this man's coffin?

- Scripture never explains, so all we can do is speculate.
 - Perhaps Jesus wanted to show His willingness to associate with sinners and the unclean.
 - Perhaps it was to show that He had taken on their uncleanness, only to do away with ceremonial uncleanness altogether when He was sacrificed on the cross.
 - Perhaps He knew that some people needed to feel His touch to know how much He cared for them.

Luke 7:18-23

*The disciples of John reported to him about all these things. ¹⁹ Summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, “**Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?**” ²⁰ When the men came to Him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to You, to ask, ‘Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?’” ²¹ **At that very time He cured many people** of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He gave sight to many who were blind. ²² And He answered and said to them, “**Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.**” ²³ **Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.**”*

Q: John was the one who announced Jesus as “the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” ([John 1:29](#)). Why would he be asking now if Jesus is the one?

- Sometimes ministry doesn’t look like you think it should.
- John was expecting Jesus to do the things that David did—like drive out the Romans, and get him out of prison.

Q: Jesus didn’t answer John directly; instead He healed a bunch of people.

Then Jesus quotes [Isaiah 35:5-6](#) and [Isaiah 61:1](#). Was that a good answer? If so, why?

- Yes, it was a great answer!
- [Isaiah 35:5-6](#) & [61:1](#) said the messiah would do the very things Jesus was doing.
 - John may have had unmet expectations, but Jesus wanted to assure him He was doing the right things, and that John could trust Him.

Q: In [Vs. 23](#), what does Jesus mean by saying, “**Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.**”?

- The word translated “take offense” means “to stumble.”
- Jesus is saying that people will be blessed if they don’t stumble simply because He isn’t meeting their expectations.
 - Many people experience disappointment with God when He doesn’t do what they expected or were told He would do.
 - Losing faith is almost always connected to unmet expectations.
- We need to trust that God is doing the right thing... even if it doesn’t look like what we expected Him to do.

Luke 7:24-30

*When the messengers of John had left, He began to speak to the crowds about John, “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵ But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who are splendidly clothed and live in luxury are found in royal palaces! ²⁶ But what did you go out to see? A prophet? **Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet.** ²⁷ This is the one about whom it is written, ‘BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.’ ²⁸ **I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.**” ²⁹ When all the people and the tax collectors heard (*this*), they acknowledged **God’s justice**, having been baptized with the baptism of John. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and the lawyers **rejected God’s purpose for themselves**, not having been baptized by John.*

Q: ([Vs. 26](#)) Why was John the greatest of the prophets?

- John was the most important prophet of all because his message was the most important of all the prophetic messages.
- All the other prophets said, “Someday the Kingdom of God will come.” But John could say, “today is the day.” He could actually point to Jesus as the Messiah!

Q: ([Vs. 28](#)) Why would those of us who are now in God’s Kingdom be greater than John?

- We have a greater privilege.
 - We get to work IN the Kingdom of God, whereas John only got to announce *it was at hand*.
- We have a greater message.
 - John said the Kingdom was at hand, but we can say, “The Kingdom is here, and you can come on in!”

[Vs. 29](#) is more than likely part of Jesus’ statement about John, rather than a commentary by Luke on how people received what Jesus said.

- The word “*this*” is not in the Greek, leaving it open to speculation as to what was actually “heard.”

- Taken this way, Jesus follows a reference to John’s greatness with a reference to the reactions to John’s preaching.

Q: What does Jesus mean when he says all the people and the tax collectors “*acknowledged God’s justice*”?

- They proclaimed God to be “just” by agreeing with God, and being baptized to show their agreement and acceptance of His purposes for them.
- The Pharisees and lawyers rejected God’s purposes for them, and refused to be baptized.
 - Baptism is connected with accepting God’s purposes for your life.
 - Refusing to be baptized is seen as rejecting God’s purposes for your life.
 - Baptism that doesn’t include accepting God’s purposes for your life, isn’t acceptable to God—it’s a worthless ritual!

Luke 7:31-35

“To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like? ³² They are like children who sit in the market place and call to one another, and they say, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.’ ³³ For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon!’ ³⁴ ‘The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ ³⁵ ‘Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children.’”

Jesus was saying that these people wouldn’t respond to any approach of God... whether it was austere like John, or celebratory like Jesus.

Luke 7:36-50

*Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. ³⁷ And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, ³⁸ and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. ³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, **“If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner.”** ⁴⁰ And Jesus answered him, *“Simon, I have something to say to you.”* And he replied, *“Say it, Teacher.”* ⁴¹ *“A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So 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 correctly.”* ⁴⁴ Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, *“Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. ⁴⁷ For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”* ⁴⁸ Then He said to her, *“Your sins have been forgiven.”* ⁴⁹ Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, *“Who is this man who even forgives sins?”* ⁵⁰ And He said to the woman, **“Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”***

A Pharisee requested Jesus to have dinner with him, but then didn’t even extend the normal hospitality of washing Jesus’ feet.

- This would have been an obvious insult or distancing of the Pharisee from Jesus.
 - We can only speculate as to why the Pharisee would do this.
 - Maybe he was trying to trap Jesus, and had Him over for dinner to try to humiliate Him.
 - Maybe he was curious about Jesus, but didn’t want to alienate the other Pharisees.

Luke doesn’t give us this woman’s back-story. All we know is that she was known as a “sinner” around

town, and that she wanted to be where Jesus was.

- For her to be identified as a “sinner” in her own town, suggests she was probably a prostitute; but that is nowhere confirmed.

Q: What was the difference between the woman and the Pharisee?

- She knew how bad her sins were!
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Follow Up Assignment

Q: Has Jesus ever failed to meet your expectations?

- If so, how?
- What does Jesus’ answer to John say to you?

Q: Did your baptism really “*acknowledge God’s justice*” ... or did you just want to join a church in the hopes that, perhaps now, you would not go to hell?

- Is there anything you need to make right?

Q: What does the way you treat Jesus say about how much you think you were forgiven?