

# A HEART OF COMPASSION | Luke 7:1-17 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 8/07/2025

I. Compassion For A Centurion (1-10) | II. Compassion for a Widow (11-17)

**INTRO:** As Jesus continues His ministering in the Galilee region, this next section moves from **Preaching to Ministering** in various towns (7:1-8:25). – Jesus’ mission was to *Proclaim truth*, and *Set Captives free* (Luke 4:18), but in our lesson today He *Heals the brokenhearted*, by showing **A HEART OF COMPASSION** (Luke 7:1-17).

- According to the Bible, "**Compassion**" is to have mercy, to feel sympathy, and to have pity for others. – The Bible tells us that God is "*a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness*" (Psalm 86:15). – The compassion of the Godhead is eternal and limitless, just like all of His qualities. – (Lam 3:22-23) *Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness.* – We see this in two stories...

## I. COMPASSION FOR A CENTURION (1-10) – READ: Jesus concluded His Sermon on the Plain...

**A. Jesus Journeyed to Capernaum (1)** – **Capernaum** was the chosen home city of Jesus after He was driven from Nazareth by the religious officials (Luke 4:26,28-30). **Jesus spent much time ministering there.** He healed the paralytic (Matt 9:1-2), Peter’s mother-in-law (Mark 1:30-31), and even cast out an unclean spirit (Mark 1:21-25). – The town had a greater opportunity than most cities **to hear and believe in Christ**, and (Luke 10:10-16) **explains that the residents** would be held to a higher standard of judgment!

**B. Jesus Hears of a Centurion’s Circumstances (2-3)** – We learn here that **Dr. Luke** chose to record this particular scenario, where the servant of a certain Centurion was very ill (2a). **READY TO DIE!**

1. **A Centurion was a Roman Officer (2b).** – During New Testament times, **the Romans** had a very elaborate and complex army. – A Centurion was a non-commissioned officer commanding at least 100 men. They were **Gentiles**, and they were often regarded as the instruments of Israel’s oppression.
2. **This Centurion was Quite Different (2c).** – **Roman law** actually allowed masters to kill incapacitated slaves that became ill or injured. – (But) **This Centurion actually cared for the well-being of his sick servant!** **He had COMPASSION for him**, and desired to do whatever he could to bring healing and recovery.
  - a. He HEARD of Jesus’ healing power from somewhere (3a). – Surely this was possible, because each time Jesus did some miraculous event, the REPORT spread everywhere. (cf. Rom 10:17)...
  - b. **This Centurion Acted In Faith (3b)** – Having never seen Jesus, he acted only on the reports that he heard! – Here we see an important truth (John 30:29b) *Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.* – This Centurion is **one of three** who gave evidence of faith in the NT (Matt 27:54; Acts 10).
    - On his behalf, **Jewish Elders** were sent to petition Jesus, to come and HEAL this beloved servant.

**C. Jesus is Summoned by the Centurion (4-5)** – The willingness of the Jewish elders implies a genuine relationship with the Centurion. – They earnestly begged Jesus when they found Him. (we too should exercise)

- **This was unheard of in those days!** **Jewish Elders** bearing good testimony of a Roman Soldier? – Yet these pleaded with Jesus that **this Roman Centurion** was a **WORTHY man** for two stated reasons: 1) *He loves our nation*, and 2) *he even built a Synagogue for their people.*

**D. Jesus Learns of the Centurion’s Faith (6-8)** – As Jesus willfully went with the Elders, He received another message from “the friends” of the Centurion (6a)...

**1. A Humble Request (6b-7a)** – Again, **this is odd** because this was a man of great Power and Authority, yet his message asked the Lord not to trouble himself because he knew himself to be unworthy of Jesus' presence. – Peter likewise acted in humility when he caught the great catch of 157 fish – “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man!” (When you recognize the presence of Jesus in your midst do you reverence Him!)

**2. An Honest Reaction (7b)** – **Something that truly amazed Jesus!** “But say the word, and my servant will be healed.” – This reveals that the Centurion understood Jesus' Authority to Heal. – What an awesome demonstration of his faith in Jesus Christ, who He is, and the POWER of His WORD!

- Re: **Power** (Isa 55:11) *So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*
- Re: **Believing it:** (Prov 16:20) *He who heeds the word wisely will find good, And whoever trusts in the Lord, happy is he.* – In John Gospel, Jesus later goes on to say... *Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.*” (John 8:51) What’s your assessment of God’s Word? Infallible, Inherent!

**3. An Honorable Recognition (8)** – This Centurion understood **AUTHORITY!** – He recognized the concept of Master & Servant and saw the parallel between the way he himself commanded soldiers and the way Jesus commanded diseases. – He associated this truth to **Jesus being Lord and master even over sickness**.

**P/A** – Because He truly believed that Jesus was the Son of God, he reached out in faith!

**E. Jesus Marvels and Grants a Miracle (9-10)** – *As He heard of this great faith* (9a). – I could almost see the expression on His face, a look of awe, a look of delight, a look of relief. (*He believes!*) – Even now, Jesus is searching for those whose hearts are full of faith, those who believe in His person!

**1. Turning to the Crowd (9b)** – *He Expresses His amazement to them...* “*I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!*” – Yet, a Roman Centurion, a Gentile man from afar, made his confession of FAITH known, by his Thoughts, his Word, and his Deeds! (tt. Rom 10:8b-13)

- *Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.* (Matt 10:32)
- This rouses a **perceptive thought**: When we exercise such faith in Jesus Christ, **He MARVELS!** – YES... **Our Faith can bring a smile to the face of the God of this universe.** – **We have the capacity to induce an expression of joy on the countenance of the Ancient of Days!** **Whoa!** – And I have come to realize that **this is what I live for!** (*To be pleasing to God! What is your purpose in life? – Glory to God!*)

**2. Returning to the House (10)** – I find it interesting that there is **NO MENTION** of Jesus saying a Word! **NO MENTION** of Jesus showing compassion on the Centurion or his Sick Servant. – However, Luke records that *when the delegation returned home... the sick servant was made Well...Healed...Restored!*

- **The Marveling Jesus Responded with a Marvelous Miracle!** – In this instance, Jesus exercised His Power and Authority to heal from a distance! – Jesus has different ways of showing Compassion and Concern in our lives, but what He is really looking for is FAITH! (*to believe in Him in any circumstance*)
- (Heb 11:1) *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.* – Jesus also said... “*If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes*”
- Capernaum, the Centurion’s household, and even Jesus MARVELED at this Gentiles faith! – The **only other account** that Jesus marveled was in (Mark 6:6), *He marveled at the unbelief of the Jews!*

**My Short Summary...** *Jesus was on the way to heal, but first to find if faith was real... And when He found that faith was true, He Marvelled, He Turned... granting Healing too!* **What a Compassionate Lord we have!**

**II. COMPASSION FOR A WIDOW (11-17)** *For a Widow of Nain* – **READ: The Next day**, Jesus journeyed to **NAIN**: It was a little town southwest of Capernaum, about 25 miles away. – **P/A: Jesus was willing to go everywhere minister!** *(After all, He left Heaven to become the Son of Man, to die for the sins of the world).*

**A. Jesus' Approach (11b-13)** – Luke tells us that **MANY DISCIPLES** followed after Him and **LARGE CROWD** as well (11b). – These were abiding with Jesus Christ (cf. John 8:31-32), hearing His Words, watching and learning many things. – Because **JESUS** was in their midst, I believe this was a **GLAD CROWD!** There was **Love and Light** and **LIFE!** – (John 6:68) **PETER** “*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.*”

**1. Approaching the Gate (12)** – He saw **ANOTHER LARGE CROWD...** a funeral procession leaving the city. He saw a Coffin, a Dead man, and a Mourning Mother. – Luke emphasizes that **the dead man was the Only Son** of a widow. – **IMAGINE the scene if you will...** Because **DEATH** was in their midst, I believe this was a **SAD CROWD!** – **Gloom and Doom HOVERED OVER their procession!** – Without Jesus...**DEATH** is more than a just a sting! (Heb 9:27) “*...it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,*”

- **As the TWO CROWD'S MET...** it incites a stark contrast to consider: **What Crowd do you run with?**
  - **Life and Joy** was approaching the city! i.e., *The Jesus Crowd...*
  - **Death and Doubt** were leaving the city i.e., *A Mourning Crowd...*
  - **A Woman's Only Son** was **DEAD** and leaving the city!
  - **But God's Only Son** was bringing **LIFE** into the city! *(Which SON are you following?)*
- **We all have one life to live on earth, so we must ask ourselves...** **What Direction are you heading?**
  - Are you marching towards the cemetery, where there is death and doom for all eternity?
  - Or are you marching with Jesus into Zion, (Heb 12:22-23) “*Mount Zion... is the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect...*” – I am on my way to Zion!

**P/A** – If you don't know Jesus, **you are running with the Wrong Crowd!** – I beseech you to **Receive Christ before you approach the gate!** – Repent of your sin and ask Jesus to be you Lord and Savior now!

**2. Approaching the Woman (13)** – **Jesus understood death!** He saw the weeping and the wailing crowd... *He saw the widow, who was now without her only son!* – *He sensed her sorrow, He saw her pain!* – **How did He respond?** – With *Splagchnizomai*, which is the strongest Greek word that expresses the deepest kind of feeling towards a person. Jesus had **A HEART OF COMPASION** for the bereft mother.

- Jesus understands sorrows, because **He was the Man of Sorrows (Isa 53:3)**
- With His **WORDS** He expressed His Concern and Comfort by saying, “**Do not Weep.**” *(Condolences)* – But with His **ACTIONS**, He was about to do a Miracle for the Widow!

**P/A** – As disciples of Jesus Christ, when we encounter someone who is mourning for their loved one, or even hurting for some other reason, we are to be Like Christ! – (Col 3:12 esv) *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.* – (1 Thess 5:14b) instructs believers to... *comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.* – *Which involve actions!*

**B. Jesus' Command (14-15)** – **As He approached the OPEN Coffin (14), He touched the frame** apparently to stop the procession. – *Jesus spoke to the “young man” commanding him to “ARISE.”* *(He can do this because He is the Source of Life!)* – “*God...gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did*” (Rom 4:17b)

- Immediately, life returned to the corpse and **the lad sat up!** (15). – **This was not just Compassion shown, but also Resurrection known!** – This was the **first of three times** that Jesus raised someone from the dead (cf. 8:54-55; John 11:41-44). Notice the important detail...
- **The lad began to speak!** – What did he say? Thanks! Halleluiah! What happened? I'm hungry!
- Whatever the case, **the One who is Lord over death and disease** restored the boy to his mother!

P/A – **The mothers response is not recorded** but may be similar to David's Song in (Psalm 30:11-12), You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, 12 To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

**C. Jesus' Compassionate Act Glorified God (16-17)** – **Fear seized the people!** - They witnessed a mighty miracle... **The dead was raised to life!** – They concluded that Jesus was "A great prophet" (16b) – *And that...*

- **"God has visited His people."** They probably did not understand that Jesus Himself was God! - Rather they felt that the miracle was evidence that God was working in their midst (in an impersonal sort of way)
- **Their Report** spread throughout *all the surrounding regions*. – But notice that **The REPORT is really about JESUS!** – Who He is... What He came to do...and Who will BELIEVE it! (cf. Isa 53:1)

**CLOSING THOUGHT: Jesus' ministry was a model for compassion**, demonstrating compassion for the sick, the hungry, and the grieving. – He showed compassion to the bereaved widow by restoring her son to life.

- **As the Son of God**, Jesus personified all of the Father's attributes, especially **His Heart of Compassion!**
- His Love was extended to all of sinful mankind, when **He Died for our sins on a Roman Cross!**
- He knew that we were dead in trespasses and sin and willfully did something about it *to remove the eternal separation from the Father.* **This is A HEART OF COMPASSION!**