

# Luke 7

Charles Dailey © 2015 NLT  
Revision of 2/15/2021 CPS  
Printed 4/1/2021

## Outline:

The Healing of the Roman Officer's Slave

The Raising of the Widow's Son

Jesus Reassures John the Baptist

Jesus Praises John the Baptist

Jesus Criticizes His Own Generation

A Sinner Anoints the Savior

The Parable of the Two Debtors

## HEALING OF THE ROMAN OFFICER'S SLAVE

**(7:1.) When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people, He returned to Capernaum. (2) At that time the highly valued slave of a Roman officer was sick and near death. (3) When the officer heard about Jesus, he sent some respected Jewish elders to ask Him to come and heal his slave.**

- Capernaum is now becoming headquarters for Jesus.
- The **Roman officer** was a centurion (in the Greek text) in charge of 100 soldiers. He was non-Jewish, yet had financed the **Capernaum** synagogue (**vs. 5**). He *loved* the **Jewish** people and revered Israel's God. Added to that, he *loved* his slave. The **Roman** centurions in Scripture are presented as outstanding men:
  1. The one whose servant was healed (in this passage).
  2. The one who confessed Christ at the cross (Matthew 27:54).

3. The ones who rescued Paul from the mob (Acts 21:32).
4. The one who bore Paul's message to the chiliarch (Acts 22:25).
5. Cornelius, the first Gentile convert (Acts 10:1)
6. Julius, who saved Paul's life on the voyage to Rome (Acts 27:3,43)
7. The centurion who brought Paul's nephew to the chiliarch (Acts 23:17,18).
8. The centurions who escorted Paul to Caesarea (Acts 23:23)

Bear in mind that Luke is writing to a Roman official.

- The **officer** approached **Jesus** through the **elders** of the synagogue (vs. 3) rather than directly.

**(4.) So they earnestly begged Jesus to help the man. "If anyone deserves Your help, he does," they said, (5) "for he loves the Jewish people and even built a synagogue for us."**

- The elders were willing to ask on his behalf because of his affection and generosity to the community. It is doubtful if the argument that he was worthy carried much weight with Jesus for He had healed all who came. **Burton Coffman** writes: "How strange it is that this Roman centurion, a Gentile, and an officer in the hated army of the oppressors, should have received such a commendation as the Jewish elders in Capernaum delivered to Jesus on his behalf. He was one of a class of persons who rose above the base morals of the ancient empire and who rejected the vanity and falsehood of the pagan religions."

(6.) So Jesus went with them. But just before they arrived at the house, the officer sent some friends to say, "Lord, don't trouble Yourself by coming to my home, for I am not worthy of such an honor. (7) I am not even worthy to come and meet You. Just say the word from where You are, and my servant will be healed. (8) I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'Go,' and they go, or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this,' they do it."

- The **officer** may have tried to deflect the **Lord** from coming to his **house** because it would be a case of a Jew entering a Gentile's house.
- While the nation of Israel was having trouble accepting the **authority** of Jesus, this "outsider" understood it immediately. Remember, Luke was writing to a Gentile and a ruler where **authority** is important.

(9.) When Jesus heard this, He was amazed. Turning to the crowd that was following Him, He said, "I tell you, I haven't seen faith like this in all Israel!" (10) And when the officer's friends returned to his house, they found the slave completely healed.

- **William M. Taylor** writes: "This centurion placed Jesus on the throne of the universe, regarding him as the ruler of the world, and as having all things under his command. He saw him, not merely as Messiah, but as God Incarnate, and therein lay the superiority of his faith to that of any of the Israelites. Not even any of the apostles, at that time, had reached the lofty altitude on which this Gentile soldier stood."

- **Evidence for a miracle:**

- This could not have been a psychosomatic (mind over matter) healing as Jesus was not present (Vs 6).
- The servant was healed immediately, not progressively. Verse 10.
- He had been sick enough that a great man came to Jesus for help. Verse 8.
- Three parties verified the healing. Verse 10.

## RAISING OF THE WIDOW'S SON

**(11.) Soon afterward Jesus went with His disciples to the village of Nain, and a large crowd followed Him. (12) A funeral procession was coming out as He approached the village gate. The young man who had died was a widow's only son, and a large crowd from the village was with her.**

- Jesus had a **large** following by this time.
- Nain is about 25 miles south of Capernaum.
- The death of an **only son** was considered an extra tragedy. Jeremiah 6:26; Zachariah 12:10; and Amos 8:10.
  - The family name is lost
  - The family income may have also been lost.

**(13.) When the Lord saw her, His heart overflowed with compassion. "Don't cry!" He said. (14) Then He walked over to the coffin and touched it, and the bearers stopped. "Young man," He said, "I tell you, get up." (15) Then the dead boy sat up and began to talk! And Jesus gave him back to his mother. (16) Great fear swept the crowd, and they praised God, saying, "A mighty prophet has risen among us," and "God has visited His people**

**today." (17) And the news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding countryside.**

- Our **Lord** was a man of deep feeling. He felt with her. (**Compassion** means to *feel with*.)
- Saying **Don't cry!** probably didn't stop her from crying, but it did alert all present that some reason to stop weeping was in the offing.
- While **Jesus** had been healing all kinds of diseases, this is the first recorded case of raising **the dead** (vs. 15). Jesus defied the ceremonial defilement forbidding such a thing; because the dead could not defile Him, but conversely He raised the dead!
- The young man instantly regained his full powers (vs. 15).
- Jesus had restored him for his mother's sake.
- The miracle did its greater work among the onlookers. They recognized that Jesus was from **God** (vs. 16).
- **Evidence for the miracle:**
  - The boy was assuredly dead. All concerned knew it. Verse 12.
  - The boy sat up and began to speak. Verse 15.
  - The report traveled far and wide. Verse 17.
  - Luke the physician would be the least apt to believe it, but he did.

## **JESUS REASSURES JOHN THE BAPTIST**

**(18) The disciples of John the Baptist told John about everything Jesus was doing. So John called for two of his disciples, (19) and he sent them to the Lord to ask Him, "Are You the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?" (20) John's two**

**disciples found Jesus and said to Him, "John the Baptist sent us to ask, 'Are You the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?'"**

- Earlier, in Luke 3:20-21, we read that **John** had been imprisoned. The historian Josephus says it was at Machaerus near the Dead Sea. *Antiquities 18; 5.1-2*.
- John's disciples reported to **John** what the **Lord was doing** (vs. 18).
- John may have had more prison privileges than was normally accorded prisoners. He could visit with his **disciples** and send them to question Jesus.
- John's faith in the personage of **Jesus** had wavered. After many months in prison, John had his doubts (vs. 20).

**(21) At that very time, Jesus cured many people of their diseases, illnesses, and evil spirits, and He restored sight to many who were blind. (22) Then He told John's disciples, "Go back to John and tell him what you have seen and heard—the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor. (23) And tell him, 'God blesses those who do not turn away because of Me.'"**

- Actions speak louder than words. **McGarvey** says, "Jesus did not work miracles to gratify skeptical curiosity, but he did use them, as here, to strengthen wavering faith. . . ."
- **Jesus** itemizes the miracles the messengers from John have **seen**. Not all of these cases have been recorded by Luke, but he certainly endorses the list.
- Of special note is that Jesus **preached to the poor** (vs. 22). Jesus specified that his men were to preach without charging the hearers. Matthew 10:8. Luke is sensitive to

the needs of the poor. With some, this was more convincing than miracles.

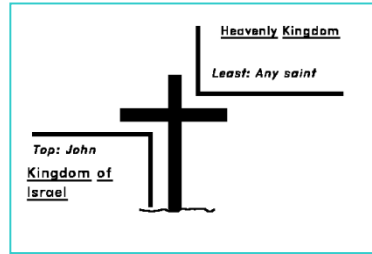
- The religious leaders were stumbling over Jesus. Hopefully, John would not do the same just because Jesus was not doing what John expected the Messiah to do.

## JESUS PRAISES JOHN THE BAPTIST

**(24) After John's disciples left, Jesus began talking about him to the crowds. "What kind of man did you go into the wilderness to see? Was he a weak reed, swayed by every breath of wind? (25) Or were you expecting to see a man dressed in expensive clothes? No, people who wear beautiful clothes and live in luxury are found in palaces. (26) Were you looking for a prophet? Yes, and he is more than a prophet.**

- The crowd had formerly admired John because he was a **prophet** and not a politician. His clothing was that of a **prophet**.
- He was **more than a prophet**. Imagine—he was more than Isaiah or Malachi.
- **McGarvey** points out, "John was miraculously born, and was himself the subject of prophecy." Normally **prophets** were not heralded hundreds of years before their birth and their births did not have supernatural elements to them. **Burton Coffman** says: "Jesus meant by this that John was not a vacillating popularity seeker, preaching only those things that fitted the popular mood, a weather-vane type of preacher, pointing in all directions like a reed in the wind."

(27) John is the man to whom the Scriptures refer when they say, 'Look, I am sending My messenger ahead of You, and he will prepare Your way before You.' (28) I tell you, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of God is greater than he is!"



- We learn from verse 28 that the kingdom was not open yet and John was not in it. Nor would he be in the earthly phase because it did not “open for business” until Pentecost in Acts 2.
- Jesus ranks those **in the kingdom** (vs. 28) very highly.

## JESUS CRITICIZES HIS OWN GENERATION

(29.) When they heard this, all the people—even the tax collectors—agreed that God's way was right, for they had been baptized by John. (30) But the Pharisees and experts in religious law rejected God's plan for them, for they had refused John's baptism.

- Luke reports that the common people fit in with God's call for repentance expressed in **baptism**, but the religious leaders rejected **John's** message.
- **McGarvey** aptly observes, “It is noteworthy that Jesus emphasizes baptism as the test as to whether men justify or reject God's counsel.” Hmm.

(31.) "To what can I compare the people of this generation?" Jesus asked. "How can I describe them? (32) They are like children playing a game in the public



square. They complain to their friends, 'We played wedding songs, and you didn't dance, so we played funeral songs, and you didn't weep.' (33) For John the Baptist didn't spend his time eating bread or drinking wine, and you say, 'He's possessed by a demon.' (34) The Son of Man, on the other hand, feasts and drinks, and you say, 'He's a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and other sinners!' (35) But wisdom is shown to be right by the lives of those who follow it. "

- This was the most religious nation on earth, yet the God of heaven could not get their attention. Jesus compared them to **children** playing. They didn't want to play wedding and they didn't want to play funeral. God couldn't suit their mood. The proof follows:
- John played funeral. He was not a party-goer and did not mix socially, so he was accused of having a **demon**.
- The Lord played wedding. He was a party-goer and they accused him of overindulging in food and drink. Besides that, he mingled with the wrong crowd.
- God's **wisdom** was producing results (vs. 29) although not among the religious elite (vs. 30). God's ways are justified by their outcome (vs. 35).

### **A SINNER ANOINTS THE SAVIOR**

(36.) One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. (37) When a certain immoral woman from that city heard He was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. (38) Then she knelt behind Him at His feet, weeping. Her tears fell on His feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing His feet and putting perfume on them.

- His name was Simon (vs 40), a common name in Scripture and *Josephus*. There is no need to identify him with other Simons.
- The invitation was sincere, but its execution lacked the courtesies normally accorded a guest. Simon probably felt the pressure of his peer group about honoring Jesus.
- **McGarvey** puts it beautifully:

“To see this scene we must picture Jesus stretched upon the couch and reclining on his left elbow. The woman stood at the foot of the couch behind his feet. His feet were bare; for every guest on entering left his sandals outside the door. The woman, feeling strongly the contrast between the sinlessness of Jesus and her own stained life, could not control her emotions. ‘The tears,’ says Brom, ‘poured down in a flood upon his naked feet, as she bent down to kiss them; and deeming them rather fouled than washed by this, she hastened to wipe them off with the only towel she had, the long tresses of her own hair. She thus placed her glory at his feet (1 Corinthians 11:15), after which she put the ointment upon them.’”

**(39.) When the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, He would know what kind of woman is touching Him. She's a sinner!" (40) Then Jesus answered his thoughts. "Simon," He said to the Pharisee, "I have something to say to you." "Go ahead, Teacher," Simon replied.**

- The implication is that if Jesus were truly **a prophet**, He would know what kind of a **woman** this was and have nothing to do with her.
- The **Teacher** was about to use His teaching skills on His critic/host.

## THE PARABLE OF THE TWO DEBTORS

(41.) Then Jesus told him this story: "A man loaned money to two people—500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. (42) But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?" (43) Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt." "That's right," Jesus said.

- Cold logicians that Pharisees were, this is a perfect setup for **Simon** to pronounce his own judgment.
- The silver coin was a denarius issued by Rome. In New Testament times, it was a day's pay for a farm laborer. Matthew 20:2. So one debtor owed 50 days wages, the other 500 days wages.
- Solving "what if" problems was a common mental exercise for the Pharisees. They loved to figure out what was right and wrong.
- The **I suppose** may show that Simon considered the simplicity of the question beneath his dignity.

(44) Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn't offer Me water to wash the dust from My feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. (45) You didn't greet Me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in, she has not stopped kissing My feet. (46) You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint My head, but she has anointed My feet with rare perfume. (47) "I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown Me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love."

- **Simon** had treated Jesus discourteously. He should have had Jesus' **feet** washed or at least brought **water**, but he did neither. The woman did both with a great personal commitment.
- Guests are honored with a **kiss** on the cheek. But **Simon** did not offer the normal greeting. The woman gave a higher form of **kiss** — one that would not be reciprocated.
- Social convention called for **Simon** to have Jesus' head **anointed with oil**, but he failed there, too. The woman used the ointment she had with her to **anoint** His
- The niceties that could show love for a guest were absent from **Simon's** hospitality.

**(48.) Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven." (49) The men at the table said among themselves, "Who is this man, that He goes around forgiving sins?" (50) And Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."**

- **Jesus** could offer **forgiveness** because he is God and all sin is against God. He forgave sin also back in Luke 5:20 with the man let down through the roof. As at that time, the religious leaders (we assume that's who was at dinner here) inwardly questioned His authority.
- Her **faith** in Jesus as Lord was clear by her conduct towards Him, her sorrow in His presence and her honor of His person. One does not always need to say "I believe."