

06-03-2018

Message: Jesus Demonstrates His Identity and Authority

Text: Luke 7:1-17

Introduction

- A. Our once crucified, now risen and reigning Lord Jesus Christ inspired Luke to record in chapter 6 the Lord's message to a multitude of Hebrew and Gentile people, calling them to trust and submit to Him as the Lord Who has authority over all life and death, Who has authority to save and destroy.

Luke 6:46 **"Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"**⁴⁷

"Everyone who comes to Me and **hears My words and acts on them**, I will show you whom he is like:⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and **could not shake it**, because it had been well built.⁴⁹ "But the one who has **heard and has not acted**, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and **the ruin of that house was great.**"

- B. Now in chapter 7 Jesus inspired Luke to record how Jesus demonstrated this authority over life and death. Jesus will heal a slave who is near death, and then bring to life a widow's son who is already dead. Why does Jesus want us here today read and hear this word about Him? So that we might continually entrust our lives to Him, not trusting in our merits but in His mercy.

I. 7:1-10 The Lord Jesus has power and authority to deliver us from the threat of death.

- A. 7:1-2 The setting. A centurion in Capernaum had a highly regarded slave (doulos) who was about to die from an illness.

Luke 7:1 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.**

1. When at full strength, a Roman legion had 6,000 men, with 60 centurions, each over 100 men. This centurion could be a Roman, but was certainly a Gentile.
2. His affection for his slave becomes even more evident when in verse 7 he calls him "my child."

Luke 7:7 for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but *just* say the word, and **my servant** (pais = child) will be healed.

- B. 7:3 The centurion "heard" about Jesus, and asked Jewish elders to plead with Jesus for the

life of his slave. "Diasozo" = to bring safely through an ordeal; to save/rescue from danger. E.g., Noah, 1 Pet 3:20.

Luke 7:3 When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and **save (diasozo) the life of his slave.**

1. Jesus's ministry in Galilee, including casting out a demon in the Capernaum synagogue and healing people of diseases in the region, resulted in the centurion hearing about Jesus.

Luke 4:36 And amazement came upon them all, and they *began* talking with one another saying, "What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out."³⁷ And the report about Him was spreading into every locality in the surrounding district.

Luke 5:15 But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear *Him* and to be healed of their sicknesses.

2. And by God's grace, his hearing about Jesus led to faith in Jesus.

Romans 10:17 So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

C. 7:4-5 The Jewish elders appeal to Jesus based on the centurion's "worthiness."

Luke 7:4 When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, "**He is worthy (axios)** for You to grant this to him;⁵ for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue."

1. The centurion loved God's people, the Jewish nation.
2. The centurion built the synagogue in Capernaum (see photos of the 1st century basalt foundation). Centurions made 50 to 110 times the salary of the lowest paid soldier, and could use their wealth, influence, manpower to do beneficial public works.

D. 7:6-8 That Jesus begins going with the elders indicates His willingness to save Gentiles.

Luke 7:4 When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, "**He is worthy (axios)** for You to grant this to him

Luke 7:6 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 (hikanos = adequate, sufficient, fit)** for You to come under my roof;⁷ for this reason **I did not even consider myself worthy (axioo)** to come to You

1. What Jesus obviously intends to stand out to us in this text is the centurion's **denial of worthiness** to receive help and mercy from Jesus, in contrast to the Jewish elders'

petition. This is the disposition of saving faith, trusting in the power, authority, and mercy of Jesus, and not in our own worthiness. When we count on Christ forgiving and saving us because “my good outweighs my bad,” we are trusting in our own worthiness, and not Christ.

- a. Trusting in our own worthiness, our good outweighing our bad, is the kind of self-righteousness Jesus condemns and rejects.

Luke 18:9 And **He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous**, and viewed others with contempt:¹⁰ "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.¹¹ "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.¹² 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'¹³ "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, '**God, be merciful to me, the sinner!**'¹⁴ "**I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.**"

- b. Trusting in Christ's worthiness requires a humbling of ourselves before Him as Lord. It is an attitude displayed by John the Baptist and Peter before Jesus. Before Jesus, great people pale into insignificance.

Luke 3:16 John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and **I am not fit (hikanos) to untie the thong of His sandals**; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Luke 5:8 But when Simon Peter saw *that*, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "**Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!**"

2. The centurion believed in Jesus's power and authority as Lord to rescue from death. His faith was such that it did not depend upon his seeing Jesus, on Jesus being physically present with his slave. All Jesus had to do was speak his slave's deliverance into existence, as God spoke creation into existence.

Luke 7:7 ... "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."

Psalms 33:6 **By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.** ...⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.⁹ **For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.**

- E. 7:9 Can we believe and trust in Jesus though we do not see Him now? Jesus inspires Luke to record His commending the centurion's faith so as to commend that kind of faith to us, and assure us that Jesus saves not only believing Jews, but Gentiles who come to Him in faith. Far from regarding Gentiles as second class citizens, Jesus informs us that our faith in Him gives us standing with Him. Was his faith greater than that of John the Baptist and Peter at this point?

Luke 7:9 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.**"

- F. 7:10 Jesus demonstrates the authority and power He claims for Himself as Lord. The healing of the centurion's slave foreshadows Christ, though His church, making His gospel known to the nations. All are invited to call upon the name of the Lord Jesus for rescue from sin and death.

Luke 7:10 When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

II. 7:11-17 The Lord Jesus has power and authority to deliver us from the state of death.

- A. 7:11 A point of this next incident at Nain (show map, slide) is to show that not only does Jesus have authority over disease, but also over death itself.

Luke 7:11 Soon afterwards **He went to a city called Nain;** and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large crowd.

- B. 7:12 a pitiful funeral procession. "The Way of Life meets the way of death." We live in a lethal creation, ever since the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden.

Luke 7:12 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.

- C. 7:13-15 Not because of her worthiness, but because of Christ compassion and mercy, He brought back the widow's son from the dead by the word of His power. He touched the "soros" = plank, upon which the wrapped and anointed body lay, (possibly subjecting Himself to ceremonial uncleanness, Num. 19:11,16), and by His word commanded the young man to arise.

Luke 7:13 **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.**

Titus 3:5 **He saved us**, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but **according to His mercy**

- D. 7:16-17 People rightly attributed this miracle to the power of God, but saw Jesus only as a prophet in the line of Elijah (1 Kings 17:21) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:31,34-35), both of whom by God's power brought a young man back to life for their (widowed, in Elijah's case) mothers.

Luke 7:16 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.

- E. Jesus was more than great prophets like Elijah and Elisha who prefigured Him - He is Lord over the prophets, who has power and authority over death.

1. We are dying people in a lethal world. Until Christ returns, no one gets off this planet alive. Our only hope beyond the grave is Christ.

Romans 8:9 ... But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.¹⁰ If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.¹¹ But **if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.**

2. By the word of His power when He returns, the dead in Christ will rise to eternal life.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For **the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout**, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, **and the dead in Christ will rise first.**¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Conclusion: Jesus inspired Luke to record how Jesus demonstrated His power and authority as Lord over life and death, so that we might continually entrust our lives to Him, not trusting in our merits, but trusting in His mercy.