

Jesus' Compassion – Touching Lives (Lk. 7)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. In this session, we will look at Jesus' ministry in Galilee as it happened chronologically—being set forth mostly in Luke 7 and supplemented by Mark 3:20-35 and Matthew 11-12.
- B. Jesus is seen as One with authority to heal the sick, raise the dead, and forgive sins (Lk. 7). These miracles were done with great compassion for those considered outcasts of society—a Gentile in the occupying army (7:1-10), a helpless widow (7:11-17), and an immoral woman (7:36-50).

II. JESUS HEALED THE CENTURION'S SERVANT IN CAPERNAUM (LK. 7:2-10)

- A. The local elders pleaded with Jesus to heal the centurion's servant (Lk. 7:2-5; cf. Mt. 8:5-6). This story is expanded only in Luke's gospel.

¹Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. ²And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. ³So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. ⁴And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, ⁵“for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue.” (Lk. 7:2-5)

- 1. **Roman centurion:** A centurion was a Roman officer in charge of one hundred men. The Jews did not like Roman soldiers since they were part of an occupying military force in Israel, but the local Jewish leaders in Capernaum respected this man and spoke to Jesus for him, as he had financed their synagogue himself instead of taking their money like other centurions.
- 2. Matthew described the servant as paralyzed and in tormenting pain (Mt. 8:6).
- B. The centurion felt unworthy to have Jesus come to his house (Lk. 7:6-10; cf. Mt. 8:8-13). The centurion understood that it would defile a Jew in a ceremonial way to enter a Gentile's home. He did not feel that God owed anything to him for having financed a Jewish synagogue.

⁶...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.. ⁷But say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸For 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...” ⁹When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him...and said to the crowd that followed Him, “I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!” ¹⁰And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick.” (Lk. 7:6-10)
- 1. **I too am a man under authority:** The centurion recognized that Jesus had great authority over sickness because He was under God's authority—thus, he believed Jesus was sent by God.
- 2. **Marvel:** That was an amazing insight for a Gentile who did not even know the Scriptures.
- C. Matthew included two more important statements by Jesus (Mt. 8:11-13).

¹¹*I say to you that many [Gentiles] will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²*But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* ¹³*Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.” (Mt. 8:11-13)**

1. *Many*: Gentiles will accept Jesus (8:11).
2. *As you have believed*: The Lord releases His blessing related to our faith (8:13).

III. JESUS RAISED A WIDOW’S SON FROM THE DEAD IN THE CITY OF NAIN (LK. 7:11-17)

- A. A large crowd gathered to Jesus in Nain (about 25 miles from Capernaum and 5 miles from Nazareth) in the autumn AD 28. Jesus showed compassion for a widow whose son died. She was in emotional pain as well as financial pressure, having neither a husband nor a son to support her.

¹¹*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. ¹²*And...behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow... ¹³*When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.” ¹⁴*Then He came and touched the open coffin...He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” ¹⁵*So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. (Lk. 7:11-15)*****

IV. JESUS SPOKE ABOUT JOHN THE BAPTIST (LK. 7:18-23)

- A. John’s disciples asked questions in Galilee (Lk. 7:18-23; cf. Mt. 11:2-6). John was in prison when he heard about the miracles Jesus did, so he sent two disciples to ask Jesus a question (Mt. 11:2). The time was probably in the autumn of AD 28, about two years after he baptized Jesus (26 AD).

¹⁹*And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to Jesus, saying, “Are You the Coming One...?” ²⁰*When the men had come to Him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, ‘Are You the Coming One...?’”* ²¹*That very hour He cured many of infirmities...and to many blind He gave sight. ²²*Jesus answered..., “Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised... ²³*And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.” (Lk. 7:19-23)****

1. John was in prison and wanted his disciples to follow Jesus; thus, they needed to be convinced of who Jesus was. John knew who Jesus was—he saw the dove descend on Him and heard the Father’s voice at Jesus’ baptism. They were both familiar with each other’s supernatural birth.
2. John’s disciples were surely acquainted with many Messianic prophecies as in Isaiah 35:4-6:
⁴*Behold, your God will come... ⁵*then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. ⁶*Then the lame shall leap...and the tongue of the dumb sing. (Isa. 35:4-6)***
3. *Not offended*: People stumble over what God does and *what He does not do*. Jesus knew that God was not going to intervene to save John. Both Jesus and John understood that this might confuse and offend John’s disciples, so John sent them to Jesus to see proof He was Messiah.

B. Jesus spoke to the multitude to vindicate John (Lk. 7:24-35; cf. Mt. 11:7-19)

²⁴...*He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?”* ²⁵...*A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those ...live in luxury are in kings’ courts.* ²⁶*But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.* ²⁷*This is he of whom it is written: ‘Behold, I [the Father] send My messenger before Your [Jesus’] face, who will prepare Your way before You.’* ²⁸*For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”* (Lk. 7:24-28)

1. *A reed shaken*: Jesus realized that the multitudes thought John was wavering. A reed shaken by the wind is a reference to a weak man who was wavering (because of persecution). If John had stopped preaching righteousness, he could have been freed from prison (Mk 6:20). John stood strong and endured prison instead of compromising in order to be received by Herod.

2. *Greater than John*: John was the greatest old-covenant prophet, but a new-covenant believer has greater privileges in God than John such as possessing the indwelling Spirit (1 Cor. 6:17).

C. Jesus declared that that generation did not respond properly to God (7:31-35). Both Jesus and John preached promises of good news described as “we played the flute,” but many did not rejoice at it. They both gave warnings of judgment described as “we mourned,” but many did not repent. Wisdom will be seen by “her children” or the deeds of those who embrace His and John’s ministry.

³¹*And the Lord said, “To what then shall I liken the men of this generation...?”* ³²*They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying: ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not weep.’* ³³*For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’* ³⁴*The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’* ³⁵*But wisdom is justified by all her children.”* (Lk. 7:29-35)

D. Jesus rebuked three cities in Galilee—Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum (Mt. 11:20-30).

²⁰*He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent:* ²¹*“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented...”* ²²*But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.* ²³*And you, Capernaum... will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.* ²⁴*But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.”* (Mt. 11:20-24)

1. Capernaum was the base for Jesus’ ministry. Chorazin and Bethsaida were cities very close to Capernaum. Tyre and Sidon were prominent Phoenician cities that experienced judgment under Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great (Ezek. 26-28).

2. The great privilege of seeing Jesus’ power brings a corresponding greater responsibility. There are different degrees of judgment in hell and varying degrees of reward in heaven.

V. A SINFUL WOMAN WASHED AND ANOINTED JESUS' FEET (LK. 7:36-50)

- A. An immoral woman anointed Jesus' feet while He dined with a Pharisee in Galilee (Lk. 7:36-38). This perfume was probably bought with the proceeds of her sin—prostitution.

³⁶...He went to the Pharisee's house...³⁷Behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner...brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil,³⁸...and she began to wash His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. (Lk. 7:36-38)

- B. Those who understand that they have been forgiven much will love God much (7:39-50). Any who lose sight of being forgiven will lack gratitude and thus lose the ability to remain zealous in their love for God (7:47). Gratitude sustains our love. We must not allow our gratitude to wane by losing sight of *how much better* God treats us compared to how we deserve to be treated.

⁴⁰And Jesus answered...⁴¹“There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?”...⁴⁴Then He turned...said to Simon, “...you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears...⁴⁵You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. ⁴⁶You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. ⁴⁷Therefore...her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.”⁴⁸Then He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”⁴⁹And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”⁵⁰...He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.” (Lk. 7:40-50)

- C. Jesus began His second tour of Galilee in the autumn AD 28. Women supported Him (Lk. 8:1-3).

¹...He went through every city and village, preaching...the kingdom of God...²and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons,³and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance. (Lk. 8:1-3)

- D. Jesus' first public rejection was by Jewish leaders who came from Jerusalem to Galilee (Mk. 3:22-30; cf. Mt. 12:22-37). Jesus defined blasphemy against the Holy Spirit as attributing the Spirit's power and miracles to the work of the Satan (Mk. 3:29-30).

²²The scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebub,” and, “By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons.”²³So He called them to Himself and said to them in parables: “How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand...²⁶And if Satan has risen up against himself...he cannot stand...²⁸Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men...²⁹but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness...³⁰because they said, “He has an unclean spirit.” (Mk. 3:22-30)

- E. Jesus' family came to see Him in Galilee (Mk. 3:31-35; cf. Mt. 12:46-50; Lk 8:19-21).

³¹His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him...³⁴And He looked...at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers!”³⁵For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.” (Mk. 3:31-35)