

Luke 7a: HG Bishop Youssef

His Grace Bishop Youssef ~ فسوي ابن الالة فاين تاطع • LUKE 7: 1 - 28 ~ Bible Study (English & Arabic - يبرع)

Outline

00:00

- 1-10: Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant
- 11-17: Jesus Raises the Son of the Widow of Nain
- 18-35: John the Baptist Sends Messengers to Jesus
- 36-50: A Sinful Woman Forgiven

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

00:56

¹ Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. ² And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. ³ So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. ⁴ And 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."

⁶ Then Jesus went with them. And 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. ⁷ Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ For 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; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does *it*."

⁹ When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" ¹⁰ And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick.

- When He concluded all His sayings - the sayings of Chapter 6
- The Centurion
 - A Centurion is a Roman Officer who commanded 100 men (prefix cent-)
 - Roman soldiers were stationed all over Israel including Galilee, Samaria and Judea in order to maintain order

- This Centurion appears to be a devout, humble man despite being a Gentile Roman Soldier
 - As a Roman soldier, he is an instrument in the hand of the Roman Government to oppress Jews
 - As a Gentile, he would not be able to enter beyond the Court of Gentiles in the Temple, but he could attend Sabbath services in the synagogue.
 - He financed the building of a synagogue in Capernaum - showing his love for the Jews
 - Under Roman Law, a master has the right to kill his servant and it was expected to do so if the servant became ill or injured to the point that he cannot work... but this Centurion was a godly man who, when his servant was sick, he heard about Christ and sent the elders of the Jews to Him
- Why did he send elders and friends instead of going himself?
 - The Lord had become very famous as a Jewish teacher... so the Centurion, perceiving himself as unworthy and unfit to go ask a favor from a great Teacher like the Lord Jesus Christ, sent elders of the Jews and his friends, instead
 - The elders of the Jews went and told the Lord that this man, despite being a Gentile and a soldier, is worthy - "for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue"
 - Even later, he sends his friends to the Lord to explain why he did not come himself
 - These conversations in the Gospel of St Matthew are said to be done by the Centurion, himself - but St Matthew was simply summarizing those parts of the story.
 - "He the Centurion was feeling unworthy, but he showed himself worthy of Christ entering - not within his roof, but within heart." - St Augustine
- The Centurion understood authority and chain of command
- The Lord marvels at him and at the Israelites
 - The Jews asked to **touch** the Lord Jesus Christ to be healed
 - This man believed that even without a touch, just at the spoken word of the Lord, his servant would be healed
 - The Lord marvels at the man's faith, but also at the unbelief of Israel
- The servant is healed
 - The Lord answered the Centurion's unselfish request and proved that He has the authority that the Centurion trusted Him to have - without seeing him, touching him, speaking to him... He spoke and the sick was cured.

Jesus Raises the Son of the Widow of Nain

15:12

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 when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. 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, and those who carried *him* stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." ¹⁵ So he who was dead sat up and began to

speak. And He presented him to his mother.

¹⁶ Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." ¹⁷ And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

- This story is only mentioned in the Gospel of St Luke
- Nain is a city near Tabor in Galilee
- A dead man was being carried out of the city
 - They used to not bury inside the city
 - All funerals are tragedies... but this one is a special loss
 - At that time, women did not work...
 - Since she's a widow, her son is now taking care of her and now her son is dead. So there is no one to support her.
 - Losing a son or daughter is one of the most difficult tragedies... more so than losing a parent or other relative
 - A large crowd followed in order to give sympathy
- The Lord had compassion on her
 - In this instance, as in so many others, the miracle of the Lord is not from a distinct purpose to give Himself credentials - but came from His own compassion on human suffering.
 - When He saw the widow crying and weeping, He showed divine compassion for the human suffering
- Touching the Coffin
 - According to the Jewish Law, a coffin is impure and if you touched it you became ritually impure.
 - The Lord touched the open coffin and those who carried it stood still.
 - They marveled that Jesus, who was known as a teacher, would touch the coffin which most Rabbis would call impure
- He presented him to his mother to make it clear "I raised you to take care of your mother"
- Jesus showed here the greatness of His power, but also the truth of His mission - so the people gave thanks to God and glorified Him
- This report went to all Judea and the surrounding region
- The Lord's Authority over Death
 - The Daughter of Jairus
 - The Son of the Widow of Nain
 - Lazarus
 - "As the Lord had mercy on the body, He also has mercy on our souls. These three miracles are illustrations of Christ's divine power and love in raising our souls that are dead in trespasses and sin. Whether the soul be dead but not yet carried out like the Daughter of Jairus; or dead and carried out but not buried like the son of the widow; or dead, carried out and buried like Lazarus. He who raised Himself on the third day can raise all of us from the death of sin. Therefore, let no one despair." - St Augustine

John the Baptist Sends Messengers to Jesus

¹⁸ Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things.

- We have three passages about the relationship between the Lord Jesus to St John
 - 18-23
 - 24-30
 - 31-35
- We can conclude some facts about the disciples of John:
 - The disciples of John were present when the Lord performed these miracles and they heard His teachings
 - Although John was imprisoned, his disciples were allowed free access to him
 - St Luke likely heard this account from one of the disciples of St John

¹⁹ And John, calling two of his disciples to *him*, sent *them* to Jesus, saying, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

²⁰ When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?' " ²¹ And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.

²² Jesus answered and said to them, "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, *the* poor have the gospel preached to them. ²³ And blessed is *he* who is not offended because of Me."

- We have seen before that John knew clearly that the Lord is the Messiah... so why is he sending these disciples?
 - Nowadays some say it's because John doubted that Jesus is the Messiah since he was in prison and hadn't been delivered... This is not in line with his character or what the Lord says about him.
 - The Fathers of the Church teach us that he sent his disciples to remove all doubt from their heart, and not for his own personal satisfaction.
- In response to those disciples, in that very hour, Jesus cured many and then answered them to "Go and tell John the things that you have seen and heard"
 - In the Gospel of St Matthew, St Matthew says the Lord simply sent a verbal message. But St Luke gives more detail that the Lord did miracles in their presence first.
 - That very hour:
 - "He knew what John's design was in sending to Him. He knew that in this very moment, those two disciples would come. He put it into his heart to send at that very time when He, Himself, was working many miracles which were the true answer to the question." - St Cyril of Alexandria
 - The poor have the gospel preached to them
 - The poor in spirit, and those who do not trust in the riches of the world
 - Those who are gratified by temporal things are too satisfied or too busy to pay attention to the word of God
- Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me

- Obviously this message is not for St John the Baptist, because he is not offended by Him
- Some people had a preconceived idea about Jesus - as a man, or as less than any prophet (e.g. people in Nazareth, Pharisees, those who perceived the Lord as a temporal deliverer of Israel)
- Those who do not take offense at Jesus for what they think He should be, but who recognize His true identity as the Son of God, and accepted His miracles as signs of His authority, and believe in His mission to announce the Kingdom - These are the children of God; the citizens of the Kingdom of God.

²⁴ When the messengers of John had departed, 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 But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and 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 send My messenger before Your 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."

- Why did the Lord wait until the two disciples departed before praising John? Why not praise him in their presence?
 - The Lord refrained from praising John in their presence lest He be accused of flattery or hypocrisy
- He praises John as a man of God
 - John did not live for his own comfort or the approval of others
 - John is steadfast, not shaken easily like a reed, but firm in his message of repentance
 - He was not like a reed swayed by the wind of secular society - people say this, so he follows them. He was stable.
 - He lived a disciplined life not a life of luxury. He wore coarse camel hair for his garment
- He praises John as a prophet
 - John was a prophet - everyone knew that. John came after hundreds of years without a prophet - so many people came to hear him and be baptized by him.
 - The Lord says he was much more than a prophet because he came to prepare the way of the Lord Jesus Christ - the Forerunner. He saw the Messiah and baptized Him! So he was greater than any other prophet before him.
- He praises John as one prophesied about
 - The Lord quotes from Malachi
 - Malachi 3:1 - "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me."
 - Centuries ago, the mission of John the Baptist was foretold and described by the prophet Malachi
- He praises John as the greatest among those born of women
 - This verse confuses many scholars

- How is the least in the kingdom of God greater than John?
 - John is the greatest of the Old Covenant Prophets
 - But John the Baptist did not see the coming of the Kingdom. He saw the Kingdom coming but did not see how the Kingdom of God was fulfilled through the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through opening the gates of Paradise and transferring the righteous from Hades to Paradise. John the Baptist, himself, went to Hades when he died.
 - The humblest child of the New Kingdom is superior to the greatest prophet of the Old Testament.
 - Why?
 - Now we can be united with Christ through the Eucharist
 - When we die, we don't go to Hades, but to Paradise.
 - The Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified, but now you are the temple of God and the Holy Spirit abides in you.
 - Among those born of women, there is no greater than John the Baptist - but the members of the Church of Christ, who are born of water and spirit, are greater than John the Baptist
- St John Chrysostom and St Augustine and some other fathers had difficulty in accepting this explanation
 - They suggest that "the least in the Kingdom of God" refers to the Lord Jesus Christ because He was younger than John the Baptist by six months and so "less" refers to Himself but in age.
 - That the Lord would say this because some people esteemed John the Baptist as greater than Him

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