

**Luke 7:1-17**

**Jesus is a Man of Power and a Man of Compassion, believe in Him.**

“Simeon took him up in his arms, praised God, and said, “Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace, as you promised. 30 For my eyes have seen your salvation. 31 You have prepared it in the presence of all peoples — 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory to your people Israel.” -- **Luke 2:28-32** (CSB)

Welcomed into the temple as a newborn, this is the announcement of Jesus. The long-awaited Savior. “A light of revelation to the Gentiles and glory to your people Israel.”

Along the way, into adulthood and ministry, He has been proving it. In his Baptism, taking on repentance for us. In the temptation, remaining rooted in the word of God bearing the full weight of every lure away from truth. In reading the Prophets in the synagogue claiming his purpose. Healing the sick and hurting. And in his preaching of the Kingdom, of a new way of living for a redeemed people.

Calling us, his followers, to his way.

That’s been our endeavor, to see the real Jesus and live as he calls us. But as we keep going deeper in this cause, we are learning that all of this living has to be firmly tethered to this person, to this King.

And here in two stories we gain again clarity on who Jesus is. And when we see it, when we believe, we learn to trust him and be comforted by him. I don’t know about you, but I am due for a dose of trust and comfort today!

He is a Man of Power and a Man of Compassion. Not just then, but now, and that is good news.

**Man of Power**

If we are going to call people to believe or even just believe ourselves, we need to know who Jesus is. And coming off of preaching the Sermon on the Plain, we see who he is as confirmed by an encounter with a Roman Centurion.

Judea was occupied by Rome, to the great consternation of the people. And this Centurion is among their ranks. Responsible for the work of more than 100 men and evidentially a pillar of the community, even if he is an occupier.

A highly valued servant of his was sick and near death. That statement says a lot about this centurion. Servants, likely here a foreigner to the Jews, were seen as livestock or tools from the Roman perspective. To be used and discarded. Yet this centurion values his servant. So he seems to be a good man.

That truth and the sickness of the servant merge then with what he has heard of Jesus.

We don't know where he heard, but news about this teacher that could heal this sick had spread broadly enough that this Roman Captain was aware - and somewhat convinced that Jesus could do something to remedy the situation.

Sends some Jewish elders, that he knows, to see if Jesus would come. And in this exchange, we see what the elders care about... patronage.

The elders presented such a surface argument for Jesus' involvement because that was the way they were accustomed to analyzing their own lives—by externals.

“Jesus, come heal the servant because the centurion is worthy of you... because he loves our nation and built us a synagogue!”

This is not unlike our day - build us a building and we will serve you!!

We have already learned though that this way of being “worthy” isn't what motivates Jesus. Yet he doesn't push back. Something else is at play and “Jesus went with them.

While this is unfolding the centurion realizes his place and sends friends to intercept Jesus and in their message delivery, we see who Jesus is.

“Lord, don’t trouble yourself, since I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. 7 That is why I didn’t even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. 8 For I too am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under my command. I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” -- **Luke 7:6-8** (CSB)

Fascinating that he doesn’t say he is a man of authority, but under authority. Yet he is making a request of a man of authority.

“He knew his own limitations and unworthiness, and he knew who Christ was. He believed that Christ could heal his servant. His faith had found a resting place.”

“Just say the word and he will be healed.”

Jesus - who has proven he has authority to forgive sin (something only God can do). He has claimed authority as the lord of the Sabbath. He is the Cosmic Authority. There is no other. He has the POWER to heal, the power to save.

And he does.

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and by him all things hold together. 18 He is also the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile everything to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” -- **Colossians 1:15-20** (CSB)

“far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he subjected everything under his feet” -- **Ephesians 1:21-22** (CSB)

“For the entire fullness of God’s nature dwells bodily in Christ, 10 and you have been filled by him, who is the head over every ruler and authority.” --

**Colossians 2:9-10** (CSB)

“All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. -- **Matthew 28:18** (CSB)

Jesus doesn't just comment on the darkness of the world, he deals with it. Because he has the power to do it.

Jesus is not just a teacher, not just a miracle worker, he is God. There is no other name that matches his. No other authority, no other power than his. Of course, we should follow him!

A couple of observations from the centurion’s story:

- The centurion had great faith. So much so that Jesus is amazed by it. But the centurion’s faith was not dependent on the healing - he wasn’t waiting to believe after signs and wonders like so many others in the Biblical stories. He believed Jesus had the power - he trusted him to heal.
- And his faith was not the source of the healing. The object of his faith was - Jesus!

Jesus didn’t even need to “say the word.” “When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant in good health.”

Jesus is a Man of Power. The One who can be trusted, to build a life around, to cling to with all that you’ve got.

Where do you need trust today?

Trust in Jesus.

There is more here, clearly, Jesus cared for the servant too, to spare him. And we see more of this compassion in the second story.

**Man of Compassion**

Traveling on to a town called Nain, two crowds converge. One led by the giver of life, and the other grieving death.

Jesus' disciples and a large crowd were tagging along with him, to see what else he would say, and what else he would do. And they crash into a funeral procession coming out of the gate of the town.

A dead man was being carried out - his mother's only son and she was a widow.

We can get a sense of sadness in that sentence. The end of life, especially one cut short in youth, is traumatic, terrible. A tragedy none of us would desire even for our enemies.

But in the first century, that description is almost a death sentence for the woman as well. No social structure to care for her. No husband or son to carry on the family name, to provide, to protect. Everything was stripped from her. Poor.

Dreams of grandchildren dashed in the death of her only son.

A crowd had formed to go through the motions with her, but she had no one.

“The large crowd posed an ironic contrast to her actual state. She was alone in this world—without a provider or protector. Tomorrow she would awake by herself, brokenhearted, without the sustaining footfall and sounds of her beloved son.”

“When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said, “Don't weep.” --  
**Luke 7:13** (CSB)

“The root word from which it comes refers to what is inside (the heart, liver, lungs), the viscera.<sup>4</sup> It describes an emotion that has a physical effect. Jesus felt for her.”

He speaks peace tenderly to her.

Imagine the crowd's reaction - “Who is this telling a mother ‘don't cry’ at the death of her son?!” And watching Jesus walk to the open coffin, touching it!

The pallbearers stopped - of course, what else would they do! His disciples probably shivered at the thoughts of how unclean this was.

And Jesus starts talking to the dude. “Young man, I tell you, get up!” I love that the exclamation point is included in my translation! What a moment. A moment of disbelief for the stunned crowd, a moment of unsure response from the shaken widow mother, a moment of compassion from the Creator of the Universe.

No other religious sage approaches people like this. Not Muhammed, not Buddha. The naturalists have nothing to say in response to death. Yet the Lord, Jesus, has compassion. He cares for her.

And in his compassion, he reverses death. The guy sits up and begins to talk. This was not the planned ending of the procession but it served no purpose now, and Jesus give the son to his mother.

A love that sends to save. A compassion that is moved for those that are hurting.

“Jesus continued going around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd.” --

**Matthew 9:35-36 (CSB)**

*Wesley ‘Oh for a thousand tongues to sing’*

“He speaks, and listening to his voice,  
new life the dead receive;  
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,  
the humble poor believe.”

Awe comes over everyone - it did then and it still should now. What a great King this is. That has not only power but compassion. Lives forever changed. Futures rewritten.

Where do you need compassion today? Jesus sees you and longs for you, he cares for you.

“There are grieving souls who mourn not only death but the loss of a relationship. There are rejected men, women, and children who feel worthless. There are the betrayed who are so wounded they fear they can never trust again. There are the depressed for whom a single positive thought is an impossibility.

“The hurts and failures of this world are burdens that cannot be borne by anyone except Jesus. But he hears the pain of every voice, and his heart goes out to us, his children, with deep compassion. Are you afflicted and hurting? Jesus hurts with you!” Hughes

This is always who he is. He is the One who will set aside his power to take on the cross in compassion for us - to give salvation - good news to the poor, liberty for the captives.

He is the “only son” who would in death grant us forgiveness, righteousness, welcomed into the presence of God without shame.

I believe we will meet both the Centurion and the Widow one day. I think we are likely to meet the servant and the young man. Seen and saved by the man of power and compassion.

What do we do with this?

Let the power humble you - like the centurion when he says “I am unworthy,” don’t rely on your works, your love of nation and building of the synagogue. But on the authority of the one in whom you believe.

Let his compassion leave you in awe - Worship like those that were shocked by this resurrection - “God has visited his people.” None is too far from the grace and compassion of Jesus - and if you have received it, know he loves you and cares for you, always. Nothing can change his compassion for you.

Live like him - See those in need of compassion and cry with them. Serve them. Bring them to Jesus so that the report about him will go everywhere.

**Jesus is a Man of Power and a Man of Compassion, believe in Him.**

Lord, thank you for your compassion towards us. The reception of your grace and power over death. Give us eyes to see it, hearts to accept it, and lives that are lived from it. Make us compassionate like you. For your glory and for our good.