

Luke 7 (1~10)

This is the inspired word of God... Every word of this book is God-Breathed, God Inspired. That simply means, that the writers were not writing of their own wills, but rather they were being led by the Holy Spirit of God.

All of scripture is significant, (2Timothy 3...*All scripture is inspired, good for doctrine...*)

God is not like man, in that He does not talk just to be talking... You can be rest assured, that when God says something, it's important, and man would wise to consider that each time he reads this blessed book.

Given that... **Why record this miracle?** Given all the miracles mentioned in the bible that Jesus did, miracles that far exceeded this one, in terms of a miraculous show of power, why did the Lord have Luke record this one? When you consider the ones like, where he cast demons out of a man, or restored sight to a blind man, or when he healed a crippled man, who had never walked a day in his life...all of those are extraordinary shows of power, and its easy to understand why they are discussed in length. But here, this one speaks of a young servant, who is sick.

This one is written not so much to magnify the "*Miraculous powers of Christ,*" but to magnify the "*Faith of this man.*"

Given the power that Christ possessed over sickness and disease, His power of demons and devils, His power the elements of the earth, like wind and water, given all that, it is quiet normal for man to be in "*Awe of Him*". But it is quiet another thing, for Christ to be in "*Awe of Man.*" As is the case here...

(Vs 9) ⁹*When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him...*

Throughout the New Testament, over and over and over again we read, how the people were *amazed* and were in *awe* of His words, and the mighty acts He performed. *Marveled* is a word that is often used to described the response of the people, and rightly so. But for Jesus to be in awe, for Jesus to be amazed by men, is quiet different. Matter of fact, only two times in scripture, is it said that Jesus "*Marveled*"... One is here, where he marveled at *the centurion's faith*, and the other is in Mark, where he marveled, ironically enough, at the "*unbelief of Israel.*" So two times, the Lord marveled at men, one is *at the faith of this Gentile man*, and the other, *the lack of faith of His own people*... Matter of fact, when you look closely at this instance, you could say that this "*marvel*" of Jesus here includes the unbelief of Israel, for in his statement, Jesus alludes to the fact that he couldn't find such faith in all of Israel.

(Vs 9) ⁹*When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, **I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.***

Thus, this passage is recorded on the pages of Holy Scripture, with a two-fold purpose, one as an "*Everlasting memorial to this man for his faith*" and the other, "*as in indictment*" upon His people, Israel.

This morning, we'll look at both of those aspects, beginning with the man, looking to see exactly what it was about this man, that caused Jesus to "*marvel*" at him...(Vs 9) ⁹*When Jesus **heard these things**, he marveled at him...* Notice, it was "*what this man said*" that *captivated* our Lord! It was the "*words*" coming out of this Gentile's mouth that caused the Lord of heaven and earth, to be "*awe struck*" at this man.

Well, what did he say that was so amazing? (Vs 6~8) ⁶*Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, **saying unto him**...*

...Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou should enter under my roof: ⁷Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. ⁸For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

Now, having “heard” what this man said, what do you think? How did his words affect you? Are you amazed at what he said? **Jesus was**...(Vs 9) ⁹When Jesus **heard these things, he marveled at him**...

What was it that Jesus heard that we do not? I mean, there’s got to be something that Jesus heard, that we do not, right? Or else, we too would “marvel” at this man, as did Jesus.

Well, the answer lies, not so much “**what**” he said, because when you look at **what** he said, there’s no great “revelation” of truth, there’s no *profound words of wisdom* there. He simply refers to the power that those who are in authority possess, how they can simply tell someone to do something, and they do it. It is the principle of authority and submission to that authority. This is no great revelation; this is nothing more than common everyday knowledge, things that most of us experience everyday. Most of you work for someone, thus you have a boss that is over you, and you simply do what they tell you to do. That’s pretty much the same thing this man is saying here...*so what was it, that cause Jesus to marvel?*

Well, the answer to that lies not so much in “*what the man said*”, as much as “*what was said,*” **had to say about the man!**

Again, it was not so much in “*what the man said*”, as much as “*what was said,*” had to **say about the man!** In other words, it was not the “*wisdom of the words*” in themselves that caused Jesus to marvel, it was not what he said, in the sense of the wisdom and weightiness of his words that amazed Jesus. But rather, it was what the “*words*” revealed about the man! Remember what Jesus had just taught...

(Lu. 6) ⁴⁵ **...for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks...**

Jesus marveled, not so much *at the words themselves*, but *what the words revealed* about this man!

These were words of “Faith!” You shall know the tree by the fruit it bears, and this was a man of Faith! Faith was in this man, and not only was it in him, it abounded in him! This man’s faith in the Lord was so great, that it required not the Lord to come and perform some miracle, he had so much faith, that he believed that the Lord wouldn’t even need to come to the house, but simply “*say the word,*” and his servant would be healed. “*Just say the word...*” and his sickness will depart! “*Just say the word...*” Being a man of authority myself, I know that by simply telling those under me to do this or do that, and they do it! Thus Lord, if you will “*just say the word,*” the infirmities that have invaded and ravished my servants body, will bow down to you, and release my servant!

It was this *great faith* of this man, that Jesus is in awe. And notice, he makes it a point, to stop what he is doing, and turn around and tell all the people following him, that this centurion man, is a man that they need to take note of, a man that is a good example for them to learn from. If you understand the implications of what he was saying here, it was a “*slap in the face*” to the children of Israel... It was an “*indictment*” on His people Israel, because rather than pointing to Israel, and their leaders as the “*example*” to follow, Jesus had to point to a Gentile!

(Vs 9) ⁹When Jesus heard these things, he **marveled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.**

Now think about that...don’t miss this... Jesus says, “*I have not found a man of such faith, in all of the land of Israel...as I have found in this Gentile, Roman soldier...*” Don’t miss the contrast he’s making

here. To get the full impact of what Jesus is saying, we must understand the contrast he is making between this Gentile, Roman soldier, who seemingly had no affiliation with the worship of God, and the Jews, the entire nation of Israel, in which everyone had an affiliation with the worship of God.

We learn that this man was not a “*proselyte of the Jews*,” meaning, he had yet to identify with Judaism. According to Jewish O.T. Law, a Gentile could become a Jew, by being circumcised, and relinquishing his nationality, to serve the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But given what this man said, it is apparent, he had not done this. Notice his words...

⁶*Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, **Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou should enter under my roof:** ⁷Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.*

According to Jewish tradition, a Gentile’s home was defiled, and any Jew who entered a Gentile’s home was defiled as well! Here we hear the Gentile, telling Jesus he is not worthy of Jesus defiling himself by coming on his property, much less come in his presence. If this man were a proselyte, he and his home would no longer have been considered unclean. Thus, even though he did build them a synagogue, and the fact that he loved the nation, we know that he was yet a Gentile in the eyes of the Jews.

That’s what makes this passage so interesting, the stark contrast of this man, who outwardly had no “*form of godliness*,” in comparison to the nation Israel, which had a “*form of godliness...*” By that, I mean that by simply “*looking*” at the nation, by all the activities, all the formalities, all the associations with the temple and the worship of God in the temple...one might be given to think, that is the witness of godly people. But it’s not, God’s not impressed by all of our activity, God’s not impressed with the so-called “*mighty works*” of our hands. God is impressed by simple child like faith in Him!

This passage serves as a good reminder, not to judge things simply based on the way they appear to be. By doing that, one might be given to look on Israel, and conclude, that all their religious activity is the example of godliness. But it’s not, Jesus makes it clear here, that the example of a god-fearing man, is none other than this Gentile, who makes no association with the nation. By all outward accounts, you may never dream of looking to the Gentile man, the outsider as the example. But that is just the point here, Jesus is not interested in the “outward accounts.” He looks on the inside, the content. And what he saw with Israel, was “*Form with no Content.*” In contrast with this man who had “*No form, but with Content.*” We see another similar teaching, in that of the “*Widow’s mite.*” We might be tempted to point to the big financial supporter, the one who gives large amounts of money, to teach on giving. But not Jesus, he pointed to a little old lady, a widow, who gave but two mites, the least denomination of money of the day.

Things are not always the way they appear... In Matthew’s account of this story, he records a statement that Jesus made, that Luke does not... ¹⁰*When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, **Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.** ¹¹And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

What is He saying here? The “*Children of the kingdom*” there in verse 12, refers to Israel... And what Jesus is saying here, things are not the way they appear! The nation may appear to be the people of God, but they are not! They think, that they will sit down at the feast table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in God’s kingdom, but they will not, but rather they will be cast out into outer darkness! While the Gentiles, like this centurion, will be the ones to dine at this table! What and incredible statement that was! That helps you understand better as to why the nation rejected him!

What is it that we are we to learn from this passage?

The Jews were identified as “*God’s people*,” much like we the “*Church*” are today. As I thought about this, I wondered what Jesus would say in our day. I would like to think, that He would point to the church, and marvel, and say... “*This is the example of the kinds of people my Father is pleased with!*” I would hope that would be the case, but I wonder. Church wouldn’t it be terrible, if the Lord **could not** point to the people of Providence Baptist Church, as the examples of the kind of people He desires? Church wouldn’t it be terrible, if He had to point to someone out here, that has no affiliation with the Church to set as the example of the kind of man He’s looking for?

In Jesus’ day, the religious system was corrupt... It was full of self-righteous individuals, who felt they were superior to those around them, by their so-called obedience to God. Rather than being as spiritual as they thought they were, they were spiritually blind, in that they were blind to their own depraved, wretched condition, and saw themselves as the righteous, while judging and condemning those around them who were not “*of them*.”

The question in our day is... Are we any different?

We would do well this morning, to examine ourselves in light of this passage... We would do well to learn from the example of Israel, that God is not interested in Religious activity! Just because we come in here, week after week into “*this building*,” and sing the songs of God, give of our money to God, listen to the word of God... doesn’t mean that we are the kind of people that God is pleased with. Israel did the same things... yet Jesus had to point to someone “*outside*” the synagogue to be the example of the kind of person God desires.

Here we find the “*Fruits*” that God desires of his people... Humility, we are to walk humbly before the Lord, walking in the awareness of our depravity, with a deep sense of our own unworthiness. Resulting in a genuine reverential fear of the Lord and His things. People characterized as those who live their lives by faith in words of the Lord Jesus Christ... people characterized by love and mercy for sinners, the sick and hurting... We would do well to examine ourselves this morning to see if are the people that God is pleased with.