

THE CENTURION'S FAITH

Lent: Journey to the Cross #4

March 27, 2022

*When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at [the centurion],
and he turned to the crowd following him, and said,
"I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel."
Then the men who had been sent returned to the house
and found the servant well.*

Luke 7:9-10

Next step on the journey: Capernaum

*When Jesus had finished saying all this in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum.
² There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. ³ The
centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his
servant. ⁴ When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you
do this, ⁵ because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." ⁶ So Jesus went with them.*

*He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble
yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. ⁷ That is why I did not even consider
myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ For I myself am a
man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,'
and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."*

*⁹ When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said,
"I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." ¹⁰ Then the men who had been sent
returned to the house and found the servant well.*

Luke 7:1-10 (see Matthew

1. What Jesus had just finished teaching is important: Luke's summary of the Sermon on the Mount
2. Luke's gospel is first of all a teaching tool for the early church
3. Luke takes us from the values of the kingdom to how these values are lived out
4. Luke seems to intentionally connect Jesus with Elijah, the greatest prophet (see 7:11-17)

Key question: Where would a gentile like Luke get such a "Hebrew" perspective?

A story of authority and humility

When Jesus had finished saying all this in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. ² There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. ³ The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. ⁴ When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, ⁵ because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." ⁶ So Jesus went with them.

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Luke 7

1. Luke has a special place in his heart for centurions, and this one is special (see Luke 23:47)
2. The story about authority begins with great humility (see Ryle's notes about kindness)
3. Jesus' life reflects both aspects of authority: both over and under (see Luke 22:42; 1 Peter 2:21)

A study in faith

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Luke 7:9-10

⁴⁴ Then [Jesus] turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹ The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

⁵⁰ Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Luke 7:44-50

1. Three stories of faith – and none of them expected such a miracle at the beginning of the story
2. Jesus celebrates saving faith – even in the most unusual places!

Authentic faith

1) Faith as trust

⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

1 Corinthians 13

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. ² This is what the ancients were commended for.

³ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, ¹⁸ even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." ¹⁹ Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

Hebrews 11

2) Faith as gratitude

³⁶ Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷ When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, ³⁸ and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

⁴⁰ Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

⁴¹ "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

⁴³ Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

Luke 7

3) Faith as our message (with help from Luke's good friend Paul)

"Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. ¹⁷ I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸ to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

²² But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—²³ that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.

Acts 26

Resources for our Lenten journey 2022

Bible.org has some wonderful resources at <https://bible.org/book/Luke>

I. Howard Marshall's Greek commentary is my go to help (Eerdmans, 1978)

J. C. Ryle has an interesting commentary (Sections 37-38 attached below) at <https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/104.htm>

Bob Deffinbaugh has two sermons on this text at <https://bible.org/series/luke-gospel-gentiles>.

I appreciate J.C. Ryle's commentary on Luke at <https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/113.htm>

Tim Keller has wonderful summary of the gospel at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-story-of-the-bible-how-the-good-news-about-jesus-is-essential-tim-keller/>

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

1-2 INTRODUCTION

- LUKE**: A UNITED, 240-VOLUME WORK; FROM THE SAME AUTHOR; A TRAVELING CO-LABORER WITH PAUL.
- LUKE**: HOW & WHY LUKE WROTE HIS orderly account about the things that have been fulfilled.
- ACTS**: HOW & WHY CONSULTS EYE-WITNESSES; WHY: TO SHOW HOW THE STORY OF JESUS FULFILLS THE STORY OF GOD & ISRAEL ... & THE WHOLE WORLD.

3-9a JESUS & HIS MISSION

- JESUS' BIRTH & GENEALOGY**: YOU ARE MY BELOVED SON.
- JESUS IS THE MESSIAH WHO BRINGS GOD'S BLESSING TO ALL HUMANITY**.
- JESUS LAUNCHES HIS KINGDOM MISSION**: THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, TO PREACH GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR.
- MANIFESTO OF AN UPSIDE-DOWN KINGDOM**: GODS LOVE - REVERSAL OF OUR VALUE SYSTEMS; RADICAL GENEROSITY, SERVANT LEADERSHIP, PEACE-MAKING, FORGIVENESS, DEEP PIETY THAT REJECTS RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY.
- JESUS SENDS OUT THE 70**: THIS IS MY CHOSEN SON; TRANSFORMATION; TALKING TOGETHER ABOUT JESUS' EXODUS TO BE FILLED IN THROUGHOUT.

9b-19a JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

- PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON**: A FOUL SON RUNS AWAY BUT COMES BACK EXCITED; LETS BRING A PARTY! LETS GET THE LOST SON TO FEAST!
- JESUS' CONTINUED MISSION TO THE POOR**: YOU'VE NEGLECTED THE JUSTICE & THE LOVE OF GOD!
- JESUS BANQUETS WITH ISRAEL'S LEADERS** vs. **JESUS KINGDOM BANQUETS WITH THE POOR**.
- JESUS TEACHES ABOUT**: PRAYER; TRUSTING IN GOD'S PROVISION; WEALTH, POSSESSIONS & GENEROSITY.

19b-24 JESUS' FINAL WEEK IN JERUSALEM

- ARRIVAL & REJECTION IN JERUSALEM**: IF ONLY YOU HAD RECOGNIZED THE WAY TOWARD PEACE.
- JESUS PREDICTS THE TEMPLE'S DESTRUCTION**: THE SCRIPTURES WILL BE FULFILLED BY THIS!
- JESUS' LAST PASSOVER**: BROKEN BREAD & RED BLOOD; REMEMBER ME, JESUS!
- THE EMPTY TOMB**: JESUS IS RISEN!
- THE ROAD TO EMPHASIS**: ONLY WHEN WE SURRENDER OURSELVES TO JESUS' UPSIDE-DOWN KINGDOM, EMBODIED BY THE CROSS, CAN WE TRULY EXPERIENCE THE REAL JESUS!

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