

That You May Know The Certainty

LESSON 8: JESUS'S GALILEAN MINISTRY, PART 4 (LUKE 7:1-8:3)

Jesus had concluded His sermon recorded in Luke 6. This was given during the time of Jesus's "Galilean Ministry." Now, Jesus continued other activities that were characteristic of His ministry in Galilee during this time.

JESUS HEALS A CENTURION'S SERVANT (LUKE 7:1-10)

7:1-10. In Capernaum, a centurion (commander of 100 soldiers, evidently a Gentile, v. 5; Matthew 8:10) had a highly-valued but sick servant (near death, paralyzed, and in great agony, Matthew 8:6). Having heard about Jesus, the centurion sent some Jewish elders to Jesus, requesting Him to come and save the man's life. These Jewish elders pleaded on behalf of the centurion, indicating his worthiness due to his love for the Jewish nation and his work of building a synagogue. As Jesus came nearer to the house, the centurion sent friends, saying he was not worthy of having Jesus under his roof. He indicated that Jesus had the authority to just say the word for his servant to be healed (understanding how authority worked with those under his authority). Jesus was amazed at his faith and told the people He had not found such faith in all Israel (Matthew 8:10-12; Romans 9:30-33)! Then, Jesus said this would be done and the man was healed from that moment (Matthew 8:13)!

JESUS RAISES A WIDOW'S SON (LUKE 7:11-17)

7:11-17. As Jesus was traveling to a town called Nain (southeast of Nazareth), He encountered a large funeral procession. It was for a widow's only son. Not only was this an emotionally devastating loss for this widow, but it was also likely would result in financial hardship. Jesus had compassion for her and told her not to weep. Then, Jesus touched the coffin (an open wooden frame that carried the corpse), the pallbearers stopped, and Jesus told the young man to get up. Suddenly, the young man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother! The people were awe-struck and gave glory to God, claiming a great Prophet had risen among them and God had visited to help His people. News about Jesus went throughout the area.

JOHN THE BAPTIZER AND JESUS (LUKE 7:18-35)

7:18-23. While John the baptizer was in prison (Luke 3:19-20), his disciples reported news concerning Jesus's activities. John sent two of them to inquire whether Jesus was the Promised One (though he previously demonstrated confidence in such, Luke 3:16-17; John 1:29-36). The reasoning for John's question is not given (e.g. whether he had different expectations for the Messiah, became discouraged in his present condition and thought Jesus would release him, asked the question for the benefit of his disciples, etc.). When they asked Jesus, Jesus was healing many people of afflictions. So, Jesus told them to report what they had seen and heard concerning these miraculous things (in fulfillment of Isaiah 35:5-6; 61:1-2) and the preaching of the good news. Those who were not offended by Jesus to fall away from Him are blessed!

7:24-30. It may have been that the crowd asked Jesus concerning the question John's disciples brought. Now, Jesus demonstrates that John was not a man who was like a reed shaken by the wind (i.e. lacking conviction, easily swayed, inconsistent, changing) or a soft man who was unwilling to endure hard things (i.e. not dressed in soft luxurious clothing and living in palaces, Mark 1:6). Rather, John was a prophet – and not just any prophet. He was the prophesied Elijah to announce and prepare the coming of the Messiah (Malachi 3:1; Matthew 17:10-13)! Yet, despite the great way God used John, he was least in the kingdom in that he did not get to experience the new and better covenant in the kingdom of God (Hebrews 8:6; 1 Peter 1:10-12). In this way, the least of those in the kingdom are greater than John. Many who heard Jesus acknowledged that God's way was right (i.e. justified God), being baptized with John's baptism; while the Pharisees and experts in the Law rejected the plan of God for themselves, not being baptized by John.

7:31-35. The Pharisees and experts in the Law were like children in the marketplace (playing and singing) who could never be satisfied. John the baptizer was accused of having a demon when he did not eat bread or drink wine. However, Jesus was accused of being a glutton, drunkard, and friend of tax collectors and sinners because he did eat and drink. Despite the rejection, the wisdom of both John and Jesus was vindicated (declared to be right) by those who accepted them.

JESUS IS ANOINTED BY A SINFUL WOMAN (LUKE 7:36-50)

7:36-39. Jesus accepted an invitation to eat with a Pharisee named Simon (Simon's motivation is not stated). As Jesus reclined at the table in Simon's house, a sinful woman (both she and the nature of her sins are not identified) came in and washed Jesus's feet with her tears, wiping them with her hair, and anointing them with perfume from an alabaster jar she had brought (likely very expensive; compare with Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8). Clearly, she had a recognition of her sinfulness and who Jesus was. Simon, however, thought that if Jesus were truly a prophet, He would have not allowed such a sinful woman to touch Him.

7:40-50. Jesus replied to Simon through a parable. Two men were indebted – one 500 denarii (a denarius was a common day's wage) and one 50. When neither could repay, both were forgiven their debts. Then, Jesus questioned which would love the creditor more. Simon correctly replied that the one who was forgiven more would love more. Jesus then illustrated how this woman (who recognized her sinfulness) went to great cost and effort to serve Jesus while Simon did not. Then, He told the woman that her sins were forgiven due to her faith and that she could go in peace. Others questioned how Jesus could forgive.

SUPPORT FOR JESUS'S WORK (LUKE 8:1-3)

8:1-3. Jesus continued His work of preaching by going from one town and village to another. His message was one of the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve apostles were with Him. Then, some women traveled with Jesus who had experienced His miracles. These included Mary (called Magdalene, who had been healed of seven demons), Joanna (Chuza's wife, who was Herod's steward/manager), Susanna, and many others (Mark 15:40-41). These were helping to support the work (as each may have contributed to a common treasury, John 12:6). Thus, women played an important role in Jesus's work in multiple ways.

CONCLUSION

Jesus has continued spreading the good news of God's kingdom. He was now traveling from place to place with many in these efforts. Still, there is a mix in the willingness of people to receive Him as the Messiah and His message about the kingdom of God.

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

Why was Jesus amazed at the centurion?

What was the impact of Jesus raising the widow's son?

How did Jesus demonstrate He was the Messiah to John's disciples?

How did Jesus describe John the Baptist?

What were the different responses to God's way of righteousness?

How did Jesus describe the Pharisees and experts in the Law?

What can be learned from the sinful woman who anointed Jesus?

What role did women play in Jesus's ministry?

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