

LUKE

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Luke chapter 7 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we will see, this chapter is packed with Jesus bringing healing to people's lives. We will look at the amazing faith of a Roman Centurion, a Gentile. We will see that Jesus restores the life of a widow's son in Nain. We will see Jesus bring comfort to John the Baptist who is in prison. We will see Jesus go to dinner at the homes of a Pharisee. And the chapter will conclude with the Parable of the Two Debtors. So a lot of information to cover tonight, a lot of lessons the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Luke chapter 7 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word!

LUKE 7**VERSE 1**

Luke tells us that after Jesus gave His Sermon on the Plain that covered Luke 6:20-49, He went to Capernaum, His home base for His Galilean ministry. And it is possible that the sermon that Jesus gave on the plain was not very far from Capernaum.

And it is here in Capernaum that Jesus has this encounter with a Roman Centurion, and, as we will see, the faith of this Gentile is amazing!

VERSES 2-5

First of all, a Centurion was a Roman officer who was in charge of 100 soldiers. They were tough and they were Gentile and thus, the Jews hated them. But, as we can see, this man was humble and the Jews respected him.

And as much power as this man had, there was nothing he could do about this problem he had. His servant was dying, near death. And I think we tend to just read through these verses and we don't think much about it.

But please understand that almost half of the Roman population were slaves and they were thought more of a possession, property than human beings. Under Roman Law a master had the right to kill his slave and if his slave became ill, if his slave was injured where he could not work any longer, it was expected of the master to kill his slave! This Centurion should have put his slave to death!

But this man seeks help for his dying servant, which tells me he had a close relationship with him, that he did not use and abuse him, but cared for those who were under his authority.

Secondly, as I have said, Roman soldiers were hated by the Jews and yet this one seems to have torn down those walls. In fact, Luke tells us he loved the Jews and their nation so much that he helped them build a Synagogue in Capernaum.

So here we have this man who is in a hopeless situation and what does he do? He sends for Jesus to help his dying slave by having some of the elders from the Synagogue in Capernaum to meet with Jesus.

How did this Centurion, this Gentile hear about Jesus? Keep in mind that the leader of the Synagogue in Capernaum was a man by the name of Jairus, whose daughter was raised from the dead by Jesus.

Thus, it is possible that Jairus told this Centurion about what happened with his daughter and, when all hope was gone, he sends for Jesus!

VERSES 6-8

I love this about Jesus. He heard a man crying out in need and He is off to comfort that man. Now as Jesus gets closer to the Centurion's house, some of the soldier's friends come out telling Jesus not to come into the house, why? Maybe because this man realized that if Jesus did enter He would be defiled according to Jewish custom not God's Law, and he did not want to cause trouble for Jesus.

Pate cites a rabbinic writing known as *m. Obolot* 18:7: "The dwelling-places of Gentiles are unclean."

What is interesting to me is that the Jewish elders said of this man that he "**was worthy.**" They praised him for building a house of worship; but he felt unworthy that Jesus would come to his house. They said he was deserving; but he felt himself as undeserving. Strong faith and great humility are entirely compatible.

Spurgeon wrote, "Two features of character blend in him which do not often meet in such graceful harmony. He won the high opinion of others and yet he held a low estimation of himself."

Also, he wrote this, "Your faith will not murder your humility, your humility will not stab at your faith; but the two will go hand in hand to heaven like a brave brother and a fair sister, the one bold as a lion the other meek as a dove, the one rejoicing in Jesus the other blushing at self."

So here we see this Centurion who did not feel worthy to have a personal meeting with Jesus, being a Gentile. And as you read that you see what a humble man he was. And he respected the Jews, he did not want to offend them even though, with his position, he could have done whatever he wanted. But he didn't!

Here was a man, not a Jew but a Gentile, who understood that he was not worthy and I wonder today how many people feel that way before God? You see, we have lost that reverence for God, that He is holy, He is righteous and we are not. Let me give you this illustration to show you what I mean because if you were to ask most people, they truly believe that they are good and yet the Bible tells us that none are good, not even one! We are told,

Before the seventeenth century, when people looked at a lake or a pond or a glass of water, they judged it clean if they could see through it. But in 1674 the Dutchman Leeuwenhoek filled a glass vial with water, began curiously looking at it through his newly acquired microscope lens, and saw, as he quaintly put it, "very many small animalcules." He then examined a drop of water and jotted down his findings:

I now saw very plainly that these were little eels, or worms, lying all huddled up together and wriggling; just as if you saw, with the naked eye, a whole tubful of very little eels and water, with the eels a-squirring among one another: and the whole water seemed to be alive with these multifarious animalcules.

When we turn the magnifying glass of God's Word onto what is inside us, we find a whole universe of squirming critters and realize our own unworthiness. As a prophet said 600 years before Jesus, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

- R. Kent Hughes, Luke Volume One, p.255

The wonderful thing is that when we come to the end of ourselves, when we realize that we are sinners we can look up and there is Jesus ready to receive us! We will see that in a minute for Luke will tell us, “**Then Jesus went with them . . .**” In other words, here was a man in need and Jesus went to him!

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30, “**Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**” The invitation is for all to come to Jesus and receive that free gift of life that is found in Him!

Today we see Christians running all over the place for help with their spiritual problems and they don’t even think about running to Jesus! This man had faith in Jesus. And, instead of going anywhere else, he goes to Jesus for help.

Too often for us, Jesus is the last person we bring our problems to when He should be the first! And this is powerful as we see in verse 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.**” In other words, what he tells his men to do they do because he is in authority over them. Now, on a much broader scale, he sees Jesus having this same authority, so much so that He could heal at a distance.

One writer summed it up like this, “He believes that, just as he, a man with authority, is obeyed by his subordinates, just so surely will the authoritative utterance of Christ be fulfilled even though He is not present where the sick person is.” (Geldenhuys)

Now let me also make this point. As you study this story in Matthew chapter 8 it seems like it was the Centurion that came out to meet Jesus and here it is the elders, which is correct? Is there a contradiction?

I believe these are the order of events, I don't believe that the stories contradict each other, it is just what each writer focused on. First the elders came out to meet Jesus, and as He went to the house of this Centurion, some of the Centurion's friends came out to meet Jesus, and then finally the Centurion came out, he couldn't hold back any longer for his friend, his slave, he was dying. No contradiction in the stories!

VERSES 9-10

The Jewish crowd that followed Jesus got a huge shock to their self-esteem as Jesus tells them that this Centurion's faith is greater than the faith He has seen in Israel, among the Jews! You see, he just believed that Jesus could heal his servant, that He had the power to do it, the authority to heal his slave, and He did!

It is as Paul said in Hebrews 11:6, "**But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**" You see, you have to have faith in Jesus to be saved. For many in Israel, they rejected Jesus, they did not please God, and they died in their sins.

And like back then, many today are falling prey to those same lies that all roads lead to God, they don't! It is only through Jesus as He said in John 14:6, "**... 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'**"

VERSES 11-17

The city of Nain was about 25 miles southwest of Capernaum. As this story opens up we see two crowds of people. One crowd entering into the city with Jesus, happy, listening to the teacher.

The other group were exiting out of the city gate mourning, tearful, for the only son of a widow had died. She now was alone, no means of support, a life of poverty ahead of her.

And as these two groups of people meet notice what we read in verse 13, “**When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’**”

So we see that Jesus had compassion on this woman, He felt her pain, her loneliness, and He tells her “**Do not weep.**” Now that seems harsh, cold, unloving, of course she is going to weep over this situation.

And that would be true if Jesus did not have the power to do anything about this situation, if He was not able to back up His words but of course, we know that He is more than able to raise the dead!

One more point here with that phrase, “**When the Lord saw her . . .**” One commentator brings this out, “Luke uses the absolute form of Lord, ‘the Lord’ (*kyrios*), which emphasizes Jesus’ deity.” (Pate)

Keep in mind that this is an open coffin in which the body of this woman’s only son is being carried on. And they are bringing him outside the city to bury him. And now, as they encounter Jesus they stop dead in their tracks. They knew of Jesus, and they respected Him, and maybe they just stopped to see what would happen. And Jesus touches this coffin and then calls for this young man to arise and he does, and Jesus presents him to his mother.

Can you imagine what she was thinking at this point? The weeping was now turned to joy by the Lord!

Now, in a spiritual sense, the enemy is carrying our dead spiritual bodies to the pit of Hell but Jesus steps in, the one **“who gives life to the dead”** (Romans 4:17), and He gives us life again. And we then are presented before the Father, we are His!

And not only is this woman rejoicing and praising God but so are the crowds of people who accompanied her! They had an encounter with God, they were touched by Jesus.

You see, no matter what we may go through in our lives, Jesus is there comforting us, encouraging us. It is not something you have to fake or pretend, but it is real, it is rich, it is deep. Keep your eyes focused on Him, as Jesus said in John 16:33, **“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”**

How true that is. This world brings much tribulation to our lives and thus, when we focus our lives on this world, we find no peace, just turmoil, anger, frustration, hopelessness. But when we get refocused on the Lord we truly find that peace that surpasses all understanding and we rest in Him!

And then, in verse 17 we are told, **“And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.”** I bet it did!

One more point here and this is kind of funny to me. One writer said, “At this point, a famous anecdote comes to mind from the life of D. L. Moody. Mr. Moody was asked to conduct a funeral service, so he decided to study the gospels to find a funeral sermon delivered by Jesus. However, Moody searched in vain, because every funeral Jesus attended He broke up by raising the dead!” (Pate) I like that!

VERSES 18-19

Let me ask you this question. Have you ever doubted what God is doing? Have you ever wondered if He is really working in your life? Have you ever been confused by what you are seeing and thus, confused with God? I am sure all of us have at one time or another and maybe some of you are at that point right now.

That is where John the Baptist was at. Keep in mind that John the Baptist's ministry only lasted a short time, maybe only a year before he was arrested and locked in prison by Herod for speaking out against Herod's wicked lifestyle, marrying his brother Philip's wife!

And as John is in prison outside of Machaerus, which was one of Herod's fortresses located on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, John began to wonder if Jesus is really the Messiah or if they should be looking for someone else.

Now that is interesting to me because in John 1:29-34 we read of John the Baptist, "**The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.'** And John bore witness, saying, **'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'** **And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.'**"

If that is true, and it is, then what in the world happened to John for him to begin to doubt that Jesus is the Messiah? Things were not going the way he had planned them or the way he thought they should go. The kingdom was not being established and he was locked in prison, in a dungeon!

It is as one writer put it, “John was already in prison, and things began to appear incomprehensible to him. He had expected that Christ would speedily destroy the powers of darkness and judge the unrighteous. But instead of doing this, He leaves him, His forerunner, helpless in prison.” (Geldenhuys).

You see, John was ready to storm the gates to get the show on the road, and when that didn't happen, he began to doubt. He is in prison and it did not look good and thus, maybe Jesus is not the Messiah?

How about you this evening? When things are not happening like you thought they should, do you begin to doubt? Don't! Learn the lesson that we see here, because God is always working, He is always moving, and His plan, His purpose is perfect. The solution for us as we begin to doubt God is found in the following verses. So let's read on and see what we need to do when we begin to doubt God as John was doing.

Leading into what we will be looking at we see that John sends his disciples to Jesus to find out what is going on and we are told . . .

VERSES 20-23

So the disciples of John the Baptist come to Jesus, obviously John couldn't leave the dungeon where he was imprisoned to go and ask Jesus himself, so he sends some of his disciples to go and ask Jesus if He is the one or is there another that they should be looking for.

Isn't it amazing how doubt can grow to such a point that even a godly person can begin to doubt who Jesus is, but it can happen and it does happen, be careful! And I guess there is a good side to all of this. John did not write Jesus off but he was just questioning and he was looking for an answer.

There is nothing wrong in questioning God, asking Him. But then we must be open to what He is showing us through His Word, speaking to our hearts or using others to share with us.

So is Jesus the Messiah, the One they have been waiting for? That is what they want to know. And how does Jesus prove that He is the One?

Notice again what verse 21 says, "**And that very hour He cured many people of their infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many who were blind He gave sight.**" In other words, by fulfilling the things that the Old Testament prophets spoke of He was showing the disciples of John the Baptist that He is the One!

He healed the blind – Isaiah 61:1, 35:5. He made the lame walk – Isaiah 35:5. He made the deaf to hear – Isaiah 35:5. He raised people from the dead – Isaiah 26:19.

In fact, it is what He said His ministry was all about, the things that Isaiah said, "**The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; he has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD. . . .**" You see, His life was a witness to who He is, the Messiah!

And then, notice what Jesus tells these disciples of John the Baptist, "**. . . '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.'**"

Now that they have seen these things they were to go and tell John that Jesus is the One!

And this proof that Jesus is the Messiah was not some feeling that they had, not some kind of emotional experience or a gut feeling, it was based on the Word of God, what the Old Testament prophets spoke regarding the Messiah!

If this evening you are confused who the Messiah is, you have some doubts because of the things you are going through, you need to clear your eyes and look upon His Word so your view will be according to the truth and you will see Jesus as He is, God, our Messiah! You see, that is the solution, get into the Word of God!

And Jesus closes with these words to the disciples of John, “**And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.**” How true that is. Keep in mind that the Jewish religious leaders were offended or made to stumble because of Jesus. They refused to accept Him as their Messiah even though His life was a testimony of who He was! And many are the same today, that name, Jesus, it makes them stumble because they refuse to bow the knee to the Creator of heaven and earth! But if you can accept that, what joy, what blessedness!

VERSES 24-28

As the disciples of John the Baptist go back to tell John the good news, that Jesus is the Messiah, the one that the prophets spoke of, Jesus turns to the crowds of people that had gathered around Him, and He explains to them that John the Baptist is a great prophet of God.

John was not some weak, vacillating person, he wasn't like a reed blowing in the wind, but bold and strong. He did not back down from what he believed!

Also, John did not dress in fancy clothes to attract people or live the life of luxury, but lived in the wilderness, dressed in camel skin clothes, wore a big leather belt and ate locust and honey.

And yet, people came out to see him, why? Because of the message he spoke, he was a prophet of God! He was what the Old Testament prophets spoke of, like Malachi said, he was a forerunner to the Messiah or a herald, to prepare the people to receive the Messiah!

And listen again to what verse 28 says because at first it seems like Jesus is praising John the Baptist and then, not so much so. Jesus said, **“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.”**

Think about that statement for a minute. Jesus said that John was greater than all the Old Testament prophets. That means he is greater than Moses, Daniel, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and-so-on. Why? How can that be? Because he saw with his eyes what they could only speak about, the Messiah! In other words, they said, ***“He is coming!”*** but John said, ***“He is here!”***

But then Jesus says that the least in the kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist. How can that be? How can our position in God’s kingdom be greater than John the Baptists?

Because we are born again, the work on the cross of Calvary had not yet been accomplished during John’s day, he died before the cross occurred. But since that time, the least in the kingdom of God is greater than John! You see, they were separated by a veil from God, but we can see Him face-to-face.

It is as Peter said, that the work that Christ has done was to restore that fellowship with God the Father. He wrote in I Peter chapter 3, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”** I Peter 3:18.

In other words, it is the New Covenant as the prophet Jeremiah spoke of, **“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”** Jeremiah 31:31-34. John only had a glimpse of what God has given to us!

Spurgeon summed it up like this, “As we may say, as a rule, that the darkest day is lighter than the brightest night; so John, though first of his own order, is behind the last of the new or Gospel order. The least in the Gospel stands on higher ground than the greatest under the law.” How true that is!

VERSES 29-30

Jesus separates the people into two divisions. Those who had repented of their sins and were baptized by John in preparation for the Messiah. Those who went through with this, they found it easy to receive Jesus when He came.

But for those who rejected John’s baptism of repentance, those whose hearts were not open, they also rejected the Messiah and here Luke tells us it was the religious leaders, the doctors of the law who could not accept these things.

Remember what Jesus said in Luke 7:23, “**And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.**” How true that is and we see that here with these two groups of people!

Today people are no different. Those who see themselves as sinners will come to Jesus, they will repent of their sins.

On the other hand, there are those who see themselves as basically good people and have no need to repent, no need for a Savior, and they reject Him.

And yet the Scriptures tell us. “**. . . There is none righteous, no, not one . . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**” Romans 3:10, 23. We all need a Savior for we are all sinners, but not all will receive Him! And because of His message of repenting of our sin, of coming to Him, to Almighty God, to Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, there will be those who are “**offended**” by the message or made to stumble by it and that is truly sad.

VERSES 31-35

How true this is. Jesus is showing us that there are people who are never satisfied, it doesn't matter what you do or say, they are upset, mad, you just can't win.

And here Jesus uses a picture of children playing and they were joyous, playing music but some refused to dance. So they toned things down and mourned like there was a funeral, and they refused to weep. Kind of strange but now Jesus is going to drive this point home by taking this illustration and making it real!

He applies it to John the Baptist and Himself. Two different people with the same message and yet, the people struggled receiving what John the Baptist said and what Jesus said.

You see, John the Baptist was an ascetic or he denied himself of things. Thus, as the Jews looked upon him, as these religious leaders observed his life, they came to the conclusion that he was demon possessed! Obviously not a good thing.

Then, on the other hand, as they examined the lifestyle of Jesus, they saw Him eating and drinking with sinners and labeled Him a glutton. You can't win on this one!

You see, nothing made them happy, they were never satisfied. Why is that? Because true joy and satisfaction is found only in the Lord. It is as the Psalmist said in Psalm 16:11, "**You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**" So as you reject Jesus you don't possess that true joy that is only found in Him!

And here is another thing that we do, that struggle with. Too often we try to please everyone around us and in the end, we only find ourselves frustrated. Yes, we are to try and live at peace with others but also understand that many times they will not want to live at peace with you and there is nothing you can do about that.

It is as Ryle admonishes us, "We must give up the idea of trying to please everyone. The thing is impossible, and the attempt is mere waste of time. We must be content to walk in Christ's steps, and let the world say what it likes. Do what we will, we shall never satisfy it, or silence its ill-natured remarks. It first found fault with John the Baptist and then with his blessed Master. And it will go on caviling [complaining] and finding fault with that Master's disciples so long as one of them is left upon earth."

I want to share something with you and it basically deals with what a secular church looks like. But if you think about it, the reason a church looks like the world instead of Christ is that they want to be liked by the world and yet, the world is not going to like the church of Jesus Christ because it does not like Christ. Thus, the church compromises to be liked by the world! Listen to these statements and see how many churches are practicing at least one of these things and probably several of them. We are told,

Teaching that the Bible is not inspired and inerrant

The Bible is the word of God (2 Tim. 3:16) and is the measure of truth and righteousness. To claim that it is not inspired is to reduce it to the level of the Quran, or the Bhagavad-Gita, or the Book of Mormon which are mere man-made writings posing as inspired words from God.

When the authority of God's word is lost, then man-made doctrines creep in. The authority and inspiration of scripture is the anchor that keeps the church from drifting into error.

Using books instead of the Bible in Bible study

It is okay to use books that assist in Bible study, but the Bible should be the central source of spiritual truth, not books about the Bible. If Bible studies are using guidebooks more than the Bible itself, then the Bible has been moved to a secondary position. If Christians are having trouble understanding God's word, then the pastor (or Bible study leader) needs to teach them how to find its truths so they can check all things in scripture by themselves (Acts 17:11).

Teaching that there is more than one way to God besides Jesus

In this world of relativism, it is not popular to claim that Jesus is the only way to be saved. But this is what the Bible says. John 14:6, "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.'" Also, Acts 4:12, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." There is no other way to be saved. The Muslims, the Buddhists, the Taoists, etc., cannot be saved without Jesus.

Being embarrassed to say that Jesus is the only way to salvation

Like the issue above, Jesus is the only way (John 14:6). Christians should never be ashamed (Rom. 1:16) to speak the truth of God's saving work in Christ. For some, to be timid and embarrassed means that one's eyes are off of God and on people.

Teaching that there is no absolute right and wrong.

As mentioned above, moral relativism is the norm of society. We often hear, “It is true if it is true for you.” The Bible tells us that there are moral absolutes independent of what we think is right. Exodus 20:1-17 is a list of the ten commandments which are moral absolutes. The Bible teaches us there is absolute right and wrong. Without moral absolutes, no one can say anything is right or wrong.

Being careful to not offend anyone at the expense of biblical truth.

Whether or not someone likes what the Bible says does not change the truth of the Bible. We should not be offensive just to be offensive, but we should not be afraid to speak the truth of God when the need arises. The gospel that offends no one is not the gospel of the Bible.

Pastors preaching moralism instead of Christ centered messages

Moralistic preaching is preaching that does not focus on the cross of Christ. For example, we do not try and be good because being good is nice. We try and be good because Jesus saved us from our sins and doing what is right glorifies Him. Preaching that is not focused on the cross is not preaching. It is a waste of time.

Often you can detect moralistic preaching by asking if the exact same sermon could be preached in a Mormon or Jehovah’s Witness setting. If so, then something is probably wrong.

Approving of homosexuality

Homosexuality is being accepted as normal all over the world. It should not be accepted as normal in the Church. Homosexuality is a sin (1 Cor. 6:9). It is wrong. But this does not mean we are to hate homosexuals. We are to pray for them and their repentance. Homosexuals are not to be pastors or elders in churches.

Approving of women elders

This one may offend a lot of people, but the Bible teaches that the elder is to be the husband of one wife. This is not merely a cultural norm of the time. It is what the Bible teaches. . .

Not condemning the sins of society

If at all possible and according to wisdom, Christians should not be intimidated by the world when it comes to condemning sin. Sometimes, when Christian pastors condemn a sin in the world, like abortion, they are attacked. Truth is not silenced by complaining voices. We do not answer to them. We answer to God.

Psychology as an authority on human nature

The Bible tells us that people are sinners by nature, selfish, prideful, and in need of the saving work of God. The Bible tells us what is right and wrong regarding childrearing, criminal behavior, actions, and words. . . . We need to accept the fact that God is the authority on man, not the psychologists.

Use of politically correct terms of the world from the pulpit where those terms replace biblical values and truths

Is a wife or husband a “partner?” Are Christians who condemn homosexuality “homophobes?” Is it correct to say a woman can kill the baby in her womb and call it “abortion rights” when discussing “reproductive rights”? Is accepting false theologies called “diversity awareness”? If such words and terms become the common vocabulary of the pulpit without qualification and/or explanation, then the preacher is adopting the terms of the world and not of God and by it he is slowly being seduced by the world.

Going to church as a social habit

Church is not a social club where politically correct ideas are tried and tested. It is not a place we go to voice our opinions so that others can hear our wisdom. It is the place where we go to learn, to be corrected, to grow, and to encounter God who is not made after our own image.

Prayer as a last resort

To seek to accomplish things in life without God, whether it be big or small, is to say we do not need God and to proclaim our independence from Him. To resort to prayer as a last resort is to exclude God from the beginning of our work and to proclaim our independence from Him. Prayer is the first resort. It is the world that operates without God, not the Christian.

Missionaries not sent out or supported

Missionary efforts needlessly curtailed. If a church cannot support a missionary effort because of legitimate circumstances, that is one thing. But, if it can and it does not specifically reach out to the world with the gospel, then it is disobeying God’s word (Matt. 28:18-20).

Divorce statistics as common as secular society

What a horrible failure this is that the Christians have the same divorce rate as the unchurched. Undoubtedly, this is due to the secularization of the heart.

Evolution

Either not condemning evolution or not taking a stand on it.

Is your church becoming secular? Are you? If either, start praying, repent of anything you believe or do that is contrary to scripture. Start praying for your church and study God’s word.

Let it be your guide.

- <https://carm.org/what-are-signs-church-becoming-secular>

Listen to what Jesus said in John 15:18-25 in regards to the world liking us, **“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, ‘They hated Me without a cause.’”**

So if the world loves you, embraces you, then something is wrong with your walk. The world will not like you because they don’t like Jesus!

VERSES 36-38

First of all, this is not the same story we see in Matthew chapter 26, Mark chapter 14 and John chapter 12 where Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, anointed the head of Jesus with oil and wiped His feet with her hair at the house of Simon the Leper or ex-leper some six days before the Passover.

Also, some say that this woman here in Luke is Mary Magdalene, but we are not sure, that is more tradition and speculation. In this story Jesus is invited to eat at the house of Simon, a Pharisee. Not all the Pharisees were against Jesus, and this one seems to be intrigued by Jesus, wants to hear more about this man named Jesus!

Now, in those days a house was often built around an open courtyard. Thus, when you had a guest over, you would leave the door open so others could gather in the courtyard and listen to your conversation with the guest.

It would seem that is what is taking place here as this woman, a notorious sinner, comes before Jesus. And keep in mind that this tells us more than the fact that she was a sinner in the sense that all people are.

She was a particularly notorious sinner – most suppose that she was a prostitute. Her presence in the Pharisee's home showed courage and determination on her part. When you think about her actions, she was pretty bold. She was known as a sinner and to enter the house of a Pharisee took a lot of guts, but she was willing to do anything to show her love for Jesus. What will you do? What will it cost you to show your love for Jesus? This woman was courageous and determined and let nothing get in her way.

As she entered this house she then came to Jesus with her alabaster flask and began to wash His feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair. Then she broke this flask and poured out this fragrant oil on the feet of Jesus. Why didn't she pour it on His head, which was the common thing to do?

Keep in mind that back then, "People reclined on low couches at festive meals, leaning on the left arm with the head towards the table and the body stretched away from it. The sandals were removed before reclining." (Morris)

And yes, normally this oil was used on someone's head and, "In all probability, the woman intended to anoint Jesus' head with her perfume. But, because Jesus, like the other participants, reclined with His head toward the table, the closest the woman could get to Jesus was His feet." (Pate)

I think that is what is going on here, that is why she anointed the feet of Jesus and not His head with this costly oil.

Now keep in mind that everyone was watching what was going on, including the owner of this house, this Pharisee who invited Jesus to eat with him. How would he respond to what was taking place in his home with his honored guest? Let's read on and see.

VERSE 39

We are not sure why Simon invited Jesus, maybe because of the following Jesus had and Simon wanted to be seen with a man like Jesus, not necessarily agreeing with His teaching. Maybe he just wanted to learn more about this Jesus. We are not sure, but this we can say.

Simon at this point does not see Jesus as a prophet because He has allowed this sinful woman to touch Him and they felt defilement can be transferred by touching! Remember, the religious leaders would tuck their robes in so they would not touch a common person, a sinner, and yet look at what Jesus allowed this woman to do.

And we can see that religious tradition, religious teaching was getting in the way of this man seeing Jesus for who He is, Almighty God!

VERSES 40-43

Jesus uses a parable to make His point. The point is simple and Simon got it. The more you are forgiven the more you are to love. Now don't come to the conclusion that we are to sin more to be forgiven more so we can love more. We have enough sin in our lives and Jesus has enough love, enough grace and mercy to cover them if we would only receive it, and when we do, that should cause us to love Him more!

For Simon, he almost seemed to hesitate in answering this question of Jesus. He said, “**I suppose the one whom he forgave more.**” Maybe Simon saw Jesus in action against the other religious leaders and how He silenced them. And it may be that he thought this is not going to turn out well for him either, but at least he did answer Jesus and correctly so. The one who was forgiven more will love him more!

Now the application and it is going to hit home, it is going to nail Simon. In saying that, please understand that Jesus is not trying to insult this man but to draw out his faith and to show Simon that not only is this woman a sinner, but so is he! Let's read on and see this application that Jesus makes.

VERSES 44-47

This woman came to Jesus for the forgiveness of her sins and all Simon could do is see her as a sinner. He was not interested in helping her.

And Jesus tells Simon, “**Do you see this woman?**” I find that interesting because it was Simon who thought that Jesus could not see this woman and Jesus is telling Simon he can't see her.

What does Jesus mean by that? He wants Simon to see this woman's love, her repentance, her devotion to Jesus and that is something that Jesus saw and yet Simon did not!

And to drive that point home we see Jesus contrast her love to Simon's lack of common courtesy that he should have given to Him as a guest. That is the washing of His feet, the kiss of a greeting, the anointing of His head with oil and yet this sinner has come to Jesus and done all those things to Jesus out of love, in the anticipation of her being forgiven.

Isn't it easy to look at others and see their sin, see their problems and yet, we miss the picture as Simon was doing. And we begin to look down upon others as Simon had done. And think about it. On a scale from 1 to 10, where is your love for Jesus? Is it maybe a 5 or 6?

If it is, think about that for a minute. If that is where you are at you are lukewarm! You are neither hot nor cold for Jesus! God wants us to love Him fully, completely, as Jesus said in Matthew 22:37, "**... 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'**" Fall in love with Jesus and keep falling in love with Him over and over again, as the song goes!

VERSES 48-50

The key to her forgiveness was faith. She saw herself as a sinner, she repented and believed that Jesus could set her free from her sins, and He did!

She came in broken over her sins and she left in peace with the forgiveness of her sins. How true that still is today if people would only see themselves as they are, sinners, and receive God's forgiveness into their lives.

As we close this evening, in this section of Luke we have seen the Centurion's servant healed from a disease that brought him near death. We saw a widow's son raised from the dead. And we have seen a woman forgiven of her sins. Which is the greatest? Some might say the physical healings, but if you think about it, they will only die again. But this woman found forgiveness of her sins and they will be remembered no more! That is eternal!

You see, if you are born once you will die twice. If you are born twice you will only die once. What do I mean by that? If you are born only once, physically, you will die physically and at the Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation chapter 20 you will see the second death.

On the other hand, if you are born twice, that is born again, receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, you will only die once, the second death has no power over you.

It is as Revelation 20:6 says, **“Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”** The choice is yours!