

Our Lord's Power Over Disease and Death

Luke 7:1-17

Luke 7:1-17: Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. 2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. 3 So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. 4 And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, 5 "for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue." 6 Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. 7 Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. 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." 9 When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" 10 And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick. 11 Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. 12 And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. 13 When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." 14 Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." 15 So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. 16 Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." 17 And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

Background Notes

In Revelation 21:4 we have a description of the blessings of the eternal state for the believer. *"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."* We catch a glimpse of that wonderful future in the power of Jesus over the "4 Ds."

The "4 Ds" are: Disease, Death, Demonic activity, and Disaster. In the eternal state, there will be no more disease, no more death, no more demonic activity, and no more natural disaster. All those problems will be gone forever, because all those problems are the result of sin. If sin had not entered God's moral universe, the 4 Ds would not exist. No hurricanes or wildfires or illness or injury or death would mar the perfect sin-free world that God created. Romans 8:22 says the *whole creation* now groans because of sin. But because Jesus Christ dealt with the problem of sin at the cross, we can look forward to a perfect eternal state. Praise the Lord!

We have a glimpse and a foretaste of that wonderful future in the Lord's miracles, where His power was manifested over disease, over death, over the demonic and over natural disaster. In Luke 7- 8 several of our Lord's miracles that show His power in these four areas are grouped together.

In the first miracle we see the Lord's power over disease with His healing of the Roman centurion's servant. This Roman military commander lived in the Capernaum area and he was possibly a proselyte of Judaism. It certainly seems that he recognized the God of the Jews as the one true God, and that he didn't worship the Greek and Roman gods. In fact, this centurion must have recognized that Jesus was the predicted Messiah, because he addressed Him as "Lord."

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord is impressed with great faith.

This Roman centurion was not a typical Roman soldier. Not only was he possibly a Jewish proselyte, but he was also very generous to the Jewish people. The Jewish elders told Jesus that this Roman centurion "*loves our nation and has built us a synagogue*" (v5). By the way, parts of that 1st century synagogue can be seen today in Capernaum under the remains of the 4th century synagogue, which is still standing there.

This centurion was extremely concerned for a servant who was gravely ill, which was also not typical. Roman soldiers were certainly not known for their kindness to servants! The centurion was so concerned that he asked some of the Jewish elders to go to Jesus, and request on his behalf that the Lord might come and heal his servant. Then the centurion had second thoughts, when he realized that the Lord was actually willing to come to his house. Maybe, as a Gentile, he didn't feel he was worthy enough for the Lord to take the time and trouble to come to his house. Maybe he was trying to save the Lord from having to enter a Gentile house, which might have been frowned on by the Jewish community. Whatever the case, the centurion recognized that as long as Jesus just spoke the word, no matter where He was located, the servant would be healed. He realized that the Lord did not actually have to be there. This was evidence of great faith on the part of this centurion.

Incidentally, there is no problem harmonizing Luke's account of this event with the parallel account in Matthew 8. Matthew did not mention the fact that the centurion sent some Jewish elders to the Lord with the initial request. After the centurion sent other friends to say that the Lord did not have to trouble Himself to come to a Gentile house, apparently the centurion himself followed (as Matthew says). He met the Lord and confirmed the message that he had given his friends.

Jesus marveled because of the great faith of the centurion (v9). What was it that impressed the Lord about this man's faith? The centurion understood the power of authority. As a military commander, when he spoke an order, his will was carried out. He just had to say the word. The power and authority of the Roman army and the Roman Empire was behind

his word. This centurion recognized that, in the same way, **the Lord Jesus had the power and authority of Heaven behind Him.** All He had to do was speak a command and everything involved had to obey, even whatever was causing his servant's serious illness. This was great faith, and the Lord marveled to find such great faith in a Gentile Roman soldier!

The Lord is still impressed with great faith. Great faith is not measured by great results, but by great trust in the Lord, and by belief in the Lord's power and authority - regardless of the results. This centurion had great faith. He knew the Lord had the authority and power to heal, regardless of whether or not the Lord chose to heal his servant. What is the measure of our faith? The Lord is impressed with great faith.

2. The Lord is concerned about great need.

In the second miracle we see the Lord's compassion for a woman in great need. Her husband had died, and now her only son - in that culture, her only means of support - had died. She was in great grief and great need.

It was not by chance that the Lord "just happened" to go that day to Nain, a village in the vicinity of Nazareth. And it was not by chance that He "just happened" to approach the gate of the city at the same time as the young man's funeral procession was coming out the city. Verse 13 says, "*When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said to her, 'Do not weep.'*" There is no way that the Lord would just pass by this woman who was in such great need. And there is no way that the Lord will just pass by people in great need today. The Lord knows and cares about all our needs, and His strength and help is available. Unfortunately some folks who are in great need don't know that they can turn to God for help – and some turn away and refuse God's help.

Notice that the Lord told the woman not to weep before He raised her son back to life. I think we have a lesson here for any believer who may be grieving the loss of a loved one, a fellow believer. The Lord will comfort you and say, "*Don't weep!*" Although we grieve over the painful separation from those whom we love, but we don't weep as do those who have no hope. And our weeping is temporary. We will see your loved one again, because you will be reunited in Heaven." This is the great hope of the believer and the teaching of Scripture.

Practical Application

1. Let the Lord heal with a word from a distance.

The Lord healed the centurion's servant with a word - from a distance! Can He do that today? Of course He can. Healers and gifts of healing and laying on of hands are not needed for the Lord to heal anyone, if it is His will for that person to be healed. Bring your request to the Lord in prayer. The Lord is able to heal - with a word – and from a distance!

2. Don't miss the spiritual picture of salvation from the miracle in Nain.

Nain was the town where the young man and his mother lived. But the son died, and the grief-stricken mother was about to bury her only son, her only hope in this life. What would she do now? No husband, no son to provide for her, little chance to remarry, and no way to support herself in that culture. But when all seemed lost, the Lord appeared - at just the right time and at the right place - and He brought new life and joy and blessing!

Remember, all the miracles of the Lord Jesus not only **demonstrated His power** as the Son of God, but they were also **designed to dramatize His teaching** and the truth of Scripture. So let's not miss the spiritual picture of salvation in this miracle of the dead son raised to life. The young man pictures our lost and dead condition because of sin. Ephesians 2:1 says that before our salvation we were **dead** in trespasses and sin. And sin results in sadness, and grief, and devastation, and hopelessness, and death. All of this is pictured in the dead son and the grief and hopelessness of the mother and the crowd of mourners. But the Lord Jesus came! He met the bereaved mother in her grief, He had compassion on her, and He brought the miracle of new life to the dead boy.

In the same way, we were in great need because of sin and its effects, and the Lord Jesus has come to us. He has had compassion on us in our lost and hopeless condition, and He has brought new life to our dead souls. In Ephesians 2:4-5 we read, *"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved."*

What joy there was for that mother and son from Nain! They had experienced the touch and the life-giving word of the Lord Jesus, and now they had the joy and blessing of new life. What a great picture! Don't miss the spiritual picture of salvation.