

**Text:** Mt 8.5-13, Lk 7.1-10; Lk 7.11-17; Mt 11.2-19, Lk 7.18-35

**Proposition:** The confidence of believers rests on the evidence of the Messiah.

If you look at the number of verses in our texts for tonight, you might feel a little overwhelmed! There are two reasons for including so many verses.

First, the first three passages, dealing with the healing of the Centurion's servant and the raising of the widow's son, are a bit short for our purposes in working through the gospels.

Second and more important is that they form the immediate context of the last two references. These passages give the answer to the question of John the Baptist concerning Christ's ministry. I am going to spend most of our time on that section, as the "miracle" passages are pretty well self-explanatory.

We will need to do a good bit of reading, although I think I will skip reading the parallel of the speech in Matthew.

Read: Mt 8.5-13; Lk 7.11-17, Lk 7.18-35

## I. The healing of the Centurion's servant (Mt 8.5-13, Lk 7.1-10)

### A. Jewish perspective of the centurion

1. Centurions are always presented positively in the gospels
2. In this case, the elders of the city (Jews) speak positively of the Gentile centurion
3. A comment from my Thru the Bible notes: "The Jews thought that the centurion was worthy of a miracle (Lk 7.4-5). The centurion knew that he was not worthy at all (Lk 7.6-8)."

### B. The significance of ethnicity: both the centurion and the servant (or son) are Gentiles

1. Preview of the coming church
2. Jesus commends the centurion's faith (Mt 8.10)
3. Jesus notes that many such will sit in the kingdom with the patriarchs, while many 'sons of the kingdom' [Jews] will not (Mt 8.11-12)

## II. The raising of the widow's son (Lk 7.11-17)

- A. The story is unique to Luke
- B. The widow's loss – utter financial ruin
  - 1. Her husband is dead
  - 2. This is her only son

The sympathy of the people must acknowledge not only the loss of the son but also the depth of her troubles.

- C. The Lord speaks a word, and the son sits up and begins to speak, causing an understandable stir

## III. The questions of John the Baptist (Mt 11.2-19, Lk 7.18-35)

- A. Interaction with John's disciples (Mt 11.2-6, Lk 7.18-23)
  - 1. Note that John's disciples visit John and tell him of Jesus' doings (Lk 7.18)
  - 2. Nevertheless, John has questions: are you the promised one? (Lk 7.19-20)
    - a. Note the repetition, the question is emphasized, and is an important one
      - 1) John saw the dove descend, heard the voice of God, but...
      - 2) John is in prison...
      - 3) The expected kingdom is not materializing...
      - 4) And Jesus is going about in a ministry similar to John's, plus the miracles...
    - b. What gives? Even God's prophets have misconceptions and weaknesses

"The frailty of John's faith gives encouragement to us when we find ourselves in error. Our security is not so much in the accuracy of our faith but in the faithfulness of the object of our faith. (Of course, we should be interested in being as accurate as possible in our faith, but our destiny doesn't depend on perfect understanding.)" [Thru the Bible notes]

3. Notice in Luke's account the many healings happening at that time (Lk 7.21)
4. The answer to John: Isa 35.5-6

**Isaiah 35.5-6** Then the eyes of the blind will be opened  
And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. <sup>6</sup> Then the  
lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute  
will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the  
wilderness And streams in the Arabah.

- a. The signs of the Messiah confirm John's preaching
- b. The signs of the Messiah call for faith in the Messiah's program

## B. The Lord's reflections on John's ministry (Mt 11.7-19, Lk 7.24-35)

1. Jesus identifies John as the messenger predicted in Mal 3.1 (Lk 7.27)

**Malachi 3.1** "Behold, I am going to send My messenger,  
and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom  
you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the  
messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight,  
behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts.

- a. John is not merely a wandering prophet and public sensation
  - b. John is the divinely appointed harbinger of the Messiah
  - c. Implication: I am the Messiah
2. Jesus points out the relative positions in the kingdom (Lk 7.29)
    - a. John is the greatest of the OT prophets [because he actually saw the Messiah]
    - b. The least in the kingdom is greater than him [because they will know the Messiah as *personal* saviour]

The relationship of John to Jesus and the least Christian saint to Jesus is not the same. John and the OT saints are an important part of God's kingdom, but they differ from the NT saints.

### 3. The reaction and response (Lk 7.30-35)

- a. The scoffers scoffed (Lk 7.30)
- b. The Lord pointed out their hypocrisy (Lk 7.31-34)
- c. The Lord pronounced his verdict (35)

God blesses those who believe. Their faith is vindicated by its object.

### Conclusion:

**Proposition:** The confidence of believers rests on the evidence of the Messiah.

The mighty works of the Messiah continue to preach the truth of his person.

Our world continues to be full of scoffers, but the fruit of their scoffing belies the truth of their claims. (Violence, bitterness, hatred, immorality...)

We rest on Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith.