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*THE MESSIAH: MIRACULOUS  
AND MERCIFUL  
LUKE 7:1-50*

In the seventh chapter Luke described Jesus' response to these persons: a believing centurion, a grieving widow, a questioning John the Baptist, a self-righteous Pharisee, and a repentant sinful woman. Jesus' divine power as Lord and His compassion as Savior are clearly evident in these incidents.

**The Healing of the Centurion's Servant — Luke 7:1-10**

The centurion is an outstanding example of humility and faith. This account records a distinctly separate event from the healing of the nobleman's son (John 4:46ff).

**7** After he had ended all his sayings in the hearing of the people he entered Capernaum. <sup>2</sup>Now a centurion had a slave who was dear to him, who was sick and at the point of death. <sup>3</sup>When he heard of Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his slave. <sup>4</sup>And when they came to Jesus, they besought him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, <sup>5</sup>for he loves our nation, and he built us our synagogue." <sup>6</sup>And Jesus went with them.

When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; <sup>7</sup>therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. <sup>8</sup>For I am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." <sup>9</sup>When Jesus heard this he marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude that followed him, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." <sup>10</sup>And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave well.

**7:1.** The previous chapter should have ended with 7:1 and the new chapter started with 7:2. Verse one forms the conclusion to the preceding narrative. The Hill of Beatitudes, northwest Capernaum is more likely the site of the Sermon on the Mount than the traditional Horns of Hattin. Apparently Jesus was in Capernaum a period of time before the healing of the centurion's servant.

**7:2.** Roman forces were not stationed in Capernaum. But the troops of Herod Antipas were under Roman authority. This centurion was a pagan by birth (7:9; Matt. 8:11-12) and probably in the service of Antipas. Ordinarily a centurion was commander of about one hundred men, although the number varied. Perhaps an army captain might be our closest equivalent. Polybius said of centurions that they were "steady in action and reliable" (*History*, vi, 24). The centurions mentioned in the New Testament all manifested a strength of character (Luke 23:47; Acts 10:22; 22:26; 23:17,23; 24:23; 27:1,43).

This centurion not only commanded soldiers but also had personal slaves or servants. The word used in Matthew 8:6,8,13, could be translated either boy or servant. Luke used the word meaning bond-servant or slave in 7:3,10 and the word for boy in 7:7. So it is concluded that it was a servant and not a son of the centurion. The slave was held in honor by the centurion. Luke does not identify his sickness. Matthew says he was paralyzed, in terrible distress (Matt. 8:6). Luke seems to imply that he would have died without the intervention of Jesus.

The centurion is exceptional in his loving care for his servant. Barclay said, "In the eyes of Roman law, a slave was defined as a living tool; he had no rights; a master could ill-treat him or even kill him if he chose" (p. 83).

**7:3-5.** Apparently the centurion heard that Jesus was able to heal

people. As a Gentile he felt the Jewish leading citizens would have more influence with Jesus. He was sensitive to the chasm that existed between the Jews and Gentiles. The elders went to Jesus and made the request. Matthew relates the story in general terms while Luke gives the detail that Jesus was approached by the elders first. This by no means excludes the possibility that the centurion later went to Jesus himself.

The elders told Jesus that the centurion was worthy of being helped. Two reasons are given: "he loves our nation" and "he built our synagogue." The Romans generally hated the Jews as "a filthy race" and as a "barbarous superstition." The centurion had expressed his love for the Jews by building their synagogue at his own expense. The standing ruins of a synagogue at Capernaum date from the second or third century. But nearby are ruins of a first century synagogue, probably the one built by this centurion. The emperor Augustus had recommended in some cases for rulers to build synagogues to help maintain order among the Jews. This centurion had not done it out of political expediency but because of love and faith.

**7:6-8.** Jesus responded to the request and went with the elders toward the centurion's home. When he was aware that the great teacher and healer was near his house, "the man's humility and faith prevail over his anxiety" (Plummer, p. 196). He sent friends with a message for Jesus. "Lord" may be used as a term of respect but more probably indicates the centurion's recognition of Jesus as supernatural. He does not want to create a problem for Jesus. He knew a strict Jew is not to enter a Gentile's house. Even though the elders said he was worthy he felt unworthy.

He believed that Jesus had the divine authority to speak the word and his servant would be healed, as it were, by remote control. The centurion understood authority. He submitted to the authority of those to whom he was responsible. He had command over his soldiers and slaves. He asked Jesus to command the illness to leave.

**7:9-10.** Jesus was impressed by the kind of faith demonstrated by the centurion. Among the Jews Jesus had not found one who believed He could heal at a distance by just speaking a word. Jesus commended his faith because he had the kind of trust Jesus wanted in His followers. Twice in the Gospels Jesus is said to marvel. In Mark 6:6 He marveled at the unbelief of those in Nazareth. Here He marveled at the centurion's faith. (See also Matt. 8:10.) See another commendation of faith — Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30.

When the elders and friends returned from Jesus to the centurion's house they found the slave well. The word means in good health.

This account reminds us not to be hasty in classifying men. Just because the centurion was a Gentile does not mean he shared the same value system as one such as Pilate.

The centurion is an example in his *care for others*, his *humility* and in his *faith*. He demonstrated care and concern for his servant, for the Jews and for Jesus. His humility is seen in his deference to the elders. Not only was he under the authority of others but he submitted to the authority of Jesus in faith.

### **The Raising of the Widow's Son — Luke 7:11-17**

This is the only mention of Nain in the Bible. Luke alone recorded this story.

<sup>11</sup>Soon afterward he went to a city called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. <sup>12</sup>As he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, a man who had died 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. <sup>13</sup>And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." <sup>14</sup>And he came and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." <sup>15</sup>And the dead man sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. <sup>16</sup>Fear seized them all; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" <sup>17</sup>And this report concerning him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

**7:11-12.** The raising of the boy occurred soon after the healing of the centurion's servant. The earliest manuscripts have the reading, "soon afterward," rather than the reading, "and it came to pass the day after," found in the King James Version.

Nain is located in Galilee about twenty miles southwest of Capernaum and six miles southeast of Nazareth. It is situated on an elevation against the slopes of Little Hermon. The tombs that have been located outside the eastern gate of the village may have been the destination of the burial party. The crowd accompanying Jesus and his disciples indicates His growing popularity.

The scene is a sad one. The death of this widow's only son left her alone in the world. No one would carry the family name. Who would

provide for her in her uncertain years ahead? The large crowd in the burial party indicated many felt sympathy for the widow.

Burial the same day is still practiced in Israel today. Hired mourners and musicians were included in the funeral procession of even the poorest. Flutes, cymbals and loud crying were a part of their grieving.

**7:13-15.** Jesus exercised His lordship by raising a dead man and ministering to a sorrowing woman. The mother was probably at the front of the funeral party. Next came the men carrying the dead young man on a bier, a flat wooden frame or wicker basket stretcher. When Jesus saw the grief-stricken mother, He felt deep sympathy. The strongest Greek word for compassion is used. Jesus wept with those who were weeping as He did later at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35). Often Jesus worked miracles because of compassion (Matt. 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 8:2).

As a word of encouragement and comfort Jesus tells the mother, "Don't cry." This may have seemed a strange comment except that He knew what He was going to do. Rather than speaking to the bearers Jesus touched the bier to stop them.

Jesus did not demand an evidence of faith but in this suspenseful and dramatic moment He simply commanded the young man to come back to life. The Lord of life and death needed only to speak a word to raise the dead (Luke 8:54; John 11:43).

The record clearly says the man was dead and Jesus restored him back to life. Luke used a technical medical word for a patient sitting up in bed. His speaking indicated the reality of the miracle. Rather than ask the young man to follow Him, out of tender regard for the widow, he gave the young man back to his mother. What a joy she must have felt!

**7:16-17.** The awesome power of God, evident in this miracle, filled the people with deep respect for God, and they praised Him. When Elijah raised an only son of a widow, she said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth" (I Kgs. 17:24).

After the centuries of silence, the people were impressed that a prophet greater than the Old Testament prophets had now appeared in their midst. God had greatly blessed them. News traveled fast. Soon the whole area had heard of this miracle. Judea probably is used in the sense of the whole country of Palestine (as in Luke 1:5; 4:44; 23:5).

Jesus as Lord demonstrated His authority and power over death and His love and compassion for those in need.

## Jesus Answers John the Baptist's Question Luke 7:18-35

In Jesus' response to John's question and in Jesus' sermon on John we learn important truths about the evidence for Jesus' Messiahship and John's role as forerunner.

<sup>18</sup>The disciples of John told him of all these things. <sup>19</sup>And John, calling to him two of his disciples, sent them to the Lord saying, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" <sup>20</sup>And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" <sup>21</sup>In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. <sup>22</sup>And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>23</sup>And blessed is he who takes no offense at me."

<sup>24</sup>When the messengers of John had gone, he began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>25</sup>What then did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. <sup>26</sup>What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>27</sup>This is he of whom it is written,

'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,  
who shall prepare thy way before thee.'

<sup>28</sup>I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." <sup>29</sup>(When they heard this all the people and the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John; <sup>30</sup>but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)

<sup>31</sup>"To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like? <sup>32</sup>They are like children sitting in the market place and calling to one another,

'We piped to you, and you did not dance;  
we wailed, and you did not weep.'

<sup>33</sup>For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; and you say, 'He has a demon.' <sup>34</sup>The Son of man has come eating and drinking; and you say, 'Behold, a glutton and a drunkard,

a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’<sup>35</sup> Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.”

**7:18-20.** In this text Luke did not say John was in prison as Matthew said (11:2). Luke had already said John was in prison (3:19,20). Josephus said John was imprisoned in Macherus, east of the Dead Sea (*Antiquities*, xviii, 5,2). John’s disciples told John of all the works Jesus was doing including the healing of the centurion’s servant and the raising of the widow’s son at Nain.

John sent two of his disciples to Galilee to ask Jesus a question. “He who is to come” designated the Messiah (Luke 3:16; 13:35; 19:38; Heb. 10:37). What did John mean? Some hold that John doubted whether or not Jesus was really the Messiah. It does not appear that John doubted his prediction or the Messiahship of Jesus or why would he trust Jesus enough to send his disciples to get an answer from Jesus? Plummer agreed:

John’s sending to Jesus is strong evidence that he was not seriously in doubt as to His Messiahship. For a false Christ would not have confessed that he was false; and what proof could the true Christ give more convincing than the voice from heaven and descent of the Spirit? (p. 202).

Another suggestion is that John grew impatient wanting Jesus to act faster in establishing His kingdom. More likely is the view that he was puzzled and perplexed about how his predictions would be fulfilled. Jesus had not fulfilled John’s predictions about the Messiah (Matt. 3:3,7-12; Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:4-9; 3:28-30; John 1:19-35). John had predicted the Messiah would cut down unfruitful trees and cast them into the fire. He would cleanse the threshing floor indicating judgment. Jesus’ ministry of mercy seemed inconsistent with these predictions. John wanted to know if Jesus was going to fulfill his prediction by doing these works of judgment or would another come to do them. Are you the one or are we to expect God to send another? John wanted to know.

William Hendriksen observed that John had “failed to discern that this prophecy of doom would go into fulfillment not now but at Christ’s second coming. He had not seen the present and the future in true perspective” (p. 393).

Prophets were given a message but their revelation often did not include an understanding of how the prediction would be fulfilled

(I Pet. 1:10-12).

**7:21-23.** Jesus did not condemn John for asking his question. He appealed to the evidence of prophecy and miracle as a basis for continued trust in Him. Jesus called attention to His fulfillment of Isaiah's Messianic predictions: healing the blind (35:5); the lame (35:6), the deaf (35:5), and preaching to the poor (61:1). Leon Morris said:

The healing miracles and the preaching to the poor have Messianic significance. They are the divine accreditation of Jesus' mission. It was in such works of mercy and not in spectacular victories over Roman armies that the Messiah's work would be accomplished (p. 142).

Jesus said that anyone is really well who is not caused to doubt or to sin because of His words or actions. Some hold that Jesus is implying that John had found a cause of stumbling in Jesus. It was more likely a promise and a warning rather than an indictment.

**7:24-27.** His answer may have seemed to some that He was criticizing or condemning John the Baptist. He cleared up any possible such misunderstanding by teaching on the greatness of John. Jesus was tender in His defense of John.

After John's disciples left, Jesus asked the crowd rhetorical questions. Did they go to the wilderness and see a weak and vacillating man? Did they go see one soft from luxurious creature comforts? "The very fact that John had lived a hard life on the simplest of fare in the roughest of places ruled out all such suggestions" (Morris, p. 143).

The crowds had gone out into the wilderness to see a prophet. John the Baptist was a prophet of God but he was more than an ordinary prophet. He was the first prophet God had sent to Israel in about 400 years. He was the special forerunner of the Messiah who was predicted by Malachi (3:1).

**7:28-30.** The greatness of John did not rest in qualities in his personality but rather in His unique role as forerunner of the Messiah. He had the privilege of personally identifying the long-awaited Messiah. Because of this he was the greatest of the whole human race before Christ established His kingdom.

The establishment of Christ's kingdom is the dividing line of human history. John had a place of greatness in the era of preparation but even the least in Christ's kingdom has greater benefits. Christians



have the special privilege of "Christ living" in us (Gal. 2:20), "God working" in us (Phil. 2:12) and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19). The book of Hebrews emphasizes the superior benefits in Christianity over those in the law of Moses. Christians have wonderful benefits as sons and daughters of the King.

The *Revised Standard Version* makes verses 29 and 30 a parenthetical statement. It seems better to take these verses as words of Jesus describing the reactions people made to John's preaching. Many accepted John's message, accepted God's ways as right, and were baptized. But the Pharisees and the experts in the law did not repent and believe the gospel. They refused to be baptized. They were experts in the law of God but missed its real message and resisted the will of God in their lives. In their smug complacency and self-righteousness they rejected both John and Jesus.

**7:31-35.** The religious leaders rejected both John and Jesus, but for opposite reasons. They could not be pleased. Jesus asks rhetorically what would illustrate their behavior. He answers with an illustration from children at play. Often children only want to object to what other children want to play. Jesus pictured Jewish children saying to other children, "We wanted to play wedding, but you didn't want to play wedding. We wanted to play funeral, but you didn't want to play funeral." In stubbornness and self-will they refused to cooperate.

Jesus applied his illustration. John the Baptist practiced a severe lifestyle and brought a message of judgment. He ate the food of the desert (Mark 1:6) and did not attend dinner parties. They accused him of having a demon. (Later they accused Jesus of having a demon — John 7:20; 8:48; 10:20). "You say" indicates that men were present in the crowd who had voiced this objection to John's ministry.

Jesus ate ordinary food and attended dinners. Morris observed, "they called Him *a glutton and drunkard* and for good measure complained about His dining companions" (p. 145).

These Jews had stubborn, willful hearts refusing to be open and yielded to God's will. Truth is objective but our response to truth is influenced by our attitudes and the condition of our hearts.

Those who are really wise will be open to accept truth whether or not it is popular or suits their preconceptions. Although many Jews rejected both John and Jesus, those who were characterized by wisdom accepted the missions and methods of both John and Jesus.

Wisdom is vindicated by the results in those who receive the truth. Matthew 11:19 says wisdom is justified by her works. (See I Cor. 1:30; James 3:17.) A wise person is teachable. He is open to truth and trusts

and acts in obedience to truth.

### **Anointing by a Sinful Woman — Luke 7:36-50**

<sup>36</sup>One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house, and took his place at table. <sup>37</sup>And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was at table in the Pharisee's house brought an alabaster flask of ointment, <sup>38</sup>and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. <sup>39</sup>Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." <sup>40</sup>And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "What is it, Teacher?" <sup>41</sup>"A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup>When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?" <sup>43</sup>Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." <sup>44</sup>Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. <sup>45</sup>You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. <sup>46</sup>You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. <sup>47</sup>Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." <sup>48</sup>And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." <sup>49</sup>Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" <sup>50</sup>And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Some people confuse this anointing of Jesus with the anointing by Mary of Bethany (Matt. 26:6; Mark 14:3; John 12:3). In both cases Jesus was anointed by a woman and in the home of a man named Simon. In both cases the act was misinterpreted and some were offended.

The following differences establish that these are separate occasions. Luke 7:37 characterizes the woman as a well-known sinner which does not harmonize with the character of Mary of Bethany, whom Jesus praised (10:39,42). In Luke, Simon is called a Pharisee

but in the other texts he is identified as Simon the leper. In Luke, Jesus' feet are anointed, in the other texts his head is anointed. In the text at hand the discussion centers on love and forgiveness, but in the other texts on the sale of the ointment and giving to the poor. The Pharisee is offended by Jesus because he considered that Jesus was permitting Himself to be defiled, or that Jesus did not know what kind of woman was touching Him. On the other occasion Judas is offended at the woman's act because of his greed. Plummer observed:

The conduct of both Jesus and the woman is unlike either fiction or clumsily distorted fact. His gentle severity toward Simon and tender reception of the sinner are as much beyond the reach of invention as the eloquence of her speechless devotion (p. 209).

**7:36.** The location of the Pharisee's home is not given. Capernaum is the probable location. The homes of the wealthy had several rooms around a courtyard. The courtyard was a favorite place for banquets in the summer. Jesus reclined on his side on a low couch at the table.

The Pharisees were Jewish leaders who insisted on strict observance of the law (Acts 26:5) and of their traditions. They were separatists and often self-righteous.

It was customary to invite traveling teachers to one's home. Simon was curious enough to want to observe Jesus closely and he invited Jesus to a meal in his home. Jesus was not a social separatist. He ate in the home of a tax-collector (5:29) as well as with Pharisees (also 11:37; 14:1).

**7:37-38.** "Behold" or "And look" calls attention to this unusual incident. The woman is unnamed, unknown. She is not to be identified with Mary of Bethany or Mary Magdalene. She was well-known in town as a sinner. Some assume she was a prostitute. She may have been but the text does not affirm this. She was no longer what she once was. When she heard the preaching of Jesus she had been touched and had repented. Unfortunately her old reputation continued.

For a meal like this a door would be open for unlimited persons to enter and observe the dinner or engage in conversation with those at the meal. R.C. Trench records the report of a traveler in the near East in 1839 when invited to the counsel's house.

In the room where we were received, besides the divan on which we sat, there were seats all around the walls. Many came in and took their place on those side seats, uninvited and yet un-

challenged. They spoke to those at table on business or the news of the day and our host spoke freely to them (p. 302).

The traveler said the same thing happened again in Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, for a well-known sinner to enter into the home of a strict Pharisee expressed determination to approach Jesus. Gratitude to Jesus for forgiveness of her sins impelled her to bring the alabaster jar of perfume. She did not come seeking forgiveness but came as a forgiven sinner full of faith and love. The vessel derived its name from the alabaster stone of which it was usually made. Ancient writers said the vases made of alabaster were the best. The jar had no handles. Its long neck was broken when the precious perfumed oil was needed.

She had previously been saved (7:50). She knew Jesus was in Simon's house and she came to express her appreciation to Jesus. Jesus would have been reclining on a couch leaning on His left elbow, with His feet extending backward on the couch. His sandals would have been removed before reclining. As she planned to anoint His feet she was overcome with emotion and her tears fell on His feet. She wiped His feet with her hair. Unloosing her hair in public and kissing His feet were not usual behavior. She continued to kiss His feet (See Matthew 26:49; Mark 14:45; Luke 15:20; Acts 20:37). She poured the perfumed oil on Jesus' feet.

**7:39.** Jesus accepted her humble expression of gratitude. The Pharisee disapproved of Jesus. The statement "he said to himself" is a form of conditional sentence that concluded that Jesus was not a prophet and He did not know what kind of a woman she was.

*This man* shows Simon's contempt for Jesus. He concluded that no true prophet would allow himself to be disgraced by contact with such a sinner. In Simon's mind this proved Jesus was not a prophet. Simon had no understanding of Jesus' mission of bringing sinners to repentance (5:32).

**7:40-43.** Because Jesus was a true prophet of God, He could and did read Simon's thoughts. Simon thought Jesus could not supernaturally know a person's heart and character. Jesus demonstrated He could read the silent thoughts of Simon's mind. Jesus told Simon He had something to tell him. Simon responded with interest, "Say on, teacher." Hendriksen translated *The Parable of the Two Debtors* which Jesus told as follows:

Two men were in debt to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, the other fifty. Since they were unable to

pay back what they owed, the moneylender graciously cancelled the debt for both. Now, which of the two will love him most? (p. 407).

A denarius was a Roman coin equivalent to a day's wages for a laborer or a soldier.

Simon's reluctant answer had an air of indifference. "I suppose it was the one who owed the larger debt." The tone of his voice may have expressed the question, "But what does that have to do with anything?" Jesus did not comment on Simon's attitude but told him he had given the correct answer.

**7:44-46.** Up to this point it seemed as if Jesus paid no attention to the woman. Jesus looked at the woman and asked Simon, "Do you see this woman?" Simon would have liked to have had nothing to do with her but his disapproving heart had been preoccupied with her since she came into the room. Jesus draws a bold contrast between the proud Pharisee and the penitent sinful woman. "The series of contrasts produces a parallelism akin to Hebrew poetry" (Plummer, p. 112).

Even though Jesus was an invited guest, He pointed out that His host had not offered the usual expressions of hospitality. Simon had not provided water for footwashing when Jesus arrived (Gen. 18:4; Jdgs. 19:21). But the woman had wet His feet with her tears. The host had not greeted Him with a kiss (Gen. 29:13; 45:15), but the woman had kissed His feet. Simon had not used cheap olive oil to anoint Jesus' head (Psa. 23:5; 141:5; Matt. 6:17), but the woman used expensive perfumed ointment to anoint His feet.

**7:47.** Jesus did not mean that her actions earned or won her forgiveness. Rather it is because her many sins were forgiven that she was so grateful and loving to Jesus. Her love is an evidence she had been forgiven. It is the one who is forgiven little (or believes he or she has little sin needing forgiveness) that loves little. Simon's lack of love is an evidence that he has been forgiven little.

**7:48-50.** Jesus did not grant her forgiveness of her sins at that moment. He announced that her sins had already been forgiven and remained forgiven.

The teaching of Christ had brought her to repentance and to assurance of forgiveness, and this assurance had inspired her with love and gratitude. Jesus now confirms her assurance and publicly declares her forgiveness. He thus lends His authority to

rehabilitate her with society (Plummer, p. 214).

Her love was the result not the cause of her forgiveness.

The Pharisees at the table literally asked their question “within themselves” rather than “among themselves.” (See Luke 5:21.) Their question was not seeking information but was a disapproval. “Who does He think that He is — claiming to forgive sins?” See Luke 5:21; Matthew 13:55; John 6:42,52 for a contemptuous use of “this.” Jesus ignored the Pharisees’ disapproval “but” He spoke to the woman. It was not her love that brought her forgiveness. It was her faith that saved her (Matt. 9:22; Mark 5:34; 10:52; Luke 8:48; 17:19; 18:42).

Morris stated, “The Greek is literally, ‘go into peace,’ and it may be worth noting that the rabbis held that ‘Go in peace’ was proper in bidding farewell to the dead, but to the living one should say ‘Go into peace’ (*Moed Katan*, 29a) (p. 149).

What a wonderful blessing when a person through a complete trust in Christ and submission to His will finds an inner peace, a wholeness and well-being. Our minds are convinced by the miracles of the Messiah but our hearts are warmed and touched by His mercy.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What was a centurion?
2. What evidence shows the person healed was a servant and not a son of the centurion?
3. What actions show that the centurion had a loving concern for other people?
4. Identify the two groups the centurion sent to Jesus.
5. What was unique about the centurion’s faith?
6. Locate Nain.
7. What motivated Jesus to raise the widow’s son from death?
8. What response did the people make to the miracle of the raising of the young man?
9. What did John mean by his question “Are you he who is to come; or shall we look for another?”
10. What six items does Jesus give as evidence He was the promised Messiah?
11. How was John the Baptist “more than a prophet”?
12. How is “he who is least in the Kingdom” greater than John the Baptist?
13. In what ways are “men of this generation” like children?

THE MESSIAH: MIRACULOUS AND MERCIFUL, LUKE 7:1-50

14. What was the name of the Pharisee who invited Jesus to dinner?
15. What do we know about the identity of the woman who anointed Jesus' feet?
16. What was the point of the parable Jesus told to his host?
17. Was the woman's love the basis for her forgiveness or the result of her forgiveness? Why?

