SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

Luke

Chapter Seven, Verses 1–50

The Word That Heals, Raises and Forgives — a centurion who asked only for a word, a widow's only son, a prophet in prison, and a sinner at Jesus' feet

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

A Gentile officer asks Jesus only to say the word; a funeral at Nain turns into a homecoming; John the Baptist sends a question from prison; and a woman known as a sinner weeps over Jesus' feet while a Pharisee looks on. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Luke's key words.

THE PASSAGE

Luke 7:1–50

authority · compassion · doubt · forgiveness

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Five movements from Capernaum to Nain to a Pharisee's table

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"Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?"" — Luke 7:49

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Luke 7:1–50

The Word That Heals, Raises and Forgives — "I say to you" — five times in one chapter Jesus speaks, and sickness, death, doubt and sin give way

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Luke 7 in 5 movements, in Luke's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where Luke is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · LUKE 7:47

"For this reason I say to you, ☆ her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but ⚠ he who is forgiven little, loves little."

† Before the Passage

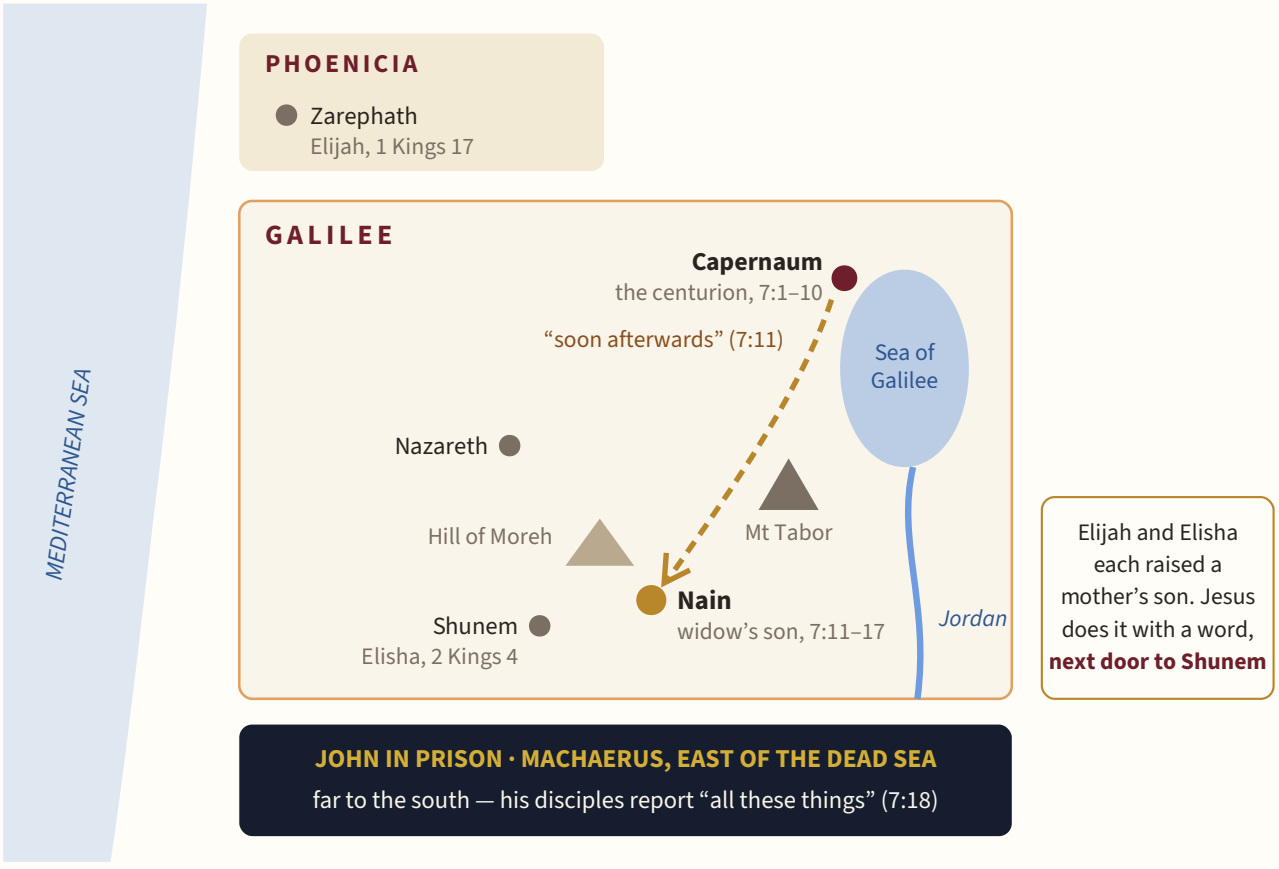
Luke 6 ended with the Sermon on the Plain and its last picture: the man who hears Jesus' words and acts on them builds on rock (6:46–49). Chapter 7 opens, "When He had completed all His discourse" (v. 1), and Luke immediately shows what His words can do. The chapter is full of Jesus speaking with authority — "I say to you" comes five times (vv. 9, 14, 26, 28, 47) — and each time something gives way: sickness at a distance, death at a city gate, a prophet's doubt, and a sinner's guilt.

The first two scenes have Old Testament echoes Luke's readers would hear. A centurion was a Roman officer over about a hundred men; this one was a Gentile who loved Israel and built a synagogue (v. 5) — the kind of "God-fearer" Luke will meet again in Cornelius (Acts 10). Nain lay on the slope of the hill of Moreh, a few miles from Nazareth and just across the hill from Shunem, where Elisha raised a mother's only son (2 Kings 4). Elijah had done the same for a widow at Zarephath (1 Kings 17), and Luke's words that Jesus "gave him back to his mother" (v. 15) repeat 1 Kings 17:23. No wonder the crowd cried, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" (v. 16).

Meanwhile John the Baptist was in prison (3:19–20) — Josephus says at Machaerus, Herod's fortress east of the Dead Sea. He had announced One who would come with a winnowing fork and fire (3:16–17); what reached his cell were reports of healing and mercy. His question, "Are You the Expected One?" (v. 19), gets an answer from Isaiah, and then Jesus turns to the crowds to honor John and to expose a generation that would accept neither John's fasting nor His feasting.

The chapter ends at a Pharisee's table. Guests reclined on couches with their feet away from the table, so a woman could stand "behind Him at His feet" (v. 38). A good host gave water for the feet, a kiss of greeting and oil for the head; Simon gave none of them (vv. 44–46). This is a different anointing from the one at Bethany in the last week (Mark 14; John 12): here it is Galilee, a Pharisee named Simon, and a woman known in the city as a sinner. Jesus' last word to her, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (v. 50), returns almost word for word in 8:48.

FIGURE · GALILEE IN LUKE 7



From Capernaum Jesus walks to Nain, just over the hill from Shunem where Elisha raised a son; far south, John waits in Herod's prison.

I
MOVEMENT

LUKE 7:1–10

Just Say the Word

A Gentile officer, a dying slave, and faith that Jesus' word is enough

[1] *When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum.* [2] *And a centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die.* [3] *When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave.* [4] *When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, "He is* ↻ *worthy for You to grant this to him;* [5] *for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue."* [6] *Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not* ↻ *worthy for You to come under my roof;* [7] *for this reason I did not even consider myself* ↻ *worthy to come to You, but* △ *just say the word, and my servant will be healed.* [8] *"For* ◷ *I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."* [9] *Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "*↻ *I say to you,* ☆ *not even in Israel have I found such great faith."* [10] *When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.*

LUKE 7:1–10

ἄξιος · ἱκανός

AXIOS · HIKANOS · "WORTHY" · G514, G2425

The elders say the centurion is *axios* (v. 4), "worthy, deserving" — a word of merit: he loves our nation, he built our synagogue. The centurion uses a different word of himself: he is not *hikanos* (v. 6), not "sufficient, fit" for Jesus to come under his roof — the word John the Baptist used: "I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals" (3:16) — and he did not count himself worthy (*axioō*, G515, v. 7) to come in person. Guzik puts it in one line: "The elders said he was worthy; he said he was not worthy." The man everyone else thought deserving is the one who knows he deserves nothing.

εἰπὲ λόγῳ

EIPE LOGŌ · "SAY THE WORD" · G3056

Literally "say with a word" — the KJV keeps it: "say in a word." *Logos* is the ordinary word for a spoken word, and the centurion reasons from his own world: an officer under authority gives an order and it is done (v. 8). If his word moves soldiers, Jesus' word can move sickness. Sproul links it to creation, where God spoke and it was so. The healing in verse 10 happens without Jesus ever arriving.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik sets the elders' argument beside the centurion's own: "The elders said he was worthy; he said he was not worthy." For Guzik the lesson is that humility and confidence belong together — "Strong faith and great humility are entirely compatible." The centurion grasped what many miss, that distance is no barrier to Christ: "Jesus' healing power was not a magic trick that required the magician's presence." And Guzik draws the gospel out of the go-betweens: the centurion sent elders and friends, but "we can come to Jesus directly without a representative even when we are unworthy."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's sermon "The Centurion's Servant" (7 October 2012) begins with the man's care for a slave who had no standing at all: "The centurion was not a wolf of an employer." The elders pleaded merit; the centurion pleaded only Jesus' word — and so, says Sproul, "The centurion understood grace." Jesus heals by speaking, as God created by speaking. Sproul uses the scene to teach how Christ is present: His human nature is in one place, yet "The finite cannot contain the infinite," and "Wherever the divine nature is, He, the person is." He applies it to the Lord's Supper, where the whole Christ meets and heals His people.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "The Centurion's Faith and Humility" argues that each grace strengthened the other. His low view of himself did not shrink his faith, and his great faith did not puff him up: "Because Christ was so great, he felt himself to be unworthy either to meet Him or entertain Him." Spurgeon notes that this jewel came from a soldier's barracks — "The best of pearls have been found in the darkest caves of ocean" — and he presses the troubled hearer: "Believe in His power, and ask Him to prove it." He ends with a prayer for us all: "O for more faith and more self-abasement."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry first notices the servant: "Christ will take cognizance of the distressed case of poor servants, and be ready to relieve them." The centurion's reasoning from his own command over soldiers rests on a true doctrine: "Christ has a sovereign power over all the creatures and all their actions." And Henry explains why Jesus turned to the crowd to praise a Gentile: "Christ will have those that follow him to observe and take notice of the great examples of faith" — even when they come from outside Israel.

II
MOVEMENT

LUKE 7:11–17

Young Man, Arise

Two crowds meet at the gate of Nain — and the Lord of life stops the funeral

11 *Soon afterwards He went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a*
large crowd. 12 *Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of*
his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. 13 *When the Lord saw her,*
He felt compassion for her, and said to her, "Do not weep." 14 *And He came up and touched the coffin; and*
the bearers came to a halt. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise!" 15 *The dead man sat up and began*
to speak. And Jesus gave him back to his mother. 16 *Fear gripped them all, and they began glorifying God,*
saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has visited His people!" 17 *This report concerning*
Him went out all over Judea and in all the surrounding district.

LUKE 7:11–17

"Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house and gave him to his mother;
and Elijah said, "See, your son is alive.""

1 KINGS 17:23

ἐσπλαγχνίσθη

ESPLANCHNISTHĒ · "HE FELT COMPASSION" · G4697

From *splanchna*, the inward parts — the gut. It is the strongest word for pity in the New Testament, and in the Gospels it is used almost only of Jesus (and of the Samaritan and the father of the prodigal in His parables, Luke 10:33; 15:20). Luke calls Him "the Lord" here (v. 13) — *kyrios*, the title of God in the Greek Old Testament — and Sproul makes much of it: the Lord saw her and was moved. No one asked Him for anything; the widow's tears were the request.

ἐπεσκέψατο

EPESKEPSATO · "HAS VISITED" · G1980

Episkeptomai, to look upon, to come and care for. Zacharias used it twice: God "has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people" (1:68) and "the Sunrise from on high will visit us" (1:78). Later Jesus weeps that Jerusalem "did not recognize the time of your visitation" (19:44). The related noun *episkopos* is an overseer or bishop — which is why Sproul says, "It's one thing to have a pastor, but another when the Bishop comes." The coffin (*soros*, G4673) appears only here in the New Testament.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik observes that "On more than one occasion Jesus broke up funeral processions by raising the dead." At the gate, "Jesus looked at the boy and spoke to a dead person as if he were alive." He is careful about what kind of miracle it was: "This young man was not resurrected but resuscitated; he rose from the dead only to die again." Still, the scene shows how Jesus regards death: "Jesus didn't like death, and He regarded it as an enemy that had to be defeated."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Widow's Son" (14 October 2012) stresses what the funeral meant: the woman had buried her husband, and now her only son, her support. Luke calls Jesus "Lord," the Old Testament name of God, and His compassion does not stop at feeling. "Jesus, however, had authority over death, and He came and touched the bier." Sproul draws comfort for every mourner: "The Lord Jesus Christ sees us when we weep, when we suffer, and when we die," and he ties the crowd's cry that God has visited His people to Christ as overseer of souls — "A bishop is an episkopos."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon preached the miracle as a picture of conversion in "Young Man, Is This for You?" (No. 2003, 15 January 1888). He opens with "the overflowing, ever-flowing power of our Lord Jesus Christ," for "No time, no place, can find Jesus unwilling or unable." A godly mother grieving over a son dead in sin has one Helper, and He comes to the coffin: "Our Lord has a way of making bearers stand still without a word." Christ speaks "Arise" to the spiritually dead as though they could hear — and they do. "Conversions are miracles which never cease."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry sees mercy and power together: “Christ’s miracles were miracles of mercy, and a great act of mercy this was to this widow.” The raising is instant — “Christ’s dominion over death was evidenced by the immediate effect of his word.” The crowd’s fear is the right kind: “The Lord and his goodness, as well as the Lord and his greatness, are to be feared.” And to every grieving widow he says, “Let poor widows comfort themselves in their sorrows with this.”

III
MOVEMENT

LUKE 7:18–23

Are You the Expected One?

A question from prison, and an answer from Isaiah

18 *The disciples of John reported to him about all these things.* 19 *Summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?”* 20 *When the men came to Him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to You, to ask, ‘Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?’”* 21 *At that very time He cured many people of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He gave sight to many who were blind.* 22 *And He answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.* 23 *“Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.”*

LUKE 7:18–23

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;”

ISAIAH 61:1

FIGURE · JESUS' ANSWER TO JOHN

JOHN ASKED A QUESTION · JESUS ANSWERED WITH ISAIAH (7:22)

"Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?" (7:19)

the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT	Isaiah 35:5; 61:1 (LXX)
the lame walk	Isaiah 35:6
the lepers are cleansed	(Elisha and Naaman, 2 Kings 5; Luke 4:27)
the deaf hear	Isaiah 35:5
the dead are raised up	Isaiah 26:19 · Nain, 7:15
the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED	Isaiah 61:1

"Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me" (7:23) — the list stops short of "liberty to captives" (Isa 61:1).

Each line of Jesus' reply (left) points John to a promise in Isaiah (right); the works themselves are the answer.

ὁ ἐρχόμενος

HO ERCHOMENOS · "THE EXPECTED ONE" · G2064

Literally "the Coming One," the present participle of *erchomai*, to come. John had used the same verb: "One is coming who is mightier than I" (3:16). The crowds would shout it at the triumphal entry: "BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD" (19:38; Psalm 118:26). The NASB's "Expected One" catches the sense — the one Israel was waiting for. John is not asking who Jesus is in general; he is asking whether Jesus is *that* One.

σκανδαλισθῇ

SKANDALISTHĒ · "TAKE OFFENSE" · G4624

Skandalizō, from *skandalon*, the trigger of a trap or a stone that trips the foot. To be "offended" in Christ is to stumble over Him — over a Messiah who heals the sick and preaches to the poor but does not yet bring the fire and the axe John had announced (3:9, 17) or open the prison door. Verse 23 is a beatitude for the waiting: blessed is the man who does not trip over the way Jesus chooses to work.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik suggests that John was confused about the kind of work the Messiah would do, and may have expected a political deliverance that had not come while he sat in prison. Jesus does not scold him. He sends back an eyewitness report — the works done "at that very time" (v. 21) — and lets the prophecies explain themselves. The blessing on those not offended, Guzik notes, is a word for anyone whose expectations of Jesus have been disappointed.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "Message from John the Baptist (Part 1)" (4 November 2012) will not soften the question. Some say John asked only for his disciples' sake: "I think that is a stretch of biblical interpretation." Instead, "Obviously, John was confused." Jeremiah, Elijah and Jonah show that true prophets struggle — "Just like everybody else, they had moments of doubt and confusion in times of distress." Jesus answers with Isaiah 61's job description, and "Nobody else was fulfilling the prophetic description of the Messiah like Jesus." Sproul's summary of verse 23: "Blessed is the one who is not offended by Jesus."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "Offended with Christ" (No. 1398, MTP 24) is preached on the parallel text, Matthew 11:6. He lists what makes men stumble — Christ's lowly appearance, the fewness of His followers, the greatness of His claims, the blood of the atonement, the freeness of grace ("Grace is the glory of the gospel") and the holiness of His commands. He can hardly believe it: "Offended with the Redeemer! What madness!" To those who stand, he gives courage: "a minority of one with Christ is stronger than a majority of fifty millions against him."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry notes that Jesus gave no speech about Himself: "Christ left it to his own works to praise him in the gates." The miracles and the preaching to the poor were the proof. And John's question is the one every person must settle: "The great thing we are to enquire concerning Christ is whether he be he that should come to redeem and save sinners."

IV
MOVEMENT

LUKE 7:24–35

More Than a Prophet

Jesus honors John — and exposes a generation that would not dance or weep

24 *When the messengers of John had left, He began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?* 25 *"But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who are splendidly clothed and live in luxury are found in royal palaces!* 26 *"But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet.* 27 *"This is the one about whom it is written, 'BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.'* 28 *"I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."* 29 *When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John.* 30 *But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John.* 31 *"To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like?* 32 *"They are like children who sit in the market place and call to one another, and they say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.'* 33 *"For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon!'* 34 *"The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'* 35 *"Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children."*

LUKE 7:24–35

> *"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."*
>
> MALACHI 3:1

ἐδικαίωσαν

EDIKAIŌSAN · "ACKNOWLEDGED GOD'S JUSTICE" · G1344

Dikaioō, to justify, to declare right. Verse 29 says the people and the tax collectors "justified God" (KJV) — they agreed that God was right in John's call to repent, and they showed it by being baptized. Verse 35 uses the same verb: wisdom "is vindicated" (is justified) by her children. Sproul explains that this is the sense James uses — shown to be right — not Paul's legal declaration that a sinner is righteous before God.

βουλή

BOULĒ · "PURPOSE" · G1012

God's counsel, His settled plan. The Pharisees and lawyers "rejected God's purpose for themselves" (v. 30). Luke loves the word: in Acts Jesus is "delivered over by the predetermined plan (*boulē*) and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23), and Paul declares "the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:27). A man can refuse God's purpose *for himself*; he cannot overturn it.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik explains how the least in the kingdom can be greater than John: John stood at the end of the old covenant, and "The least in the Gospel stands on higher ground than the greatest under the law." On the insults of verse 34, he notes that the critics meant "a friend of tax collectors and sinners" as an accusation, "But there was another sense, a glorious sense, in which that last accusation was true." Those who receive wisdom may be nobodies to the world, but "They are somebodies in heaven, whatever men make of them."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

In "Message from John the Baptist (Part 2)" Sproul explains that "greater" is not rank but blessedness: believers after the cross, resurrection and ascension stand in a better place in redemptive history than John, for "The kingdom of God is here in a very real sense." The children in the market are fussy playmates — "Kids are great at inventing games" — who reject John for his fasting and Jesus for His feasting. And "justified" in verse 35 means shown true, not declared righteous: Sproul keeps that distinction, for we "must be justified by faith and by faith alone."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry reads the parable of the children as a picture of men who will not be pleased by any messenger God sends: "We are here in a state of trial and probation," and God tries us by different means. Some receive the call and some refuse it, but the wise all come down on the same side: "Wisdom's children are herein unanimous, one and all."

V
MOVEMENT

LUKE 7:36–50

Her Sins, Which Are Many

A Pharisee's dinner, a flood of tears, and two debtors

36 *Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and*
reclined at the table. 37 *And there was* ⚠ *a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He*
was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, 38 *and standing*
behind Him at His 🔁 *feet, weeping, she began to wet His* 🔁 *feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the*
hair of her head, and kissing His 🔁 *feet and anointing them with the perfume.* 39 *Now when the Pharisee who*
had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "⚠ *If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of*
person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner." 40 *And Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have*
something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher." 41 *"A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five*
hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 *"When they were unable to repay,* △ *he graciously forgave them both. So*
which of them will love him more?" 43 *Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And*
He said to him, "You have judged correctly." 44 *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. 45 *"You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My*
🔁 *feet.* 46 *"You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My* 🔁 *feet with perfume.* 47 *"For this reason*
🔁 *I say to you,* ☆ *her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but* ⚠ *he who is forgiven*
little, loves little." 48 *Then He said to her, "*△ *Your sins have been forgiven."* 49 *Those who were reclining at the*
table with Him began to say to themselves, "🕒 *Who is this man who even forgives sins?"* 50 *And He said to the*
woman, "☆ *Your faith has saved you; go in peace."*

LUKE 7:36–50

FIGURE · TWO DEBTORS, TWO GUESTS

TWO DEBTORS, TWO GUESTS · LUKE 7:41–47

500 DENARII
about a year and a half of a laborer's wages
forgiven much → loves much

50 DENARII
about two months' wages
forgiven little → loves little

"When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both" (v42)

THE WOMAN		SIMON THE PHARISEE
wet My feet with her tears	water for the feet (v44)	gave Me no water
has not ceased to kiss My feet	the kiss of greeting (v45)	gave Me no kiss
anointed My feet with perfume	oil for the head (v46)	did not anoint My head

Her love is the evidence, not the price: "Your faith has saved you" (v50).
A denarius was a day's wage for a laborer (Matthew 20:2).

Read across each row: everything Simon left undone as host, the woman did — and Jesus says the difference is how much each knew he or she had been forgiven.

ἐχαρίσατο

ECHARISATO · "GRACIOUSLY FORGAVE" · G5483

From *charizomai*, to give freely, built on *charis*, grace. The moneylender does not reduce the debts or set up a payment plan; "when they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both" (v. 42). The KJV says "frankly forgave" — freely. The debts were 500 and 50 denarii, a denarius being a day's wage (*dēnarion*, G1220). Both debtors were bankrupt; one simply knew how deep his debt was.

ἀφέωνται

APHEŌNTAI · "HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN" · G863

Aphiēmi, to send away, release, forgive. In verses 47 and 48 it is perfect tense — forgiven and standing forgiven. That matters for the hard clause "for she loved much." The parable runs forgiveness first, love second (vv. 42–43), and verse 50 names the means: "Your faith has saved you." Her love is the proof of forgiveness, not its price; Guzik, Sproul and Henry all read it so. The same words, "your faith has saved you" (*sōzō*, G4982), return to the woman healed in 8:48.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads the woman's tears as the fruit of something already done: "her great love was evidence that she had been forgiven, probably privately on a prior occasion and now publicly." Jesus' parable shows the heart of God — "Forgiveness is ready from God; there is no hesitation or shortage on His part." Guzik admits how hard this is to receive: "It can be so hard for us to truly believe that we are forgiven." And he notes that Jesus welcomed what embarrassed the other guests: "He did not reject deeply emotional devotion."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Forgiven Woman" (11 November 2012) thinks Simon invited Jesus to test whether He was a prophet. The woman, by contrast, came to worship. "She was not your rank and file, run-of-the-mill, commonplace sinner," and her worship was extravagant: "The woman did not simply whimper." The parable of the debtors is grace itself — "There was no payment and nothing that could be done to earn it" — and her love is the response to grace, not its cause. Sproul ends with the line between two kinds of people: "Dearly beloved, how our land needs people today who will kiss the Son instead of despising Him."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "Go in Peace" (23 September 1883, MTP 48) is on verse 50. While Simon judged, "Christ did not speak to her, but he spoke up for her." Jesus credits her faith, for "Christ loves to crown faith because faith loves to crown Christ." Spurgeon wants faith with tears in it: "I am always doubtful of the genuineness of a dry-eyed faith," and "The faith that never kisses his feet is a faith that he will tread under his feet." Then the dismissal: she is sent from the court with the charge cleared, and "Peace is the fit result of what the Saviour has done for you."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry insists that no one pays his own way: "Silver and gold will not pay our debt, nor will sacrifice and offering." The woman's tears and kisses do not buy pardon; they show it, for "All true penitents have a dear love to the Lord Jesus." The more we grieve over sin and love Christ, the clearer our evidence that we are forgiven. And Jesus' last word gives her rest: "They who know that their faith hath saved them may go in peace."

VI
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From Elijah's upper room to the friend of sinners

> *"Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house and gave him to his mother; and Elijah said, "See, your son is alive.""*
>
> 1 KINGS 17:23

> *"Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. 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."*
>
> ISAIAH 35:5–6

> *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;"*
>
> ISAIAH 61:1

> *"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."*
>
> MALACHI 3:1

> *"How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!"*
>
> PSALM 32:1

> *"Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them.""*
>
> LUKE 15:2

> *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"*
>
> ROMANS 5:1

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's closing appeal in "The Forgiven Woman" borrows Psalm 2: our land needs people "who will kiss the Son instead of despising Him" — the woman at Jesus' feet did exactly that.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one chapter. Guzik walks the text and keeps the details straight; Sproul presses doctrine — grace over merit, Christ's presence, John's real doubt, justification; Spurgeon preaches each scene as a gospel invitation; Henry draws counsel from every line. They differ on small points — Guzik calls Nain a resuscitation, Spurgeon makes it a picture of new birth — and agree that the woman's love was the fruit, not the root, of her forgiveness.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · Just say the word	Elders said worthy, he said not; strong faith and humility fit together.	Not a wolf of an employer; he understood grace; Christ heals by a word.	Christ so great he felt unworthy; best pearls from the darkest caves.	Christ cares for poor servants and rules all creatures.
II · Young man, arise	He breaks up funerals; resuscitated, not resurrected; death is an enemy.	The Lord saw her; He touched the bier; when the Bishop comes.	No time or place finds Him unable; conversions are miracles.	Mercy and power; His goodness as well as greatness is to be feared.
III · The Expected One	John confused about the Messiah's work; Jesus answers with works.	Obviously John was confused; Isaiah 61 is the job description.	Offended with the Redeemer — what madness! (on Matt 11:6)	He left His works to praise Him; is He the One to save sinners?
IV · More than a prophet	The least in the gospel stands higher; friend of sinners — gloriously true.	Greater in blessedness; fussy children; justified means shown true.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	We live in a state of trial; wisdom's children are unanimous.
V · Her sins forgiven	Her love was evidence of forgiveness; hard to believe we're forgiven.	No payment could earn it; kiss the Son instead of despising Him.	He spoke up for her; doubtful of a dry-eyed faith; go in peace.	Silver and gold won't pay the debt; penitents love Christ dearly.

LUKE 7:1–50 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **Worthy and not worthy.** The elders called him *axios*, deserving; he called himself not *hikanos*, not fit. Guzik: "The elders said he was worthy; he said he was not worthy." Jesus marveled at the man who knew he deserved nothing. THE GREEK
- **Distance is no problem for His word.** "Just say the word" (v7). Guzik: "Jesus' healing power was not a magic trick that required the magician's presence." Sproul: Christ heals by a word as God created by a word. GUZIK
- **The widow did not ask.** No one requested the miracle at Nain. "When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion" (v13) — *splanchnizomai*, moved in His gut. Her tears were the prayer. THE TEXT
- **Greater than Elijah.** Elijah stretched himself over the child three times and cried to the LORD (1 Kings 17:21); Jesus touched the coffin and spoke. Luke even borrows Elijah's line: He "gave him back to his mother." THE TEXT
- **Honest doubt is not unbelief.** Sproul: "Obviously, John was confused." Jesus answered the question, sent the evidence, and then praised John publicly as more than a prophet. SPROUL
- **The answer is the works.** Henry: "Christ left it to his own works to praise him in the gates." Six lines of Isaiah, all happening "at that very time" (v21). HENRY

- **You can refuse God's purpose — for yourself.** The Pharisees "rejected God's purpose for themselves" (v30). Critics will find fault with fasting and feasting alike (vv33–34). THE TEXT
- **Love is the fruit, not the root.** The parable puts forgiveness first and love second (vv42–43); verse 50 credits faith. Guzik: "her great love was evidence that she had been forgiven." GUZIK
- **Tears belong in faith.** Spurgeon: "I am always doubtful of the genuineness of a dry-eyed faith." Simon gave Jesus nothing; she gave Him everything she had. SPURGEON
- **"Who is this man?"** The chapter's question (v49). He heals with a word, raises the dead, fulfills Isaiah, and forgives sins — what only God can do (5:21). THE TEXT

† Questions for the Table

1 **The elders said the centurion was "worthy"; he said he was not. Which voice do I listen to when I come to Jesus — my record or His word?**

Strong faith and great humility are entirely compatible (Guzik).

7:4–7

2 **Jesus raised the widow's son without being asked. Where have I been grieving silently, and what does it mean to me that "the Lord saw her"?**

The Lord Jesus Christ sees us when we weep (Sproul).

7:12–15; Heb 4:15

3 **John asked an honest question from a prison cell. What question would I ask Jesus from my hardest place — and where in His Word would I look for the answer?**

Jesus answered John with Isaiah, not with a scolding.

7:19–23; Isa 35:5–6

4 **The people of Jesus' day criticized John for fasting and Jesus for feasting. What excuse do I use to keep God's messengers at arm's length?**

They rejected God's purpose for themselves.

7:30–35

5 **Am I more like Simon or the woman — someone who thinks he owes 50, or someone who knows he owes 500?**

He who is forgiven little, loves little.

7:41–47

6 **Jesus told her, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." What would it look like for me to actually walk in that peace this week?**

Peace is the fit result of what the Saviour has done for you (Spurgeon).

7:48–50; Rom 5:1

Luke 7 asks the question the dinner guests asked: "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" He is the Lord who heals with a word, stops a funeral, answers a doubting prophet, and sends a sinful woman home in peace. If you know how much you owe, you are closer to Him than you think — come to His feet.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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