

CHAPTER SEVEN

Outline

- A. Luke's account of two miracles in the healing ministry of Jesus (1-17).
1. Healing the centurion's servant—a lesson in faith (1-10).
 - a) It took place at Capernaum (1).
 - b) The centurion appealed to Jesus (2-5).
 - (1) His servant was dear to him and at the point of death.
 - (2) He sent the elders of the Jews to ask Jesus to come and save his servant.
 - (3) The elders urged Jesus to do so. They said:
 - (a) He is worthy that you do this for him.
 - (b) He loves our nation and built our synagogue.
 - c) Jesus went with the elders (6-9).
 - (1) As they neared the house, they met the friends of the centurion with a message for Jesus.
 - (a) He did not feel worthy to have Jesus enter his house or even to come in person to ask Jesus to come.
 - (b) His request: "Say the word and my servant shall be healed."
 - (c) The centurion's insight into the power and authority of Jesus:
 - i) As a man under authority he understood the power of giving orders.
 - ii) He knew what it meant to have his orders obeyed.
 - (2) Jesus marveled and said, "Not even in Israel have I found such faith."
 - d) When the centurion's friends returned to the house, they found the servant in good health.
 2. Raising the widow's son—a demonstration of Jesus' compassion (11-17).
 - a) The circumstances leading to the miracle (11-13).
 - (1) Jesus and His disciples, accompanied by a great crowd, were nearing the city of Nain where they met the funeral procession.
 - (2) The man that had died was the only son of a widowed mother.

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- (3) Many people from the city were with her.
 - (4) When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said, "Don't cry."
 - b) The gentle Jesus performed the mighty miracle (14-15).
 - (1) He touched the bier and the bearers stood still.
 - (2) He said, "Young man, I say to you, Arise."
 - (3) The dead man sat up and began to speak.
 - (4) Jesus gave him back to his mother.
 - c) The effect of this miracle (16-17).
 - (1) Fear held all in its grasp.
 - (2) They glorified God saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us; God has visited His people."
 - (3) The report went out to all Judea and surrounding country.
- B. Luke's account of two incidents in the teaching ministry of Jesus (18-50).
- 1. What He taught about John the Baptist—a lesson on true greatness (18-23).
 - a) John had sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus (18-23):
 - (1) "Are you the one that is to come, or are we to look for another?"
 - (2) Jesus' answer:
 - (a) Instead of answering "Yes" or "No," He showed them His power to heal many diseases and to restore the sight of the blind.
 - (b) He said, "Go tell John what you have seen and heard."
 - (c) He added, "Blessed is he whosoever he might be who is not ensnared by me."
 - b) The lesson about John (24-35).
 - (1) What did people expect to see in John? (24-26).
 - (a) A reed shaken in the wind?
 - (b) A man clothed in soft raiment?
 - (c) A prophet? Yes, but more than a prophet.
 - (2) The true greatness of John (27-28).
 - (a) He was the messenger to prepare for the Lord.
 - (b) Among those born of women there is none greater than John.
 - (c) The one who is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

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- (3) The reaction to John's message (29-30).
 - (a) Publicans justified God by being baptized by John.
 - (b) The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God, refusing to be baptized by John.
- (4) A contrast between John and Jesus (31-35).
 - (a) The example of children playing games: Funeral or Wedding.
 - (b) The people rejected both John and Jesus:
 - i) They said John had a demon.
 - ii) They accused Jesus of being a winebibber and a glutton.
 - (c) The wise understood both John and Jesus, for "Wisdom is justified of all her children."
2. What He taught on the occasion of the anointing in the house of Simon the Pharisee—a lesson on love and forgiveness. (36-50).
 - a) Jesus was a guest in the house of Simon (36).
 - b) The anointing while He was at the table (37-38).
 - (1) By a woman of the city, a sinner.
 - (2) She knew that He was at the Pharisee's house.
 - (3) She stood at His feet weeping; her tears wet His feet; she wiped them with her hair and anointed them with precious ointment.
 - c) The reaction of the Pharisee (39-47).
 - (1) Simon was saying to himself, "If this man were a prophet—he was sure that He wasn't—he would have known what sort of woman was touching him. Simon knew her only as a sinner.
 - (2) Jesus answered the question of Simon's mind and said, "Simon, I have something to say to you."
 - (3) Simon answered, "Teacher, say it." (40)
 - (4) Jesus told the story of two debtors, one owing five hundred denarii and the other, fifty. Their debts were cancelled when they couldn't pay them.
 - (5) Jesus asked, "Which of them will love more?"
 - (6) Simon answered, "I suppose the one to whom he forgave more."
 - (7) Jesus said, "You have decided correctly." Then He

- pointed out the contrast between what the woman did and what Simon neglected to do.
- (8) Jesus said, "Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much." But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little—that was true of Simon.
- d) The lesson of forgiveness (48-50).
- (1) He said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."
 - (2) The other guests said to themselves, "Who is this that even forgives sins?"
 - (3) Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Healing The Centurion's Servant

Scripture

7:1-10 After he had ended all his sayings in the ears of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and at the point of death. 3 And when he heard concerning Jesus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would come and save his servant. 4 And they, when they came to Jesus, besought him earnestly, saying, He is worthy that thou shouldest do this for him; 5 for he loveth our nation, and himself built us our synagogue. 6 And Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: 7 wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say the word, and my servant shall be healed. 8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 9 And when Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned and said unto the multitude that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole.

Comments

After he had ended all his sayings.—that is, after the lesson recorded in chapter six. The incidents that follow, emphasize the healing

ministry of Jesus. The place is Capernaum. See also Matt. 8:5-13, *a certain centurion's servant*.—Theophilus, a Gentile, would be interested in this. Of course, by the time Luke was writing the account, the gospel had been preached to much of the Gentile world. The ministry of Jesus was largely to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," but there were some Gentiles who shared in the blessings of the Son of God. Such incidents as this gave Gentiles as well as Jews grounds to hope in Him. See Matt. 12:21; Lk. 2:32.

This Roman soldier's servant was dear to him; this helps us to see what kind of a man he was. The cruel business of war often tends to harden the hearts of men; some officers have little regard for their men. But the centurion's concern for his servant commended him to Jesus.

sick and at the point of death.—The servant was in critical condition. The centurion's request was urgent. Nothing but a miracle could save him.

he heard concerning Jesus.—The people of the whole area had heard about the miracles of Jesus. See Lk. 4:37; 6:17-19. The news traveled fast, and the distressed people were eager to bring their sick for Him to heal. He never turned one away who called on Him for help.

he sent unto him elders of the Jews.—Matthew says that the centurion came to Jesus and told Him about the sick servant. In the light of Luke's statement, we assume that he did it through his agents, the elders of the Jews.

Not all leaders of the Jews were opposed to Jesus. These elders were respected men who, the centurion thought, would have influence with Jesus.

besought him earnestly.—The elders were evidently sincere in their desire to help the centurion. They presented a strong case: "He is worthy of this thing he asks you to do." "He loves the Jewish nation; he built our synagogue."

This is not the only Roman soldier to be commended in Luke's writings. Cornelius was a devout man and one who worshiped God with all his house. See Acts 10:1-8.

Gentiles were attracted to the nation of Israel because God had given them the revelation of His will in the Old Covenant (Deut. 4:7-8; 5:2-3). He had promised them the Messiah who would "reign as king and deal wisely, and execute justice and righteousness in the land" (Jer. 23:5). Hope was kindled in the hearts of many who

heard about Him. Gentiles who were without God and who had no hope in this world (Eph. 2:12) were strangely drawn to the people of God and the hope of all the world which is Christ. See Rom. 9:4-5.

But many Jews conducted themselves in such a manner as to cause Gentiles to blaspheme the name of God (Rom. 2:24). What a warning to Christians!

And Jesus went with them.—The Physician answered the call for help. The fact that a Gentile had turned to Him in his distress was not the point. Soon His gospel would be proclaimed in all the world with the message of salvation for all peoples.

the centurion sent his friends.—The genuine humility of the man made him realize that he was not worthy to have the Prophet enter his home. He sent his friends to ask Jesus to speak the word that his servant might live—such faith is the complement of such humility. Who were these friends? Jews or Gentiles? All we know is that they were friends. But his greatest Friend was the one whom some had called “the friend of sinners” (7:34).

say the word and my servant shall be healed.—John records a similar incident which should not be confused with this one (John 4:46-54). In both cases, however, Jesus spoke the word that brought healing to the sick without being in the immediate presence of the person to be healed. He was not limited either by time or by space, for He is God. *I also am a man set under authority.*—As an officer of the Roman army, he knew what it meant to take orders as well as give orders. He knew what it meant to be obeyed when he spoke. Perhaps no one ought to give orders who does not know how to obey orders.

He believed that Jesus' authority extended to the realm of disease. He could give the order, and the centurion's servant would live. The soldier expected a miracle to take place.

when Jesus heard these things, he marvelled.—He marvelled because of the nature of the centurion's faith and because a Gentile had such faith in contrast to the lack of it in Israel. Jesus marvelled also because of the unbelief of the people of His own town (Mark 6:6).

found the servant.—Jesus spoke the word; the centurion's servant was healed, and his faith in Jesus was justified. The friends found the servant in good health when they returned to the house.

Luke describes this amazing miracle in such simple terms, but we should remember that it was “the work” of God.

*Raising the Widow's Son**Scripture*

7:11-17 And it came to pass soon afterwards, that he went to a city called Nain; and his disciples went with him, and a great multitude. 12 Now when he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, there was carried out one that was dead, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 14 And he came nigh and touched the bier: and the bearers stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. 15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. 16 And fear took hold on all: and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is arisen among us: and, God hath visited his people. 17 And this report went forth concerning him in the whole of Judaea, and all the region round about.

Comments

soon afterwards.—The footnote in some Bibles reminds us that many ancient manuscripts suggest that this event occurred on the next day, that is, the day following the healing of the centurion's son. Nain is some fifteen miles from Capernaum. It is possible that Jesus made the journey within the time limit. But more likely, Luke merely says that this miracle followed after the other one without specifying the exact day on which it occurred.

and a great multitude.—Large numbers of people witnessed this miracle. A crowd accompanied Jesus and His disciples, and another crowd from the city of Nain was with the funeral procession. With that many people having witnessed the miracle, Luke had no difficulty verifying the facts as he was preparing to write to Theophilus.

the only son of his mother.—Note the details which suggest the genuineness of this miracle: Luke tells of the exact spot where it occurred—"when He drew near the gates of the city." The dead man was young and the only son of a widowed mother.

when the Lord saw her.—Luke had become convinced of the deity of Jesus and didn't hesitate to refer to Him as the Lord. See Rom. 10:9-10.

he had compassion on her.—The word signifies a deep stirring of the emotions. Jesus had pity and sympathy for the distressed mother.

Literally, the word refers to the vital organs of the body: the heart, the liver, the intestines and others. We know that fear, anger, joy, anxiety affect the function of these organs. The language of the New Testament expresses it in a bold term. It means that Jesus was deeply affected by the sight that met His eyes; His pity and compassion were really felt.

Weep not.—Jesus put His compassion into words when He said, "Don't cry—don't go on weeping." How helpless, by contrast, we often find ourselves when we try to comfort the sorrowing. "Don't cry" has little effect unless the cause of grief is removed. That's exactly what Jesus did, for He raised the son from the dead and gave him back to his weeping mother.

"Don't go on crying" can have meaning to the Christian as he looks to the resurrection when the enemy which is death shall be abolished. Paul urged the Christians at Thessalonica not to sorrow as those who have no hope. He assured them that Christ will come and that the dead in Christ will be raised and the living will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. These are indeed words of comfort. I Thes. 4:13-18; Rev. 14:13; I Pet. 1:3-5; I Cor. 15:50-58; II Cor. 4:16-5:8.

And he that was dead sat up.—Luke stresses this astounding thing: at the command of Jesus the dead man sat up and began to talk. Jesus gave him back to his mother.

Fear took hold on all.—The fear that held all in its grasp was not the fear that makes man a coward, but the fear that makes him bow in reverence before his God. They all praised God for what He had done, and they were all sure that God had raised up a Prophet in their midst.

God hath visited his people.—He had blessed them with the presence of Jesus the Son of God. The miracle that showed His compassion prepared them to accept His deity.

Reports about Jesus' activity quickly spread throughout all the country of Palestine—here called Judea—and the surrounding territory. These reports reached the ears of John's disciples.

About John the Baptist

Scripture

7:18-35 And the disciples of John told him of all these things.
19 And John called unto him two of his disciples sent them to the

Lord, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? 20 And when the men were come unto him, they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? 21 In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. 22 And he answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them. 23 And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me.

24 And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? a reed shaken with the wind? 25 But what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' court. 26 But what went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. 27 This is he of whom it is written,

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,

Who shall prepare thy way before thee.

28 I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there is none greater than John: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he. 29 And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. 30 But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him. 31 Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? 32 They are like unto children that sit in the market place, and call one to another; who say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not weep. 33 For John the Baptist is come eating no bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a demon. 34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners? 35 And wisdom is justified of all her children.

Comments

And the disciples of John.—Matthew informs us that John was in prison when this incident occurred (Matt. 11:2). Luke had referred

to the imprisonment earlier in his account (Lk. 3:20). He also refers briefly to the death of John at the hands of Herod a little later (9:7-9).

Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?—There are two views about the reason for asking this question. One suggests that John had become impatient and discouraged as a result of his imprisonment and was actually wondering whether or not Jesus was the Messiah. The other—this is the view presented here—holds that John sent his disciples to Jesus for their own sakes that their faith might be strengthened and that their loyalty might be centered Him.

This, of course, is a matter of opinion; but it is hard to believe that John's faith faltered in face of persecution. He had seen the Spirit descend and abide on Jesus. He had heard God say, "This is my Son." Was John more likely to forget than Peter and John who refused to obey the order of the Sanhedrin in the face of the threat of death? They had seen the Risen Lord and could not forget what they had heard from Him (Acts 4:19-20). John's disciples had been loyal to him to the point of jealousy over the popularity of Jesus. Some of them may have been slow to transfer their loyalty to Jesus. See John 3:22-30.

Go tell John the things which ye have seen and heard.—This does not necessarily suggest that John was in doubt about the matter; it may suggest that Jesus was presenting visible evidence of His claim to be the Messiah so that John's disciples could see for themselves. It would relieve John's anxiety over their loyalty to Jesus to have them tell of the proof of His Messiahship.

What Jesus said corresponds to Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah which Jesus read in the synagogue in Nazareth at the beginning of His ministry (Lk. 4:16-20). He could have answered the question with a simple "yes," but it was better to present the evidence that permitted the disciples to arrive at the answer for themselves. Jesus not only pointed to the miracles as His credentials but also to the fact that the poor had good tidings preached to them—this was the mark of the Messiah.

And blessed is he whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me.—Some were ensnared by what they saw in Jesus, largely because He did not come up to their expectations of Messiah. They saw Him at the feasts where publicans and sinners were gathered. They saw Him doing what they called work on the sabbath day. They heard Him reproach both the Pharisees and the lawyers. He

rejected the kingly crown they offered to Him, but later was compelled to wear the crown of thorns in shameful mockery of the fact that He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He was a stumbling block to Jews who sought signs from heaven, but ignored the works that proved Him to be the Christ (I Cor 1:22-25; John 10:31-38).

This was a word of encouragement, perhaps for John, and certainly for his disciples. And it is also for all who examine the evidence and accept Him as the Christ.

he began to say to the multitudes concerning John.—The coming of John's disciples gave Jesus an excellent opportunity to teach the people about true greatness as it was seen in John the Baptist. Was he a reed shaken by the wind, that is, a weakling? Far from it! John was known for his great courage as well as for his humility (Matt. 3:14; John 3:30). Was he a man clothed in soft raiment, that is, one like the pampered sons of the kings of that day? All who had seen him remembered his garments of camel's hair and the leather girdle about his waist. No, John was not a man of luxury and ease.

much more than a prophet.—John was a prophet as much so as Elijah or any other Old Testament man of God who spoke God's message to His people under the power of the Holy Spirit. But he was more than a prophet, for he actually presented Messiah to Israel. The others had foretold His coming (Deut. 18:15; John 5:46).

Among them that are born of women there is none greater than John.—John was great in dedication to the task God gave him. He was great in humility, gladly serving as the forerunner of the Christ. He was great in courage, boldly denouncing the sin of Herod the tetrarch. He was great in faith, accepting the evidence God gave to prove that Jesus was the Son of God (John 1:29-34).

yet he that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he.—The contrast is between one born of women and one in the kingdom of God who enters that kingdom by being born of the water and the Spirit (John 3:3-5). The least in the spiritual realm is greater than the greatest of the physical realm. The kingdom of God is spiritual, and those born into that kingdom are the children of God.

justified . . . rejected.—The people who heard the message of John acknowledged that God was right in condemning their sins. The

Pharisees and lawyers rejected God's advice given through John, because they imagined that they were already righteous. Mark 1:4. *Whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation?*—Jesus likened them to children playing in the market place. They were playing two kinds of games, one the exact opposite of the other. One was the wedding game; the other was like a funeral. "We piped unto you and you didn't dance—the wedding." "We wailed and you didn't mourn—the funeral." These games illustrate the attitude of the Pharisees and others who refused to accept either John or Jesus. John's message was like the mournful funeral game, and the Pharisees and lawyers refused to be baptized by him. Jesus' message was like the festive wedding game, but they called Him a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. *a friend of publicans and sinners.*—The Pharisees sought to label Jesus and thereby discredit Him in the eyes of the people. In reality, He was the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the people.

The label was intended as an insult, but in reality it became a compliment, for He is the Friend of sinners who died to blot out their sins. The Pharisees said He was blaspheming when He said to a sinner, "Thy sins are forgiven."

They had implied that He was a sinner. His answer was, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repent. Matt. 9: 12-13.

And wisdom is justified of all her children.—Wisdom's children can see why it was necessary for John to do what he did, and also understand why Jesus ate with publicans and sinners. Folly rejected the counsel of God, refusing to respond to the preaching of either John or Jesus.

The Anointing in the House of Simon

Scripture

7:36-50 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he entered into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. 37 And behold, a woman who was in the city, a sinner; and when she knew that he was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, 38 and standing behind 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. 39 Now when the Pharisee that had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner. 40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Teacher, say on. 41 A certain lender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred shillings, and the other fifty. 42 When they had not *wherewith* to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most? 43 Simon answered and said, He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44 And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon. Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that even forgiveth sins? 50 And he said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Comments

And one of the Pharisees.—Luke mentions two other occasions when Jesus was a guest in the home of a Pharisee. One wonders why these Jewish leaders invited Him. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, but one who was interested in what Jesus had to say. The ones about whom Luke writes were openly antagonistic to Jesus.

This incident occurred at the height of Jesus' popularity; the Pharisee may have used it as an occasion to evaluate the claims of the Prophet for himself. It is evident that Simon didn't believe Him to be a prophet and perhaps sought to vindicate his judgment on the issue.

And behold, a woman who was a sinner.—We must be content to leave the woman unnamed as Luke does. All efforts to identify her with Mary Magdalene or any other known person of New Testament times are futile. Luke's designation, "a woman of the city, a sinner," is all that the account requires. Not the name of the

woman, but the lesson Jesus taught is what matters. The lesson is this: Christ does forgive sinners, and those who really understand His merciful forgiveness love Him greatly.

There is no indication that Luke intended this story to illustrate the thought of verse 35, "Wisdom is justified of her children." It does show what the Pharisee thought of Jesus in contrast to the love shown toward Him by a sinner who found forgiveness because of His mercy.

when she knew that he was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house.—Two things are evident: She must have known Jesus, and her love for the Savior prompted her to enter the Pharisee's house to anoint His feet. What finer place to show her love for Him than in the house of one who needed to know Him? Was her weeping a sign of shame for a sinful life she was leading, or was it a tears of joy over having found Him who had forgiven her sins? The further development of the story gives us the answer to these questions.

This man, if he were a prophet.—Simon was watching the woman as she washed Jesus' feet with her tears and anointed His feet with precious ointment. He assumed that Jesus neither knew the woman nor what sort she was. Details are missing about the time and place of her having found forgiveness through Christ. There is no doubt, however, about this being the motivating force that prompted her to express her great love and appreciation for what had been done by Him for her. Being unaware of this, Simon was already passing judgment on Jesus. He was saying to himself, "This man is no prophet; I knew it all along. No prophet would let a woman that is a sinner touch him."

And Jesus answering said unto him.—Simon had not said a word, but Jesus knew what he was thinking. Probably his disgust could be seen in his face. His contempt for Jesus could scarcely be hidden.

Jesus said, "Simon, I have something to say to you." The scorn of the proud Pharisee must have shown through his half-polite permission for Jesus to speak: "Teacher, say it." Then Jesus told the little story of the two debtors and asked, "Which of them will love more?" It was a very simple story; anyone could answer the question. Simon's answer shows that he was completely unaware of the identity of the One who had asked it. He didn't know that Jesus was the Prophet about whom Moses had written (Deut. 18:15); Acts 3:22).

Thou hast rightly judged.—Although he answered with indifference, he answered correctly: "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." Jesus turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman?" He had been quite sure of himself; he had judged her to be a sinner. Is it possible that the Pharisee was beginning to realize that he could have been mistaken? Was there something about the presence of this Teacher that was causing him to reexamine both the question and his answer?

Jesus began to point out the discourtesy—if not the insult—with which Simon had treated Him. He contrasted it with the thing which the woman "who was a sinner" had done. Then he added, with words that must have stung this proud Pharisee, "Her sins, her many sins, have been and remain forgiven."

The tense of the verb "are forgiven" indicates that this had already occurred at some past time and that the fact remained true at the time Jesus spoke. The point of Jesus' parable shows the same thing: the debtors had been forgiven, even though one debt was so slight as to mean little or nothing.

for she loved much.—According to Jesus' story of the debtors, the love followed the forgiveness. Love led her to anoint the feet of her Lord.

Who is this that even forgives sins?—They reasoned correctly when they said, "Only God can forgive sins"; but they were wrong when they assumed that Jesus was just a man and not God.

Thy faith hath saved thee.—that is, her faith had saved her at some point in the past and the fact remained at the moment when He was speaking to her. Her faith, not her love, was the cause of her being forgiven. Love followed forgiveness, just as in the story of the debtors.

go in peace.—More than just a dismissal, this is instruction to continue in the way of peace.

Summary

Four incidents of the ministry of Jesus are presented in this chapter. Two are of the healing ministry and two of the teaching ministry of the Lord. But the examples of healing were also used to teach; for teaching was primary in His ministry, miracles were worked to prove that He spoke from God.

Healing the centurion's servant gave Jesus the opportunity to point out the meaning of faith. The soldier knew how to give

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orders, and he knew how to obey them. He believed that Jesus had the right to give the order and his servant would be healed. Jesus marvelled that a Gentile saw what Israel failed to see, the real meaning of faith.

The compassion of Jesus was shown in the miracle of raising the widow's son. People stood in awe when they saw it and glorified God saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us; God has visited His people."

The disciples of John asked Jesus, at John's suggestion, the burning question, "Are you the one that is to come, or are we to look for another?" Jesus answered by telling them to look at what He was doing. It was the fulfilment of the prophet's description of the work of the Messiah.

Jesus spoke of the greatness of John, but pointed out that the least in the kingdom of God is greater than the greatest born of woman. But there was wisdom in John's approach to the work he was to do, and there was also wisdom in what Jesus did, although many misunderstood both John and Jesus.

He taught the great lesson on love and forgiveness when He was a dinner guest in the house of Simon the Pharisee. The woman of the city, a sinner, had been forgiven at some time before this incident. Out of her great love for the Lord who had forgiven her sins, she entered the house of the Pharisee who didn't believe that He was the Prophet of God and before all the guests poured out the expression of her love on Him. Her sins were forgiven as shown by her love; but, as in Simon's case, little appreciation for forgiveness is accompanied by little love.

Questions

1. What does the New Testament say about the various Gentiles who were attracted to Jesus?
2. What caused the centurion to appeal to Jesus? *
3. What was his reputation among the Jews?
4. Why did he ask the elders of the Jews to speak for him?
5. When and why did he decide that Jesus should not enter his house?
6. How did he explain his reason for saying to Jesus, "Say the word and my servant shall live"?
7. Why did Jesus marvel at what he said?
8. What are the circumstances of the raising of the widow's son?

CHAPTER SEVEN

9. What was Jesus' attitude toward the widowed mother?
10. What are some of the Scriptures that give hope to the Christian in the face of death?
11. What was the effect of the miracle on the people who witnessed it?
12. What did John do when he heard about all these things?
13. What question did John's disciples ask Jesus? Why?
14. How did Jesus answer?
15. Why did some find an occasion of stumbling in Jesus?
16. What questions did Jesus ask the people about John?
17. How explain what Jesus said about the greatness of John in contrast to the least in the kingdom of God?
18. What did Jesus mean by His reference to the games played by the children?
19. Why did they call Jesus a friend of publican and sinners?
20. How did He show the wisdom of His ministry and of John's.
21. Why did the Jewish leaders invite Jesus to their homes?
22. What does John say about the attitude of Nicodemus toward Jesus?
23. What was the name of the Pharisee in whose house the anointing took place?
24. What are the facts about the woman who anointed Him?
25. Why did she enter the Pharisee's house?
26. What was the Pharisee thinking while she was anointing the feet of Jesus?
27. What story did Jesus tell the Pharisee?
28. How did he treat it?
29. What lesson did Jesus teach from it?
30. What did He say about the woman's sins?
31. What had her dramatic demonstration of love proved?
32. Why do some have only little love for the Lord?