HOMEWORK: Read Luke chapters 7 & 8

**Main Point**

Jesus reveals the power of God and transforms lives.

Read Luke 7:1-17.

* **The definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1, “Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.” How was the centurion’s faith revealed in this story?**
* **What types of power did the centurion believe Jesus had?**

The Jewish elders were willing to intervene with Jesus because they considered the centurion a truly worthy man. Though he was a Gentile, he loved Israel and had spent time and money constructing a synagogue in Capernaum. The centurion did not consider himself worthy of being in Jesus’ presence, but he had faith that Jesus could heal his servant, even at a distance. He understood the spiritual authority Jesus commanded because he understood military authority. Jesus was amazed that the faith of the Gentile centurion was greater than the faith of any He had found in Israel. The centurion’s faith was rewarded; his slave was restored to good health by Jesus.

Read Luke 7:18-50.

* **Read Luke 7:39 again. What is your impression of Simon? What doubts did Simon have about Jesus?**
* **What seems to be Jesus’ main concern in this passage? Simon’s main concern?**
* **How did Jesus lead Simon to a clearer understanding of the woman’s motive for her actions? What was the point of the parable (vv. 40-43)?**
* **What decision did Jesus’ parable and questions help Simon to reach?**

While Pharisees often criticized Jesus for eating with sinners, one member of this sect invited Jesus to a meal at his home. Jesus did not refuse the man, although He surely knew the nature of Simon’s attitude toward Him. Willing to offer His love even to those who rejected Him, Jesus entered and reclined at the table.

The contrast of Simon’s indifference and the woman’s gratitude stand in stark contrast. The woman’s act showed she had more than respect for Jesus. She had great love for the Lord and expressed it in an extravagant manner.

Read Luke 7:36-50.

* **If you could see Jesus face-to-face, what is the first way you would express gratitude for your salvation? How did the woman in Luke 7:36-38 do this?**
* **What are ways we can express gratitude for our salvation?**

An unnamed woman who lived in this town came to the banquet. Luke described her as a sinner. Several social conventions were broken in the woman’s encounter with Jesus. The woman must have entered the home uninvited: for a woman to approach a man who was not her husband would have been unthinkable in Jewish society. Her sinful reputation would have made any contact between her and a religious leader forbidden. Each part of the woman’s actions spoke eloquently of her love and deep gratitude for Jesus.

Jesus’ parable helped Simon understand that love grows out of forgiveness. The more a person understands and appreciates his or her debt, the more that person will appreciate forgiveness. The natural response is to love the one who forgives, just as our love for Jesus grows out of having received forgiveness from Him. Jesus showed love in guiding Simon to see both the woman and her extravagant care. Jesus did not stop with emphasizing the rightness of the woman’s action. He also prompted Simon to contrast his own lack of gratitude.

Read Luke 8:1-15.

* **What do you know about some of Jesus’ followers from verses 1-3? Why do you think of the thousands of people who had heard Jesus’ message (5:1, 15), only a handful are identified as having left their lives to follow Him?**
* **What does it reveal about the state of our hearts when we don’t desire to dig deeper into challenging spiritual truths?**

In an agricultural society, everyone would have understood what happened when a sower went out into a field to sow his seed. At least one path ran through most fields, and much of the terrain in Israel was rocky under a thin layer of topsoil. Dropping seeds along such paths was futile. Many fields had thorn bushes along the perimeters. Seeds falling there had no chance to grow and survive until harvest time. Others, however, did fall on fertile soil and produced a bumper crop (100 times what was sown). There is a difference between hearing and listening, and between receiving and accepting. The 12 disciples and the women who supported Jesus’ ministry with their finances had listened and accepted the Word of God to the point that it impacted their lives. The crowds heard and received what Jesus gave them, but their lives were largely unchanged.

Read Luke 8:16-25.

* **What stands out to you the most about the scene in verses 22-25?**
* **How can you relate to the desperation of the disciples in these verses? Where are you currently questioning Jesus’ care for the things you are worried about?**

With the story of Jesus’ calming a storm, Luke put the reader on the spot to consider “who then is this” that even the winds and the waves obey Him. Luke’s account of the event confronts us, as it did the original disciples, to come to terms with the real Jesus. From this passage, we see that the real Jesus cares about what worries us and has the power to do something about it.

Read Luke 8:26-56.

* **Look at verse 28. Why is it significant that the man referred to Jesus specifically as “Son of the Most High God?&quot;**
* **What did the man call himself? What is significant about this name?**

Jesus’ casting out the demons was not just a display of His miraculous abilities, but also of His power against darkness. The possessed man called himself “Legion,” a name that did not simply denote a large numbers (5,600 soldiers would constitute a legion), but the term referred to a large organized collection of soldiers who were connected to a greater army. In other words, these demons were a collection of evil spirits at war against this man, and through him against God. Yet at the sight of Jesus , they cowered and began to make the terms of their surrender.

The demons that controlled this man immediately recognized Jesus. They intrinsically knew that His power far exceeded theirs. Jesus was the “Son of the Most High God,” and the demons knew that their fate rested solely in Jesus’ word. In every display of glory, Jesus’ power pointed back to His Father’s.

* **How do each of the three miracles in this practice point to the importance of who we place our faith in?**