

NOTES FROM ASSISTANT PASTOR STEVEN'S SERMON

26th February 2023 am

SERIES FROM LUKE'S GOSPEL "God's love for the lowest"

Part 10 "How can we have confidence in Christ?"

Scripture references from the ESV

Luke 7: 1-35 After he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. ² Now a centurion had a servant^[a] who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him. ³ When the centurion^[b] heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. ⁴ And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, ⁵ for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue." ⁶ And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. ⁷ Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. ⁸ For I too 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 servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." ⁹ When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." ¹⁰ And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

¹¹ Soon afterward^[c] he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. ¹² As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. ¹³ And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." ¹⁴ Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." ¹⁵ And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus^[d] gave him to his mother. ¹⁶ Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" ¹⁷ And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

¹⁸ The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, ¹⁹ calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" ²⁰ And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" ²¹ In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. ²² And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame

walk, lepers^[e] are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. ²³ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

²⁴ When John's messengers had gone, Jesus^[f] began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

²⁵ What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts. ²⁶ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷ This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’

²⁸ I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” ²⁹ (When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just,^[g] having been baptized with the baptism of John, ³⁰ but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)³¹ “To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? ³² They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, “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, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ ³⁵ Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.”

At the end of Luke Chapter 6, Jesus says this

⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the Rock.

Jesus is asking us to place full confidence in him as the Messiah, the King of Kings. He is asking us to place full confidence in his word and to build our very life on him and nothing else.

How, then, can we have this confidence in Jesus above all that we hear and are taught by the world around us, above what we learn from our culture, tradition, or background?

This is a pressing issue. Jesus' teaching has moved, in the UK at least, from being accepted to being rejected more and more. Even our family members think what we believe is outdated and that we must adapt what is in the word to the world around us. There is a Pick and Mix approach to Jesus' word.

- We like what he says about love but not what he says about sin and obedience.

- We like what he says about helping the poor but not what he says about our own desire to be rich.

Even some churches and denominations have moved away from faithfully teaching what Jesus said.

With all that is going on around us, how can those of us here at Broadstone Baptist have confidence that Jesus' word alone is the Rock on which we can stand?

We will see three reasons why we can have confidence in Jesus. They come from the three different interactions with Jesus in this passage.

1. We can have confidence in Jesus because when we speak to him, he answers us

Immediately after Jesus speaks of the house built on rock, we hear about this fantastic Centurion.

Centurions were employed by Rome and had command over about 100 men, hence the name. These were powerful guys who oversaw the tax collection and general policing of the area. This centurion would not have been Jewish but he had clearly earned the respect of the Jews by building the synagogue. However, he would have still been considered an outsider.

This makes what happened next even more powerful. This powerful outsider sought the help of Jesus as his servant. He was not some powerful man from Israel. He was a powerful man from the greatest force known to the world at that time – the Roman Empire. In human terms, Jesus was under the Centurion's authority so he could just have commanded Jesus to come, but instead he humbly sent someone to ask Jesus to come.

This is something we really need to grasp. A non-Jewish powerful leader of the conquering Roman empire

sought the help of Jesus, a Jewish carpenter's son from the middle of nowhere, and actually saw himself as

unworthy to come to him in person. This was because the Centurion understood that:

When we speak to Jesus, we talk to the one who answers with ultimate authority!

Jesus' authority is not just over 100 men. He is the man to whom the universe listens. At his word, the Earth could cease to spin. The Centurion's role gave him insight into how

someone with ultimate authority operates. He understood that Jesus did not need to physically be with his servant to heal him.

That knowledge humbled him and allowed him to put his faith in Jesus' word, even if Jesus said no. Jesus marvelled at his faith, and indeed healed his servant, proving that authority to be true.

From this we can learn that:

a) We can all speak to Jesus.

We often fail to remember the reality of Jesus being alive today. After he rose from the dead, Jesus ascended into heaven and is now seated on the throne.

- To us, he often seems far away but he is not. Even if he was, that wouldn't stop us from being able to come to him with every request, just like the Centurion.

Despite distance, time or even the sheer enormity of the situation, we can know that Jesus is listening and, more than that, he knows about all that is happening.

b) He answers with ultimate authority

His answer to every situation, whether a yes, no or not yet, is to be met with humble adoration that he, the one who can command the universe, is actually answering us. Nothing is impossible for Jesus.

That means whatever his answer might be, we should not be limited in our requests to our Lord.

This is a call to prayer. One reminder says this: if you are **not** praying, then you are quietly confident that time, money and talent are all you need in life. You will always be a little too tired, and a little too busy. But if, like Jesus, you realise that you can't do it on your own, then no matter how busy or how tired you are, you will always find the time to pray.

We need to humble ourselves like the Centurion, and we do this by dwelling on the authority of Jesus.

c) If this is true, then all his words come with that same authority

It means that it is true that building our life on Jesus is a firm foundation. What he says carries ultimate authority, unlike any other person, culture or tradition. It is his words that have maximum weight and power. The world's words may shout louder, but that doesn't make them powerful compared to Jesus.

We can have confidence in Jesus,

because when we speak to him, he answers with ultimate authority

2. We can have confidence in Jesus because when we were lost, he saw us (v13 above)

In this situation, when a woman has lost first her husband and now her son, we see the compassion of Jesus. For a woman to have lost so much in those days wouldn't have just meant the natural grief of losing loved ones. It also left her in a desperate economic situation with no one to look after her. You can imagine what was running through her mind. Where would she go? What would she do? She had nothing but intense pain. There was nothing that she could do to save herself.

All she could do was walk next to her dead son as his body rested on a plank of wood. Jesus was there,

**And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep."
(v13 above)**

This is the first time Luke gives Jesus the title 'LORD', or Kyrios, the Greek translation of the word Adonai, the title given to God alone, the one with ultimate authority. Luke tells us that Jesus is God incarnate.

Jesus, God incarnate, saw her grief, desperation, and the suffering to come, and he had compassion on her, displaying the love of God. Then he touched the bier, the plank of wood, where her dead son lay, an act that was considered to be spiritually unclean. Yet God-incarnate brought life and light by a word from his mouth: **"Young man, I say to you, arise."** (v14 above). What he did for this woman, he has also done for us.

Because when we were lost – he saw us

- We are lost like this woman - lost in our sin. There is nothing we can do to save ourselves

Jesus saw us. He saw our situation and the suffering that awaits us in eternal separation from him and he had compassion on us. He came down for us, placed himself on a different form of wood and took on the curse of sin that was destined for us, and with his word, brought us into a new life with him

- **'It is finished,'** he declared on that cross, and on the last day, he will say to all who trust in him: **'Arise'** in the power of his resurrection.

We can have confidence in Jesus' word over everything else, because it is by his word that we are saved.

Because when we were lost – he saw us and, by his word, saved us

Many of us have felt lost at times but the one who trusts in the Lord can know that they are seen, and cared for. Jesus will not let you go.

When we feel lost – he sees us and guides us

3. We can have confidence in Jesus because saving us was always his plan

Many people, including Jews, refute the idea that Jesus is the promised Messiah. They admit that he said and did good things but say he would have acted very differently if he had been the Messiah. Muslims are not satisfied that Jesus is the one. Secular culture today might admit that Jesus is one way, but certainly not the only one. In fact, John the Baptist himself was confused. He sent his disciples to ask whether Jesus was the one to come, the one spoken about by the prophets, or should they be looking for someone else?

The Messiah, the promised King of Kings was seen as this conquering, rescuing ruler who would establish an everlasting kingdom, (and of course he will,) but the Jews were looking for a messiah who would rise up and conquer the Romans. Yet here was Jesus marvelling at a Roman centurion of all people.

Jesus showed them and us that everything he did whilst on Earth was always the plan, and he did it for us!

He ran through everything that he was doing (v22 above), matching the prophecy from **Isaiah 61:1: The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor;**

This is the agenda-setting statement for the work of the Messiah: to bring good news to the poor.

God's plan for the world's salvation brought about a new Kingdom that would never spoil or fade. It is fulfilled in Jesus.

We can have confidence in Jesus because saving us was always his plan

- Will you build your house, your life on this Rock - on Jesus?

v 28 – 35 (above) call us to consider that question.

- Are we going to humble ourselves, as the tax collectors did, admit we cannot save ourselves and submit to the compassionate rule of Jesus as the true Messiah, living our lives based on his word alone?
- Are we going to reject him as the Pharisees did? Jesus and John had given the Pharisees evidence and opportunity. The invitation was open to them as much as to anyone else.

The first group, having heard Jesus and having already been baptised by John, declared God as just.

However, the Pharisees refused because Jesus did not precisely fit their expectations.

We see this in our culture. Jesus' teaching and God's plan for our salvation and his Kingdom will always be counter-cultural. It will always go against the grain of what the rest of the world is saying.

There always will be people who reject Jesus.

However, when we build our house on this Rock, on this truth, following Jesus as our Messiah, King, and Saviour, we can be confident that this Rock will not be moved.

Our salvation has been secured, and Jesus' word is to be followed above all else.