



Luke 7:11–17

11 Soon afterwards, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. 12 As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out – the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. 13 When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, ‘Don’t cry.’ 14 Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on,

and the bearers stood still. He said, 'Young man, I say to you, get up!' 15 The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. 16 They were all filled with awe and praised God. 'A great prophet has appeared among us,' they said. 'God has come to help his people.' 17 This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

Reflection

Here in the opening of Chapter 7 Luke has recorded two healings side by side. It is interesting to consider why? What is the purpose of giving us these accounts here? In the preceding chapter Jesus has

been teaching about God's kingdom. Loving your enemies, refraining from reckless judgement, pursuing forgiveness. Jesus has taught that you can tell a tree by its fruit and has concluded that if we want a foundation that survives the storms of life and perhaps future judgement then we need to listen and act on his words.

But the question is – can we trust this Jesus? Does he practice what he preaches? Is it actually worth listening and responding to this Jesus?

This is a question that lingers not just after his bold teaching in chapter 6. It's also still lingering from chapter 4 when Jesus at the synagogue in Nazareth opened up the scroll from Isaiah and claimed to be the fulfilment of these words:

18 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom
for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's
favour.

These words written about God's Messiah, his future King were claimed clearly and publicly but Jesus. But can we trust this Jesus?

This question lingers from chapter 2 when the angels say to the shepherds:

Today in the town of David a Sav-

your has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

Is Jesus the Messiah Lord?

You see the accounts that Luke has given about Jesus up until this point are far stronger than him simply being a dynamic religious leader. Luke's account is building a case that Jesus is the one-off Messiah. The only Son of God. The one individual in the history of the world who can and is ushering in God's kingdom.

It's not just enough for him to be a dynamic teacher. There have been millions of dynamic teachers in the history of our world. Millions who have inspired hundreds, even thousands of people to change. Yet I think it's fair to say that not a single hu-

man teacher has ever fully lived out their own teaching. Everyone falls short of the ideals they espouse, the aspirational pictures they declare.

Luke's point in writing this Gospel is to draw up a clear account for Theophilus of the things that have been fulfilled among us. And this is a reference to Jesus as the one true Son of God, the Messiah, the one who is different to everyone else.

And so here in Luke chapter 7 Luke records for us two events that give example to everything Jesus has been teaching. The healing of the son of a Roman official – an enemy of Israel, and the healing of this woman's son in Nain.

Our passage today could not open with

a more heartbreaking picture. Here we are in the town of Nain, near Galilee and a widow is walking in the funeral procession of her only son. This woman's life is over. Her husband is dead and now her only son is gone as well. In the ancient world for a woman to have no male head of house or heir meant financial ruin, a life of poverty not to mention the deep sorrow and grief she was bearing that day. It is a heartbreaking picture.

Jesus and his disciples approach this crowd. And the question is, does Jesus practice what he preaches? Does Jesus have the power to back up his bold claims to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour?

The answer Luke gives us is yes.

Here Jesus halts the tragic procession to the grave, he comforts the crying mother and with a word he brings this boy back to life. This is a miracle. This is beyond explanation. This is not normal, nor is it explainable. It's difficult to believe that this even happened. That someone can go from death to life with a word. It's just not possible.

And that's the point. It isn't possible, it isn't possible for anyone to do this except one person. Not just one person that day, not one person in that period of time. No there has only ever been one person in the history of our world who has such power. He is not just a religious teacher, he is not just a guru or a popular preacher. He is Jesus the Son of God, the Messiah. This is the point Luke is making. There is no one else

like Jesus.

Think & Pray

It's easy for our own view of Jesus to be tamed, isn't it? It's easy for us to unconsciously turn the Jesus in our heads into a self-help hero or just a guy with good life advice. But none of this will do for the follower of Jesus. For the Jesus we worship and is Lord of all. He has power over death and he proclaims the year of God's favour. There is no one like him. And we call him Lord and Saviour.

Why not take some time today to reflect upon your own image of Jesus? Have you downsized him or ceased to relate to him as Lord and Saviour?

What would it look like for you to trust and follow the Jesus Luke records for us – the Jesus who comforts the broken hearted and brings life to the dead?

Take some time to reflect upon your own faith journey today and thank God for the power and love of his Son Jesus.