

Seeing Jesus: Marveling at the Outsider and Caring for the Destitute
Luke 6:20-21, 24-25, 35-36; 7:1-17
Sermon Outline

Introduction: Jesus' disturbing claim to be the one true God's answer to the world's deepest problems is backed up by his character. What he preaches in Luke 6, he practices in Luke 7.

I) He responds graciously to anyone who reaches out to him in faith

A) The blessings and curses of Luke 6 did not mean that Jesus hated the rich and powerful

The first person he helps after the sermon is a centurion

The nature of Jesus' response

- To his house (v. 6b-7)
- Heals (v. 10)
- Publicly marvels at his faith (v. 9)

B) God's love is this way

The "way in" is simply faith—not poor, or rich, or weak, or strong

Causing God to marvel?

C) Faith

1) What is it?

- Love (v. 2: *servant...highly values*; v. 7: *let my child be healed*)
- Confidence (v. 7b: *But say the word...for I too am a man under authority*) e
- Humility (v. 6b: *I am not worthy to have you come under my roof*)

2) Why so important to God?

- The centurion is like us—he never saw Jesus

II) He reaches out, unsolicited, to the destitute

A) The widow

- No husband, no son.

B) The scene

- v. 13: *compassion*
- Unsolicited

C) Our experience

III) Responding to this portrait of love in action

- Don't despair
- Ask

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) It is fashionable and plausible in our pluralistic time to dismiss the claims of Jesus to be the one true God's only solution to the universal problems of sin and death. But such a dismissal is difficult to do if we take the portrait of Jesus seriously. Reflect on the following statement by John Stott in *Basic Christianity* and then reflect on how that love is demonstrated in Luke 7:1-17: "It is this paradox which is so baffling, this combination of the self-centeredness of his teaching and the unself-centeredness of his behavior. In thought he put himself first; in deed last. He exhibited both the greatest self-esteem and the greatest self-sacrifice. He knew himself to be the Lord of all, but he became their servant. He said he was going to judge the world, but he washed his disciples' feet" ... The worst of men is adorned by an occasional flash of such nobility, but the life of Jesus irradiated it with a never-fading incandescent glow. Jesus was sinless because he was selfless. Such selflessness is love. And God is love."
- 2) You would think that Jesus' strong warnings to the rich and powerful in Luke 6:24-26 would have caused him to ignore the entreaties of the centurion—a rich and powerful figure embodying the oppressive regime of foreign rule. Why does Jesus respond to him as he does?
- 3) Jesus publicly commends the centurion's faith (Luke 7:9). What characterizes that faith? Compare your own faith to it. Notice as you do that the centurion was very much like us that he had only heard about Jesus, and never throughout the narrative does he ever actually see Jesus face to face.
- 4) The centurion's faith caused Jesus to marvel, which must mean that your faith could possibly have a similar effect. What would it take? Is it possible?
- 5) Reflect on the following: "The reason why God wants faith is that faith is what we do when we give up: when we give up trying to control things, when we give up trying to justify ourselves, and when we give up demanding "entitlements" from God. The reason why he wants us to give up on these things is that he wants us to live in Reality—to know ourselves and him truly. And the truth of things is this: He justifies our existence, we do not; he is in control, we are not; and God owes us nothing."
- 6) Reflect on those moments in your experience when you have seen a great need and been so moved that you have spontaneously done something to mitigate it, or, if you couldn't do anything, felt your heart break under the weight of it. Spend some time thanking God for revealing himself in the response of your heart and ask him to express that love even more fully in you. Ask for greater trust.