

**ST JOSEPH THE WORKER**  
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



**Faith and Anointing**

**A Showcase of Compassion and Faith: Navigating Luke 7**

**Luke 7** calls us to mirror the faith of the centurion, the gratitude of the sinful woman, and to stand in awe of the compassion of Christ, as exhibited in the raising of the widow's son. It also prompts us to reassess our preconceived notions about who is worthy of God's love and forgiveness. The chapter reaffirms that **faith, humility, and love** are valued in the kingdom of God, **more than self-righteousness or ritualistic adherence to religious norms.**

**The Faith of the Centurion (Luke 7:1-10)**

In Capernaum, a Roman centurion demonstrates remarkable faith in Jesus' healing power, leading Jesus to heal his servant from a distance, praising the centurion's faith.

**The Raising of the Widow's Son (Luke 7:11-17)**

In the town of Nain, Jesus displays His compassion and power over death by resurrecting a widow's only son, causing great awe among the people.

**John the Baptist's Question (Luke 7:18-35)**

From prison, John the Baptist sends disciples to Jesus to ask if He is the Messiah. Jesus responds by pointing to His miraculous deeds and teachings, affirming His role and praising John as His forerunner.

**Jesus' Anointing by a Sinful Woman (Luke 7:36-50)**

At a Pharisee's house, a sinful woman anoints Jesus' feet with her tears and perfume. Jesus uses this act to teach about forgiveness, affirming that her sins have been forgiven due to her great love, revealing that those who are forgiven much, love much.

Luke 7 paints vivid pictures of faith, compassion, doubt, and forgiveness, unfolding in powerful narratives of healing, resurrection, questioning, and anointing. As Jesus demonstrates His authority over illness, death, and sin, He also affirms the value of faith, humbling the self-righteous and uplifting the humble and repentant.

**Themes**

Faith and Healing  
Compassion and Resurrection  
Questioning and Affirmation  
Sin and Forgiveness

**Topics**

The Faith of the Centurion  
The Raising of the Widow's Son  
John the Baptist's Question  
Jesus' Anointing by a Sinful Woman

**People**

Jesus  
The Centurion  
The Widow and Her Son  
John the Baptist

The Sinful Woman

Pharisee Simon

**Locations**

Capernaum

The Town of Nain

Simon the Pharisee's House

**ST JOSEPH THE WORKER**  
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**Luke 7****The Faith of the Centurion**

- 1** When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum.
- 2** There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die.
- 3** The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant.
- 4** When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this,
- 5** because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue."
- 6** So Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof.
- 7** That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.
- 8** For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

**7:1–10** The second main subsection of Luke 4:14—9:50 (7:1—8:56) covers Jesus' actions in Galilee. This subsection emphasizes the nature of Jesus' salvation and the required response of faith. In the center of this subsection is an episode that brings together a cluster of themes central to the saving rule of God in the ministry of Jesus (7:36–50): Jesus' association with sinners (cf. 7:34), an explanation for why "sinners" love Jesus, Jesus' authority to forgive sins, and the identity of Jesus. The first and last miracle in this subsection relate to officials asking Jesus to heal someone dear to them who is near death (7:2–3; 8:41–42). In both accounts a message is sent to Jesus while he is on his way, requesting that Jesus not trouble himself (7:6–8; 8:49). In both accounts, faith in Jesus' authority over death is highlighted (7:9; 8:50). In the first miracle Jesus heals someone near death, while in the last miracle he restores a dead child to life. Chapters 7 and 8 encourage faith in Jesus' power to save. The centurion's acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord, together with the following statements of his own unworthiness, his trust in the power of Jesus' word, and his recognition of Jesus' ultimate authority, all recall Peter's confession of sinfulness before Jesus as Lord (5:8).

The centurion doesn't want to trouble Jesus to come to his house. This is because of his confidence in the power of Jesus' word to heal from wherever Jesus is, not because he thinks it is too late to save his servant. All Jesus needs

9 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said,

**“I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.”**

10 Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the **servant** well.

### Jesus Raises a Widow’s Son

**11** Soon afterward, 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.

### Jesus and John, the Baptist

**18** John’s disciples told him about all these things.

Calling two of them,

19 he sent them to the Lord to ask, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”

20 When the men came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?’”

21 At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind.

22 So he replied to the messengers,

**“Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy[a] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are**

to do is “say the word” and the servant will be healed (7:7; cf. Ps 107:20). Jesus’ climactic statement is an emphatic endorsement of the uniqueness (“not . . . even in Israel”) and greatness (“such great faith”) of the centurion’s faith (Lk 7:9). The man exemplifies the appropriate response of faith: humility before the Lord and recognition of the Lord’s authority in the power of his word.

**7:11–17** The second miracle of this subsection (7:1—8:56) highlights Jesus’ mercy for the grieving as well as his power over death. The plight of the woman is underscored in that not only has she lost her only son but she is also a widow. The well-being of widows is often a concern in Luke–Acts (cf. Lk 18:2–5; 20:47; 21:2–3; Ac 6:1; 9:39–41). The emphasis in Luke 7:13 is on Jesus’ compassionate initiative. In keeping with the angelic announcement in Luke 2:11, Peter’s confession in Luke 5:8, the climactic conclusion to Jesus’ sermon in Luke 6:46, and the immediately preceding statement of the Lord’s authority by the centurion in Luke 7:6–8, Luke identifies Jesus as “the Lord” (v. 13). As surprising as it may be for Jesus to approach the bier with a dead man on it, the action of speaking to a dead body and commanding it surpasses anything up to this point! The crowd’s assertion that “a great prophet” is among them is true (cf. 4:24). However, Luke’s reference to Jesus as “the Lord” and the following discussion about even John being “more than a prophet” (7:26) indicate that the evaluation of the crowd is still inadequate.

**7:18–35** These verses explain Jesus’ saving rule with reference to John the Baptist. First, Jesus is defined in response to John’s expectations (vv. 18–23). We know from Luke 3:20 (the last episode involving John the Baptist), that John is in prison. It is from there that he sends his disciples with this question (7:19). In his parenthetical comment in Luke 7:21, Luke provides the setting for the following message so that these disciples both

**raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.**

**23 Blessed is anyone who does not stumble  
on account of me.”**

**24 After John’s messengers left, Jesus began to speak to  
the crowd about John:**

**“What did you go out into the wilderness to see?  
A reed swayed by the wind?**

**25 If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in  
fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and  
indulge in luxury are in palaces.**

**26 But what did you go out to see? A prophet?  
Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.**

**27 This is the one about whom it is written:**

**“I will send my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you.’**

**28 I tell you, among those born of women there is no one  
greater than John; yet the one who is least in the  
kingdom of God is greater than he.”**

**29 (All the people, even the tax collectors, when they  
heard Jesus’ words, acknowledged that God’s way was  
right, because they had been baptized by John.**

**30 But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected  
God’s purpose for themselves, because they had not been  
baptized by John.)**

**31 Jesus went on to say,**

**“To what, then, can I compare the people of this  
generation? What are they like?**

**32 They are like children sitting in the marketplace and  
calling out to each other:**

**“We played the pipe for you,  
and you did not dance;  
we sang a dirge,  
and you did not cry.’**

**33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor  
drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’**

**34 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you  
say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax  
collectors and sinners.’**

**35 But wisdom is proved right by all her children.”**

hear from Jesus and see what he is doing. Jesus is alluding to the hopes for the Messianic age found especially in Isaiah (Isa 19:18–19; 26:19; 29:18–19; 35:5–6; 61:1–2). In the second part of this section (Lk 7:24–28), John is defined in relation to the arrival of the kingdom through Jesus. John is neither someone who is easily swayed nor someone who is consumed with luxury. In contrast to these distractions, John is a prophet. In fact, John is more than just any prophet; he is the promised messenger of God. Jesus’ reference to Malachi 3:1 indicates that the messenger (Elijah = John) goes before Yahweh, and Jesus replaces the coming of Yahweh here (cf. Lk 1:17,76; 3:4; Mk 1:2). John is more than a prophet and greater than anyone else who has lived before him because all other prophets were only able to say that the promised salvation and Savior was coming in the future. John, however, uniquely points to Jesus himself and the arrival of the kingdom of God in Jesus. The significance of Jesus’ death and resurrection and inauguration of the new covenant, however, is that any believer this side of the cross is able to point to God’s saving plan in Jesus with even greater clarity than the greatest prophet, John the Baptist. In the third part of this section (Lk 7:29–35), John and Jesus are both defined in relation to reactions to God’s plan. This is the first use of the phrase “this generation” in Luke’s Gospel. It is consistently used to refer to those opposed to Jesus (9:41; 11:29–32,50–51; 17:25; 21:32). The reason why Jesus likens “this generation” to children in the marketplace who complain when their demands are not followed is because of their responses to John and Jesus. The apparent gloom of Luke 7:31–34, however, is not the whole story. The “children” of wisdom (v. 35) are those who respond to Jesus.

### Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman

**36** When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.

**37** A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume.

**38** As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

**39** When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

**40** Jesus answered him,  
**"Simon, I have something to tell you."**

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

**41** **"Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"**

**43** Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven."

**"You have judged correctly,"** Jesus said.

**44** Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon,

**"Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."**

**7:36–50** This account demonstrates Jesus' forgiveness of sins for those who receive him by faith. The scene is a meal at a Pharisee's house, and a woman who is well known for being sinful arrives at the dinner with a jar of expensive perfume. At this time, a person reclined while eating, lying on their side with the body extending away from the table. The woman in this story stands behind Jesus and at his feet. Thus, the woman's tears fall on Jesus' feet. The reason for the tears is explained later by Jesus himself. Ironically, while Simon the Pharisee is thinking to himself that if Jesus were really a prophet, he would know that a sinner is touching him, Jesus answers his thoughts by telling a story and asking him a question (vv. 41–42). In reply to Jesus' question about which one of the debtors would respond with greater love, Simon correctly acknowledges that it would be the one who had the bigger debt forgiven. Jesus then contrasts the three actions of the woman with Simon's inaction. Her actions, says Jesus, display her love for Jesus in response to the great forgiveness she has received. One needs to grasp the significance of sin in order to grasp the greatness of forgiveness.

Jesus repeats to the woman what he has already said to Simon about her (v. 48). Her forgiveness is now explicitly confirmed on the basis of Jesus' authority. Furthermore, Jesus' declaration to the woman reassures her in the face of Simon's hostility. The concluding statements by Jesus and the reaction of the other guests show again that Jesus surpasses the inadequate category of "prophet." The response of the other guests clarifies that Jesus' declarations about forgiveness are not merely statements about God forgiving the woman—Jesus is the one doing the forgiving. Finally, Jesus declares that the woman has been saved through faith (v. 50; cf. 8:48; 17:19; 18:42). The woman is a sinner who has been forgiven. Thus, being "saved" and "peace" point to wholeness and harmony

<p><b>48 Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”</b></p> <p><b>49 The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”</b></p> <p><b>50 Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”</b></p> <p><i>Footnotes</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Luke 7:22 The Greek word traditionally translated leprosy was used for various diseases affecting the skin.</i></p> <p><i>Luke 7:27 Mal. 3:1</i></p> <p><i>Luke 7:41 A denarius was the usual daily wage of a day laborer (see Matt. 20:2).</i></p>	<p>between the “sinner” and God because Jesus forgives sin.</p>
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### LUKE 7 - Bible Study Questions

1. How does the faith of the centurion challenge our understanding and expression of faith?
2. What can we learn from Jesus' act of raising the widow's son about His compassion and power?
3. How do we reconcile John the Baptist's doubts about Jesus being the Messiah with his role as the forerunner?
4. What lessons can we learn from the act of the sinful woman who anointed Jesus?
5. How does Jesus' reaction to the woman who anointed Him challenge the societal norms of His time and ours?
6. How can we apply the lesson of those who are forgiven much, love much, in our personal and communal life?
7. How does Jesus' affirmation of John the Baptist's role inform our understanding of His mission?
8. How does the healing of the centurion's servant challenge the ethnic and cultural barriers of the time and in our current world?
9. How can we cultivate a faith like the centurion in our daily lives?

- 10. How do we understand the concept of faith and healing as presented in this chapter?**
- 11. How does Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees challenge our attitudes towards self-righteousness?**
- 12. How do we respond when our expectations of God, like John's, are not met?**
- 13. In what ways do we experience Jesus' compassion in our lives today?**
- 14. How can we emulate the sinful woman's gratitude and love for Jesus in our lives?**
- 15. How can we apply Jesus' approach to the Pharisees and the sinful woman in our interaction with others?**
- 16. How does the resurrection of the widow's son affirm Jesus' power over death, and how does it relate to His resurrection?**
- 17. In what ways do we see Jesus challenging societal and religious norms in this chapter?**
- 18. How can we embrace and extend forgiveness as shown in the anointing story?**
- 19. How does the notion of great love resulting from great forgiveness impact our relationships?**
- 20. How do we maintain faith in the face of doubts, as shown in the case of John the Baptist?**