

➤ **Read Luke 7:1-17.**

➤ **Reread Luke 7:1-10.**

1. Jesus returns to Capernaum, the hometown of some of his disciples and his frequent base, after delivering his important sermon. As he returns to his local community, what problem is brought to his attention? (v. 2)

2. This centurion represents the occupying Roman force in Israel. What has he done to impress the local Jewish elders so that they plead to Jesus on his behalf? (v.4)

Roman Centurions

Roman centurions were esteemed not only because of the command they held over one hundred soldiers, but also because of their strong character. They had to meet elite qualifications and be men of fortitude and integrity. The unnamed centurion in this passage has impressed the military and political leaders of Rome enough to qualify for his rank.



Digging Deeper (for those who are interested)

Compare how the centurion's Jewish neighbors see him to how he sees himself. (vv. 4-7)

3. "The Romans were not known for displaying humility, especially before their Jewish subjects."¹ This centurion, however, is different. In what ways does he exhibit deep humility toward Jesus?

4. Though the centurion is desperate to get help for his highly valued servant, what option does he now propose? (vv. 6b-7)

5. Look again at verse 8. The centurion clearly understands authority. What kind of authority does he firmly believe Jesus has?

What kind of authority does Jesus truly have? (Mt. 28:18)

6. God's chosen people had the gift of the Law and the Prophets. This Gentile, who has had none of these benefits, nevertheless has great faith. We have the gift of the Word and the counsel of the Holy Spirit, yet we still sometimes struggle to trust in Jesus' authority. How does this man's story encourage you to trust Jesus' authority in your life and circumstances?

7. Turn to Luke 2:29-32. Reread the words Simeon spoke as he held the infant Jesus. What part of these prophetic words of praise are beginning to be realized in this passage?

► **Read Luke 7:11-17.**

8. As Jesus travels to the town of Nain, who is with him? (v.11)

9. Jesus and the large crowd meet another large crowd coming out of the town gates. As this crowd is a funeral procession, what does Luke note about the deceased and his mother? (v. 12)

10. How does God view widows? (Ps. 68:5; 146:9)

The Plight of Widows

Widows in the patriarchal culture of Ancient Israel were vulnerable both socially and economically. Widows were very unlikely to be able to find ways to provide for themselves and likely had no inheritance rights, other than maintaining the property passed down to their underage children. Though there were many Old Testament commands that family and community were to care for and protect widows, they were often completely dependent on the charity of others.²

11. Neither this widow nor her friends see Jesus, show their faith, or plead for her in her desperation. Yet how does he respond when he sees her? (v. 13)

Unclean

Under Levitical law, touching anything that had come into contact with bodily fluids, disease, an unclean person, or a dead body would lead to a person's being ceremonially unclean and involve a purification process in order to allow that person to worship in the synagogue and rejoin society at large.³

12. Jesus has already shown that he can heal the living with a word. He now speaks to the dead and performs the ultimate of miracles.

- a. Why do you think Jesus not only speaks to the deceased but also touches the bier (a stretcher for carrying a corpse) in front of these large crowds?

- b. After raising this young man, what does Jesus do? (v. 15)

13. Read 1 Kings 17:22–24. Jesus’ miracle would have reminded the Jewish crowds of this Old Testament story.

a. How does the widow respond to the miracle Elijah performs?

b. How do the crowds respond to the miracle Jesus performs? (v. 16)

14. What happens as a result of this miracle? (vv. 16–17)

15. In the miracles we have looked at this week, Jesus showed his heart for the Gentile outsider, the lowly servant, the widow, and the orphan. There are many verses in Scripture that call us to reflect his heart and care for the vulnerable. What do the following verses have to say about this?

Leviticus 19:33–34

Isaiah 1:17; James 1:27

Ask God to bring to mind someone you can show his love to this week.

16. Some of us are looked down upon or outsiders, widows or orphans. Though this may be true of us, Jesus shows that he sees and cares deeply for our good. Pray for the faith to believe that Jesus will provide for all our needs.

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe. *An Exposition on the New Testament Comprising the Entire “BE” Series: The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton: SP Publications, Inc., 1989), 195.

² Sources:

Frank E. Gaebelein, Gen. Ed. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with the New International Version of the Holy Bible in Twelve Volumes*. Vol. 8 (Matthew, Mark, Luke) (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 899.

Leon Morris. *The Gospel According to St. Luke: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 139.

³ Morris, 140.