

The Life and Ministry of Christ, Part 12

After the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus came down from the mountain and great multitudes of people followed Him.

Luke 7:1 AMP AFTER JESUS had finished all that He had to say in the hearing of the people [on the mountain], He entered Capernaum.

In Capernaum – Matthew 8:5; Luke 7:1

After His rejection by the people of Nazareth, Jesus adopted Capernaum, a city of Galilee.

Capernaum was the hometown of Simon Peter and headquarters for much of Jesus' ministry. It was in the territory of Herod Antipas and as an economic center and custom's station it had a tax



collector's office (Matthew 9:9) and a large number of Roman soldiers based there (Matthew 8:5-6). It was located on the northern-most part of the sea of Galilee on a major road from Egypt to Damascus that was called the way of the sea. Since Capernaum was the largest city and port on the north part of the Sea of Galilee, it was a place of much trade. It had a synagogue where Jesus frequently taught, performed miracles and was confronted by Scribes, Pharisees, and legalists. The centurion's paralyzed servant (Matthew 8:5-13), a paralytic carried by four friends (Mark 2:1-12), Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-31), and the nobleman's son (John 4:46-54) were all healed in Capernaum.

Centurion's Servant Healed - Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:2-10

Matthew 8:5-6 NKJV Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, ⁶saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

The centurion was a commander of 100 men in the Roman army. The Roman centurion was the highest ranking commander that had extensive authority and direct contact with the men. This is one of two centurions that had direct contact with Christ. The other was in charge of Jesus' execution. Notice the centurion's faith and recognition of the Lord's authority after Jesus said He would come and heal his servant.

Matthew 8:8–9 NKJV The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.

Matthew 8:9 NKJV For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

Matthew 8:10 NKJV When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!

Jesus reached beyond the borders of race and culture to minister to a Gentile that was considered to be an alien, enemy and spiritually lost. When the centurion came, he acknowledged Jesus as Lord and knew and confessed that He was able to heal his servant. Jesus’ response to this man’s faith gives hope to anyone who truly trusts and believes. The depth of the centurion’s faith is indicated when he said, “*Speak a word, and my servant will be healed.*” Only two times did Jesus marvel at people. The first was when the people at Nazareth did not believe and now when the centurion expressed such great faith.

Matthew 8:13 NKJV Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.” And his servant was healed that same hour.

Luke 7:10 NKJV And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick.

Even from a distance, the man who had been sick was healed.

Widow’s Son Is Raised - Luke 7:11-16

Luke 7:11 NKJV Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd.

Luke 7:12 NKJV And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her.

Pay attention to the way Jesus responded to the woman’s grief.

Luke 7:13 NKJV When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.”

Notice the scene. There was a large crowd following Jesus and also a large crowd from the city was with the mother of the dead son. In the mingling of the crowds, Jesus saw the woman and had compassion on her. The word for compassion means to be stirred deeply with sympathetic pity. Compassion is a deep moving in one’s whole inner

being. In Philippians 2:1 KJV the same root word is used and is interpreted “if any bowels and mercies.” The “bowels of compassion” indicates the stirring of the seat of one’s emotion, love and pity. At the sight of death and grief, Jesus was filled with great affection and compassion. Leviticus 21:11-12 said anyone coming near a dead body would be made unclean, but Jesus interrupted death and came and touched the open coffin.

Luke 7:14–15 NKJV Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

Jesus’ actions show that He was greater than death, disease, and traditional beliefs. For some of the Jews, death was final. Jesus possessed the right, power and authority to override religious beliefs, the laws of nature and even death. Not too far from this location was where Elijah raised the widow’s son from the dead, (1 Kings 17). Elijah agonized and cried out in prayer for the LORD to let the child’s soul come back to him,” (vs. 21).

Jesus said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. Two other times Jesus raised the dead by the power of His word, (Luke 8:41-56 — twelve year old girl, and John 11 — Lazarus). In these two miraculous events, we see the power of Jesus’ word.

Luke 7:16 NKJV Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has risen up among us”; and, “God has visited His people.”

The word fear (phobos — φόβος) means “to be put in fear.” The multitudes recognized that there was something special and powerful about Jesus. They said, “A great prophet has risen up among us”; and “God has visited His people.”

Luke 7:17 NKJV And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

During this year of Christ’s popularity, He did these miracles, signs, and wonders in public. Everyone was hearing what He was doing.

John the Baptist’s Delegation - Matthew 11:2-6; Luke 7:18-23

Matthew 11:2–3 NKJV And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”

John had been in prison since Jesus began His public ministry. Even in prison, John heard about Jesus' works. John wanted to know the certainty of the fact that Jesus is the Messiah. Remember when John was baptizing in the Jordan, Jesus came to him and John said: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:2). "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained on Him." (John 1:31) John had been "baptizing with water, but the One Who was to come would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire," (John 1:33). He testified, "I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." (John 1:34) John was anticipating a Messiah who would mobilize people into a great army, but Jesus was showing compassion. Now while facing impending death he needed assurance, so John asked, *"Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"*

Here is Jesus' testimony to John.

Matthew 11:4–6 NKJV Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

This was exactly what Jesus said He came to do. Jesus wanted John's disciples to bear witness to what they saw and heard. Their personal testimony of Jesus offered irrefutable evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. Why did Jesus say: "Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me?" Although the prophecy of Jesus becoming King of kings and Lord of lords and setting up His earthly kingdom had not been fulfilled, He demonstrated the power and works of the Messiah. There are several prophecies about Christ that are yet to be fulfilled in the last days. Jesus Christ's miracles are proofs that He is the Messiah, the Son of God.

His works are beyond doubt the works of God.

Jesus Commends John the Baptist - Matthew 11:7-19; Luke 7:24-28

John was facing severe testing in prison. He had wonderful revelations about Jesus and saw the Holy Spirit descend on Him in the form of a dove. He heard a voice from heaven saying: "This is My beloved Son." He had blazed the path for the Messiah. Now, John wanted to know "Are you the One?" Everything John said pointed toward Jesus Christ the Messiah. After John's disciples departed, Jesus began speaking about John.

Luke 7:27–28 ESV This is he of whom it is written, “ ‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’ ²⁸I 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.”

John the Baptist was God’s appointed man to go before Jesus the Messiah. Remember before he was born, John and his mother Elizabeth were filled with the Holy Spirit, (Luke 1:15, 40-41). Jesus said “among those born of women none is greater than John.” Then Jesus made a casual statement that is very significant.

Luke 7:28 NKJV 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.”

John the Baptist was of the old order of prophets. The Messiah and His kingdom offer a far greater ministry of righteousness than John’s ministry. Jesus ushered in a new dispensation for Christian living. John baptized with water, Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Anyone who has experienced the spiritual privileges and advantages that are in Christ are greater than what John the Baptist had. The person who is least in Christ’s kingdom has remarkable potentials and responsibilities that were not available for Old Testament saints. What makes the people of the kingdom of God so different? They have a baptism that is with the Holy Spirit and with fire. What John offered was an external cleansing and washing. Jesus offers new life and cleansing by the Holy Spirit and fire.

After Jesus had commended John the Baptist, there was a division among the people.

When all of the people heard Jesus, even the tax collectors agreed and declared the righteousness of God, for they had been baptized by John. The Pharisees and experts in religious law rejected God’s will and plan for them, for they had refused John’s baptism. (Luke 7:29-30)

Luke 7:31–32 NLT “To what can I compare the people of this generation?” Jesus asked. “How can I describe them? They are like children playing a game in the public square. They complain to their friends, ‘We played wedding songs, and you didn’t dance, so we played funeral songs, and you didn’t weep.’”

Jesus compared the self-righteous people who rejected Him and John with spoiled children who are pleased with nothing. Whatever one child wants to play, the other child wants to play the opposite. John was too

strict and Jesus was too friendly.

Rejection of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum - Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 10:12-15

Once again, Jesus did many miracles in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. These three cities are within 4 miles of one another. Jesus was saying *“to whom much is given, much is required.”* Many mighty works were done in Chorazin and Bethsaida and Jesus said: *“Tyre and Sidon would have repented.”* The Lord exalted Capernaum by making it His headquarters and Jesus said, “Sodom would have remained if the mighty works which they experienced in Capernaum would have been done there.” If God blesses us, much will be required of us. Consider all of the signs, wonders, healings and miracles that we have witnessed. A day of great judgment is coming!

What lessons can we learn from this study?

How can we apply them to our lives?