

Chris Murphy

August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025

Luke 7: 1-17

Sermon Title: Healing and Mission

Scripture Text:

Luke 7:1-17

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Slave

7 After Jesus[a] had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. 2 A centurion there had a slave whom he valued highly and who was ill and close to death. 3 When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, asking him to come and heal his slave. 4 When they came to Jesus, they appealed to him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, 5 for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us." 6 And Jesus went with them, but when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to say to him, "Lord,

do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; 7 therefore I did not presume to come to you. But only speak the word, and let my servant be healed. 8 For I also am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me, and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." 9 When Jesus heard this he was amazed at him, and, turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." 10 When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

### Jesus Raises the Widow's Son at Nain

11 Soon afterward[b] he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. 12 As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow, and with her was a

large crowd from the town. 13 When the Lord saw her, he was moved with compassion for her and said to her, “Do not cry.” 14 Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stopped. And he said, “Young man, I say to you, rise!” 15 The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus[c] gave him to his mother. 16 Fear seized all of them, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has risen among us!” and “God has visited his people!” 17 This word about him spread throughout the whole of Judea and all the surrounding region.

Prayer...

Introduction:

I am grateful that Brian and Julie are here this morning to share about their mission work as Bible translators. How wonderful that our church has partnered with them for many years. Together we

help spread the Gospel in many nations that might not otherwise learn about our Lord Jesus.

Whenever I think of the importance of Bible translation, I consider what it would be like if I had never had the opportunity to read the Bible. Since I grew up in the church, officially accepted Christ at six, became a member of a church at 13, then felt called to ministry at 19, and now have served in some form of ministry work for over 30 years, I have no real reference for living on this earth without the reality of living as a Christian and knowing God's Word.

Do you remember when you received your first Bible? My first Bible was a fairly small black leather Bible that my mom gave me to read. I think it was a King James version of the Bible that she read as a child. Eventually I read a Children's Bible and later got a burgundy Revised Standard Version Bible that I marked up with highlighter. At 13 I started to read a chapter of the Bible every night and I kept that up for many years. With the help of Young Life, my faith grew

significantly in high school and by college, I was able to start taking more academic classes on Scripture. Eventually I went to seminary to study Scripture and theology even more. I am so grateful for all the ways that God has become real to me through Scripture. I am so thankful for Brian and Julie and others who make sure the translated Scripture is available in the native language of many nations.

This morning is our last sermon for the summer series on Holy Spirit Healing stories. Today we remember how two miracles of healing led to a greater fulfillment of Christ's mission work. Like the impact of Scripture on missions, Jesus' healing ministry had a huge impact on spreading the Gospel of God's grace and love.

The first story we read today is of the healing of the servant of a Roman centurion. Apparently this Roman centurion has heard of the ministry of Jesus and has faith that Jesus is a healer. He asks some Jewish leaders to request that Jesus heal his servant who is very ill. As Jesus is on the way to heal the servant, the Centurion sends out

messengers to tell Jesus to go ahead and heal his servant even without coming into his home. The Centurion understands Jesus' authority like few people, since he too commands people to do things in his role as a soldier. Jesus is impressed with the Centurion and heals the slave without going further. It is a story of faith and reminds us that Jesus has authority to bring healing wherever he goes. I like how this story shows both the humility of the Centurion and his faith in Jesus. The Centurion must be aware of his own sin as one who is part of the oppression of the Jewish community. He seems to use his influence in positive ways like helping to build the Jewish synagogue. I appreciate that the Centurion understands that Jesus has authority and shows faith in Jesus' power to heal.

Don't you wonder what happens to the Centurion and his servant after the healing? Since they are mentioned in the Gospel of Luke, I imagine that both of these people become followers of Jesus.

For me this story shows that a miracle of the healing of this slave helped spread the Gospel to the Gentiles and the Jews. It reminds me that Jesus came to spread his love to all people and all nations.

The second story this morning is the healing by resurrection of a young man who had died. Jesus has great compassion for his mother who is a widow. Out of love for both the mother and her son, he heals the young man. He wipes away the tears of the mother by healing her son.

The response of the crowd is amazement. They realize that Jesus is a great prophet and they follow him with great joy.

This profound story of compassion and love also reminds us of the power of miracles within the life of Jesus and how his miracles were significant in fulfilling his mission of bringing salvation and healing to the world.

Friends, this last week continued to awaken us to the sorrow in our world. The shooting at Annunciation Catholic School in Minnesota

broke our hearts and we continue to pray for the families impacted, especially the families of those two children who were killed. We grieve how mental illness must have impacted the shooter and also led to his actions and his suicide. This tragedy like so many tragedies we encounter in our world are so hard to fathom and causes us to weep and cry out for change in so many ways. We know that as a society we need to continue to address the problem of gun violence and the struggle of mental illness.

Beyond this tragedy, we know fighting continues in places like Kiev in Ukraine. Immigrants are being detained and deported in our country and other places. Children are dying of hunger in Gaza. Violence is in many places, such as the South Sudan. What do we do?

Friends, like the widow in the story and the humble Centurion seeking help for his servant, we cry out for Jesus to come and bring healing. We wonder how Jesus might make a difference. And yet our life bears witness to the fact that Jesus is able to bring great comfort

in times of suffering and also at times miracles of healing can take place.

Although Jesus did do miracles and still through the Holy Spirit does miracles today, we often are left with questions at why our world continues to be so vulnerable to evil and suffering. Even though Jesus did miracles like the ones we read about today, remember that his community in Galilee continued to be under Roman oppression. Jesus himself was crucified. The early church faced persecution and many were martyred for their faith. The miracles of Jesus were amazing and are amazing today, but our world continues to face great obstacles. Miracles are signs of the kingdom that keep us hopeful as we do the sometimes difficult and disciplined work of mission for Christ's kingdom. We continue to spread the Gospel of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit to all nations and we remember that God loves the world and sent his son to bring healing and wholeness to all people and all creation.

This morning I want to pray for the mission of Christ in our world. I want to give thanks for all those who serve as mission partners in our church and in other places who faithfully share God's word in the midst of the suffering that exists in our world. May we continue to have hope in the healing power of the Holy Spirit and we pray for our world.

Before I pray, I want to share some wisdom from Pope Leo IV, the current Catholic Pope.

He recently shared,

Like Augustine we come together with our moments of anxiety, darkness, and doubt, and just like Augustine through God's grace we can discover that God's love is truly healing. Let us strive to build a community where that love is made visible. May we continue to strengthen our common mission as Church and community to promote peace, live in hope, and mirror God's love and light in the

world. It is in our unity in Christ and communion with one another that the light will grow together and brighter in our world.

Prayer....