

Wonderful Salvation in the Gospel of Luke

After He completed all His words in the hearing of the people, He entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's slave, who was highly valued by him, was ill and about to die. And when he heard about Jesus, he sent to Him some elders of the Jews, requesting that He would come and completely heal his slave. And when they came to Jesus, they entreated Him earnestly, saying, he is worthy of Your granting this to him, for he loves our nation, and he himself built the synagogue for us. And Jesus went with them. But already, when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not fit for You to enter under my roof; Therefore, I did not count even myself worthy to come to You. But speak a word, and let my servant be healed. For I also am a man set 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 slave, Do this, and he does it. And when Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turning to the crowd following Him, He said, I say to you, Not even in Israel have I found such great faith. And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health. And soon afterward He went into a city called Nain, and His disciples went with Him, as well as a large crowd. And as He came near the gate of the city, behold, one who had died was being carried out, an only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a considerable crowd from the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, He was moved with compassion for her and said to her, Do not weep. And He came near and touched the bier, and those carrying it stood still. And He said, Young man, to you I say, Arise. And the dead man sat up and began to speak. And He gave him to his mother. And fear took hold of all, and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet has been raised up among us, and, God has visited His people! And this report concerning Him went out in the whole of Judea and in all the surrounding region (Luke 7:1-17).

GOD'S WAY IN REACHING SINNERS

1. By His Divine Authority

In Luke 7:1-10 we see authority and the word of authority. The centurion seemed to be saying to the Savior, "Lord, I am not worthy to come to see You or for You to come to my house. Yet I know what authority is. I am under the authority of others, and others are under my authority. All I need to do is speak a word to one of the soldiers, and he does what I say. I know, Lord, that You are the authority in this universe."

How did this Roman centurion, a Gentile, come to know the Lord's authority? He loved the Jewish nation and built a synagogue for the Jews. From this we see that probably he had some knowledge of the Old Testament. Furthermore, he referred to the Savior as Lord. Hence, he realized that the Savior was the One who has the genuine authority.

2. By Faith in His Word

This centurion represents the believing Gentiles, who are saved through faith in the Lord's word (v. 7). The Lord Jesus marveled at the centurion's faith: "And hearing these things, Jesus marveled at him, and turning to the crowd following Him, He said, I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." The Gentile centurion recognized the authority of the Savior and realized that His word was a word with healing authority. Thus, he believed not only in the Savior, but also in His word. He asked the Lord not to come personally, but only to send His word. Today faith still comes to us through the hearing of the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17).

3. By His Seeking to Save the Lost

This account indicates the unique commission of the Savior, coming to save lost sinners (19:10). He does not expect fallen man to come up to Him, but He has come to seek and to save that which is lost. He left the Father's throne above and emptied Himself of all but love.

4. By the Savior's Compassion

This next case was unique in its misery—the only son of a widow was being carried in the coffin. The Savior's compassion was also unique in His loving sympathy. He volunteered, in His tender mercy, His power of resurrection to raise the widow's son from death, without being asked to do so.

Although compassion is close to mercy, compassion is deeper, finer, and richer than mercy. Compassion involves a deeply affectionate feeling. Compassion refers to the inward feeling that resides in the one who looks upon wretchedness. This affection originates in Christ's loving essence.

5. By His resurrection Power

Here we see the Savior's compassion in speaking to the widow and in touching the coffin. When He touched the coffin, those who were carrying it stood still. Then the Lord commanded the dead son of the widow to arise. He was not asked to do these things. But seeing the situation, He initiated the action that caused the dead son to be raised up. Praise the loving Savior who came to give life to the dead! Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10)."

(Adapted from the Life-Study of Luke.)