

Luke 7.11-35

The Good News: New and Good!

Glad you are HERE, Perhaps it was STRUGGLE to Come to BICF this Morning
 Physical Struggle > Little SLEEP! For some SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE > DOUBTS
 Disappointed w/ God > He LET YOU DOWN > Did not Fulfill EXPECTATIONS
 Financial Crisis? Prayers Not Answered? Healing Never Came? Family Troubles?
 Spiritual ATTACK? BORED? TIRED? SICK? MIND in WRONG PLACES?
 FEELINGS? Good COMPANY// Most IMPRESSIVE Believer so Far in Luke
 Filled w/ SPIRIT of God from Womb – Fearless Preacher, even to KING Herod

John the BAPTIZER's life based on BEDROCK of his FAITH in GOD

NOW this Spiritual GIANT – Valley of DESPAIR, Trapped DOUBTING CASTLE

1. Doubts about the Lord

Gospel of Luke > HONEST Account of Life of Jesus > CONVINCED the Reader
 Confronts with FACTS presented FAIRLY & FULLY > Make Informed Decision

...it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent
 Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Luke 1.3,4

1st Reader > Theophilus > SEEKER – Luke gives MEATY BONE to Chew On
 Historically Accurate, Best Literary Style any NT Writer – Full-Orbed Presentation

2 Inspired Volumes – Gospel: Jesus on Earth / Acts: Jesus in Heaven

a. Expectations

Last MENTION of John: 3.20 > Herod LOCKED John up in PRISON / STILL In?
 John PREACHED Greater One, Stronger One was COMING > Not Clear WHO?
 vs. 18-19 John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, he
 sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we
 expect someone else?"

Very SPECIFIC Question > NOT “Are you SENT from God?” Of Course he WAS EXACTLY > Are you the MESSIAH? – Expected, Anticipated, ANOINTED ONE

In LUKE this is FIRST CONVERSATION between John & Jesus > INDIRECT
John PROMISED Messiah / CONVINCED > NEVER Says JESUS is the ONE!

Luke tells us JOHN IN PRISON BEFORE tells us John Baptized Jesus
BAPTISM Narrative – No Dialogue with John – John NOT MENTIONED w/ Jesus

Jesus NOT the AGENT of God John was EXPECTING > Crowds said PROPHET

John not going to BANK his FUTURE on POPULAR PERCEPTIONS

John – HONEST Question: Where is JUDGMENT God told him was COMING?

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?...The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."
Luke 3.7,9

v. 20 When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, `Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?'"

Jesus NOT ANGRY or DISAPPOINTED or OFFENDED by John’s QUESTION
PSALMS – God INVITES our LAMENTS, COMPLAINTS, QUESTIONS

God invites us TRY & HIT Him with our BEST PUNCH

b. Explanation

vs. 21,22 At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. 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 are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

Jesus REPLY seems OBSCURE > REVIEW of Scope of Jesus' MINISTRY
 PITHY Phrases – Quotes from Prophet Isaiah – Context: MESSIANIC Kingdom

Following his MANIFESTO: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."
 Luke 4.18,19

...flipped through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, there He was, hanging out with someone else with a handicap – hob-knobbing with people with disabilities, reserving his most gentle touch for the blind and counseling the fathers of little boys with seizures. He seemed to go out of His way to strike up conversations with guys who were paralyzed on straw mats by the pool of Bethesda. Since Jesus was not caught up with his own concerns, he was able to fully and selflessly enter into someone else's sufferings.
 Joni Eareckson Tada

v. 23 Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.

If you're in PRISON – DOUBTING & SUFFERING – Might want MORE!

BLESSED if you are NOT OFFENDED by JESUS

Setbacks & Questions can RAISE DOUBTS & Questions to Certainties of Faith
 God Never PROMISED EXPLANATION to all our Questions > Trust & OBEY

Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you." Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
 Isaiah 35.3-5

John > IMPRISONED in DOUBTING CASTLE should be ENCOURAGED

His MINISTRY being FULFILLED, NOT BETRAYED by One who Comes After
 Jesus ASSURES him the KINGDOM has Come / Jesus the KING is Here

c. Evidence

Luke has set forth PROGRESSION of MIRACLES > Picture into Sharper FOCUS from Ch 4 > See CLEARLY – Who is Jesus, and What had he COME to DO? HEALS Ma-in-Law / Cast out EVIL SPIRITS / Cleansed LEPERS / LAME Walk
Now RESUSCITATION of a DEAD MAN

v. 11 Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him.

Modern NEIN 10 kms South-East NAZARETH / Day's Journey from Capernaum

v. 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.

VIVID Scene: CROWD with Jesus CONFRONTS PROCESSION of MOURNERS

MOTHER would have WALKED in FRONT of Funeral Stretcher/Bier
 LARGE Procession: TRAGEDY touched Many Hearts – No Provider, No Protector
 WOMAN left with BLEAK, DIFFICULT Future > ONLY Son Died THAT DAY
 DECAYING Body lain on BOARD, WRAPPED in Cloth, NOT Closed COFFIN

v. 13 When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry."
 HEART > 'Earthy' word: Jesus GUTS went out to her > BOWELS of MERCY!
 Compassion > Feeling YOUR PAIN in MY HEART

Pagan gods of Greece & Rome INDULGED their VICES SELFISHLY

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows... Isaiah 53.4

True & Living God reaches His HURTING Creation with LOVING KINDNESS

v. 14 Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!"

Jesus NOT INVITED to INTERVENE > NO Faith-Response Possible from Son
 Jesus acts here by SOVEREIGN GRACE > REVERSAL of DEATH
 TOUCHING Dead Body > CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN – No Matter to Jesus

PAUL BRAND – LEPROSY Specialist – Great Advances & Understanding
 Came to CHINA 1980's > THEN Very BASIC Care > BASED Mostly on FEAR
 TAUGHT Chinese Doctors > Latest IDEAS about LEPROSY – INTERESTING
 What GOT MOST Attention > Dr. Brand TOUCHED Lepers - COMPASSION

1st Time in Luke > Jesus called LORD > Lord over DEATH Itself
 Dramatic CONFRONTATION – Divine AUTHORITY over Death
 Two CROWDS – Joyful Followers of Jesus / Sad, Grieving Mourners MET There
 Lord drew FIRM LINE > DEATH you have come THIS FAR, but NO FURTHER

Who is like the LORD our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of their people. He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the LORD. Psalm 113.5-9

v. 15 The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

CRITICS – Then & Now – REALLY DEAD? SLEEPING? Was this TRUE?

DR. LUKE says Young Man was DEAD > **“Dead Man SAT UP and TALKED”**

Every Biblical MIRACLE of Healing was SPONTANEOUS, UNSCHEDULED
 Never FIXED a DATE or LOCATION to have HEALING SERVICE
 Schedule TODAY? Schedule HOLY SPIRIT right OUT of the PROGRAM
 Never Schedule HEALING Service in HOSPITAL Wards > NO OFFERINGS!

If he were dead, he could not sit up. If he could sit up, he was not dead. What nonsense. Unless we are prepared to abandon an idea that is second nature to us – to say that with Christ death is neither an unstoppable force nor an immovable object.

Reginald Quirk

2. Day of the Lord

v. 20 `Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?'

It was all right his going about healing an odd slave here and raising a widow's son from the dead there – John had nothing against that. But what about the big issues? When was Jesus going to start putting oppressive governments right? Abolishing evil rulers like Herod? Putting down the Roman tyranny and giving Israel her political independence? ...when was Jesus going to get his prophet out of prison?

David Gooding

Jesus was not the Messiah John Expected

a. The Greatest

v. 24 After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind?"

Jesus EULOGIZED John UNASHAMEDLY > Greatest of Prophets/Men
 STERN, STRONG, FIRM Not Moved by CIRCUMSTANCES – Mighty OAK
 PROBLEM is NOT PRISON > Luke never says JOHN is IN PRISON

v. 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.

Did you go into Wilderness to see FASHION SHOW?

John Not PANSY or PANTY-WAIST who cannot ENDURE TROUBLES

Lived HARD Life in ROUGH PLACES on SIMPLEST of Fare

...the tenacity of John's faith. He is not asking, Are you the Messiah or should we give up? Rather, he is saying, God has promised one to come whose ministry will be marked by the Holy Spirit and fire. We have confidence in that promise, and if you are not the one, we will keep looking. Fred Craddock

vs. 26,27 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you."

GREATEST of All OLD Covenant Prophets > FORERUNNER of Messiah

"See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me." Malachi 3.1

v. 28 I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John...

GREAT Not in PERSONAL Identity > PRIVILEGE & POSITION as Prophet

John SAW and even BAPTIZED the LONG EXPECTED One – MESSIAH

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things. 1 Peter 1.10-12

John was GREAT in Terms of OPPORTUNITY – No Other OT Prophet Saw Him
Same use of word GREATER by Jesus – I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. *He will do even greater things than these,* because I am going to the Father. John 14.12

No one can do GREATER QUALITY Work than Jesus > Sinless, Fully Obedient Church does Greater work NOT in QUALITY but in QUANTITY – Go FURTHER Jesus lived and died in 300 km Radius > We take His Message to ENDS of Earth

b. The Least

v. 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.*"

v. 26 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you...

As PROPHET he has LIMITED Viewpoint of OLD COVENANT

OT Understanding _____ X _____

"Day of the Lord"

Day of Lord – ONE FINAL Day – Blessing on Faithful / Judgment on Enemies

John: "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Luke 3.16,17

John belongs to OLD, PASSING Order: Jewish Types, Promises, Ceremonies

Romantic Notion > Live in Time of Abraham, Moses, David, Prophets
ALL of them WISH they could be YOU > Because of all YOU KNOW in Christ Jesus brings NEW Order of Kingdom of Salvation

"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it." Luke 16.16

John > TIME of PROMISE // Jesus > TIME of FULFILLMENT

Strange MOST RELIGIOUS were MOST RESISTANT / PAGANS Praised Jesus!

LAWYERS concerned with LAW of God, NOT the WILL of God

Sacred things may become profane by becoming matters of the job. C.S. Lewis

Diff. not btwn Jesus & John SAME SIDE / Diff. btwn Receiving & Rejecting

The closed mind leads to mistake on mistake.

Leon Morris

vs. 31,32 "To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other: "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not cry."

Jesus was KEEN OBSERVER of Life and People > Miserable CHILDREN

Kids play GAMES of Rituals they SAW on Streets – Weddings & Funerals

PARABLE of the BRATS > SPOILED Children > 2 Bickering GROUPS

NOTHING can make them HAPPY – POUTING over their Many PRIVILEGES

Even GOOD Kids have BAD Days – NOTHING is RIGHT

NO Game is FUN – No Food tastes GOOD – NO BOOK Interesting

Jesus talking to SPOILED ADULTS – have NO CHILDISH EXCUSES

Unreasonableness of People > Reject Jesus & John for OPPOSITE REASONS

Picture of OBTUSENESS of RELIGIOUS Leaders > Nothing PLEASES Them

vs. 33,34 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' 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."'

JOHN refused to play WEDDINGS / JESUS refused to play FUNERALS

JOHN was TOO GLOOMY / JESUS was TOO GIDDY

JOHN was DEMONIC / JESUS hung out with DRUNKARDS

JOHN FASTED Too Much / JESUS FEASTED Too Much

JOHN was too EXCLUSIVE / JESUS was too INCLUSIVE

JOHN's Message Too UNCOMFORTABLE / Jesus' Too COMPROMISING

The news of the kingdom is always new, unexpected, upsetting. It will not fit into men's preconceived ideas, nor pander to their prejudices. It digs far deeper than their shallow understanding of the evils of Satan's kingdom, and soars far higher than their low view of the glories of God's kingdom. Michael Wilcock

b. Supper

vs. 33,34 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking...The Son of Man came eating and drinking...

STRANGE Criteria Evaluate RELIGIOUS Character > EATING HABITS

CENTRAL Importance of TABLE CULTURE for 1st C PALESTINIAN JEWS

Luke 5 > Jesus CRITICIZED Severely for EATING Tax Collector Matt's House

Today NEVER Measure POLITICAL Candidate or PASTORAL Cand by Eating

TABLE Fellowship and SABBATH – Last Vestiges of Culture in Changing Society

Luke 7.36 > TABLE Fellowship issue CONSIDERED Again – Simon's House

Luke moves from PRINCIPLE to PARTICULAR EXAMPLE

Jewish critics of Peter: "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and *ate with them.*" Acts 11.3

Next Time you PREACH to SINNERS > PACK your own LUNCH!

Religious Criticized Jesus – Friend of Sinners – They're Not Sinners

So Jesus was NO FRIEND of THEIRS

c. Saved

CROWDS IN NAIN > vs. 16 They were all filled with awe and praised God... This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

Even if YOU are NOT RELIGIOUS > You still must RECKON with Jesus INFLUENCE on HISTORY > SOCIAL Impact of those who Claim to Follow Him
 Wed met Religious Official Chinese Gov't – Xtianity FASTEST Growing in China
 CROWD expressed OPINION of Him, So must YOU – NOW – No NEUTRALITY
 IF – as He Claims – He is God & Lord – You must deal with HIM at End of Life
 v. 16 "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people."

Great Prophet > INADEQUATE Christology – but HIGHEST Praise of Villagers
 REMINDED them of Elijah & Elisha who ALSO Raised the DEAD
 ELIJAH > LAY atop CORPSE and PLEAD WITH GOD for his LIFE
 ELISHA > LAY his STAFF across the DEAD BOY from SHUNEM
 JESUS – Simply SPOKE to the CORPSE > COMMANDED Death to LEAVE
 Jesus is CENTRAL ISSUE of LUKE > Very REASON he Wrote this BOOK
 Angel Gabriel: "He will be great..." Luke 1.32

v. 35 "But wisdom is proved right by all her children."

Truly Wise will proceed RIGHT Way – God's PERSPECTIVE – Life & Eternity

Wise NOT walk in CRITICAL Way that can NEVER be PLEASED

John had DECIDE SAME Way we DECIDE, Respond to Testimony of OTHERS

DIFFERENT STYLES – John & Jesus – Same GOAL: Bring Sinners to GOD
 Important THING about Ministry > NOT its STYLE but its SUBSTANCE

Sometimes God is doing something powerful, but we miss it because of our expectations of what he should do...when he does not, we think he has failed.

Darrell Bock

Warning to John and US – Do Not STUMBLE over Jesus – No Other Savior

"See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." Romans 9.33

DEAD made ALIVE > FEAR of God on All – HOLY Awe before God's POWER
 Been 1000 yrs since Such MIRACLE in ISRAEL > God VISITED His PEOPLE
 We have GREATER Reason to Fear and Praise Him > More Significant Visitation
 Came to Cross > Life not just for ONE but ALL who Know Him
 Visited with SHALOM > as RISEN One who CALMS our All our FEARS
 Visiting NOW by HIS SPIRIT – Gathered in His NAME – Worship and FOLLOW

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 coffin, and those carrying it 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.

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 was 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 was 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 are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

23. Blessed is the man who does not fall away 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 desert 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 experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)

31. "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 flute 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."