

**Sun., Feb. 27**

Memory Verse: "Awestruck, everyone praised God. 'A great prophet has appeared among us,' they said. "God has come to help His people.'" -Luke 7:16

Reading of Scripture: Luke 7:1-10

Message: "Miracle: Power over Death"

Text: Luke 7:9 "When Jesus heard these words, He was impressed with the centurion. He turned to the crowd following Him and said, 'I tell you, even in Israel I haven't found faith like this.'"

Scripture: Luke 7: 11-17

Blurb: This Sunday we begin our new series: Miracle (Luke 7-9). Jesus is a wildly popular teacher and healer. But this Sunday, we are shocked when Jesus takes things to a whole new level! This Jesus is more than we thought! He is Himself God. And when we see Him extend His hand this Sunday, we are moved to truly become one of His!

***[Recorded Worship Beginning]***

**WELCOME** -Pastor Andrew

**MEMORY VERSE** -Pastor Andrew

"Awestruck, everyone praised God. 'A great prophet has appeared among us,' they said. "God has come to help His people.'" -Luke 7:16

**WORSHIP MUSIC SET** -Pastor Andrew

*Death Was Arrested*

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

***[Live Worship Beginning]***

**GATHERING SONG:** *O Taste and See* -Sanctify

**WELCOME** -Pastor David

**MEMORY VERSE** -Pastor David

"Awestruck, everyone praised God. 'A great prophet has appeared among us,' they said. "God has come to help His people.'" -Luke 7:16

**WORSHIP MUSIC SET** -Sanctify

*God of Creation*

*In Tenderness*

*In Christ Alone*

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

**[Both Recorded & Live Worship]**

**READING OF SCRIPTURE: Luke 7:1-10**

Jesus has been out in the region connecting with His fellow Jews. But when He comes back to His town, He connects with a Gentile. Listen for where Jesus says He finds the greatest faith. Luke 7:1-10,

“1 After Jesus finished presenting all His words among the people, He entered Capernaum. 2 A centurion had a servant who was very important to him, but the servant was ill and about to die. 3 When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to Jesus to ask Him to come and heal his servant. 4 When they came to Jesus, they earnestly pleaded with Jesus. ‘He deserves to have you do this for him,’ they said. 5 ‘He loves our people and he built our synagogue for us.’

“6 Jesus went with them. He had almost reached the house when the centurion sent friends to say to Jesus, ‘Lord, don’t be bothered. I don’t deserve to have you come under my roof. 7 In fact, I didn’t even consider myself worthy to come to you. Just say the word and my servant will be healed. 8 I’m also a man appointed under authority, with soldiers under me. I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and the servant does it.’

“9 When Jesus heard these words, He was impressed with the centurion. He turned to the crowd following Him and said, ‘I tell you, even in Israel I haven’t found faith like this.’ 10 When the centurion’s friends returned to his house, they found the servant restored to health.”

**GROW MOMENT:** Lenten Weekly Disciplines (introduced on Friday videos) -Pastor David

**PRAYERS** -Pastor Andrew

**GENERATIONAL BRIDGE:** -Pastor Andrew

**MESSAGE: Miracle (Luke 7-9) 1: “Power over Death”**

**PP#1:** Miracle 1: “Power over Death”

“Jesus was impressed with the centurion. He turned to the crowd following Him and said, ‘I tell you, even in Israel I haven’t found faith like this.’” -Luke 7:9

Today, as we continue to read through the Gospel of Luke together, we start our new series for Lent: “Miracle.” Yes, it’s ultimately about the miracle of Easter we’re heading towards, but as we do, we’re going to be looking closely at Jesus’ miracles in Luke chapters seven through nine. We begin in Luke 7 with today’s message, “Power over Death.” My text is Luke 7:9 “When Jesus heard these words, He was impressed with the centurion. He turned to the crowd following Him and said, ‘I tell you, even in Israel I haven’t found faith like this.’”

**PP#2:** *Image showing Jesus’ popularity, perhaps surrounded by crowds*

The polls are in: Jesus’ approval ratings are up! He’s a full-blown celebrity! Key to His popularity are the miracles He’s been performing. He continues to be out in public engaging ordinary people in preaching and teaching, yes, but what’s really been capturing the attention are His miracles.

He's been healing the sick—both physically and spiritually, and demonstrating that He has God's power and authority. Some of the Jewish leaders may be voicing skepticism, but the crowds are unswayed. Jesus is their guy, and they're following Him!

How about us? You see, as we've been following Jesus with Luke, and we've been a part of the crowd, we've been watching Jesus closely, too. He's been talking about living seriously for God, and that hits our hunger. It's when we see Him do all these amazing miracles, however, that we begin to wonder if He's the real deal, and we wonder if He could be the Christ. Maybe like the crowd we also really want Him *as one of us*. But the question we're starting to get from Him is: will we be one of His! Now, that's a *different* commitment, actually, right? We've seen that some have chosen to follow Him. Some have gone all in. But right now, we're being swept along with the thronging crowds, following Jesus as our social influencer, and happy to call Him our guy.

**PP#3:** *Image of Jesus inviting us to follow Him, but pointing to a narrow/hard road*

This Wednesday we start Lent, the six-week journey to Easter. It's a time to assess our lives, what we are really hungry for, and what we want from Jesus. We wrestle between what we want from Him, and what He wants from us: do we want Jesus to be there for us, or do we commit to be there for Jesus? Do we want Him as one of us, or are we willing to become one of His? It's easier to be the first, but He calls us to be the latter.

**PP#4:** Luke 7:1-17 (CEB)

1 After Jesus finished presenting all His words among the people, He entered Capernaum. 2 A centurion had a servant who was very important to him, but the servant was ill and about to die. 3 When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to Jesus to ask Him to come and heal his servant. 4 When they came to Jesus, they earnestly pleaded with Jesus. "He deserves to have you do this for him," they said. 5 "He loves our people and he built our synagogue for us."

In Luke chapter 7, Jesus had finished His extended teaching time probably somewhere on the northwest side of Lake Galilee. Jesus had been traveling among the Jewish villages in Galilee and now heads back to Capernaum. Remember He has made this His home base during the time of His public ministry, likely moving in with Simon Peter.

Well, Jesus is a local celebrity who now comes back to town. Word spreads quickly. And Jesus gets a request from a non-Jew, a Gentile. And not just any Gentile, He gets word from a Roman soldier, actually a commander of the local Roman soldiers who are there to ensure Roman occupation. Most likely he was part of the troops Rome allotted to their local puppet King Herod Antipas that they set up in Galilee. A centurion commanded 100 soldiers, so he was likely the commander stationed in Capernaum and area.

Now, usually the Jews hated the Romans and especially the Roman occupying soldiers. But this centurion, it says, was well liked. He seemed to be fair and just, let the Jews do their thing, and even really cared personally about the local people...to the point where he had his soldiers help the Jews build the local synagogue, and he may have even given some money for it.

So, a rare instance where the Jews and Roman soldiers are getting along really well. And it seems that this centurion had at least some tenderness to the Jewish faith. Maybe he was a godly Gentile. We don't know. But it is interesting that in the Gospels, Roman centurions, more than once, show remarkable faith. For example, make a note to verse 2 and write, "Compare Luke 23:47" which is the centurion who is in charge of crucifying Jesus.

Now in Matthew's telling of the story, in Matthew 8, the centurion comes and talks to Jesus directly. Luke here has him sending some of the local Jewish leaders to speak on his behalf. So, the whole story must have included a couple of conversations, one by the Jewish leaders that Luke tells, and then perhaps another one at the house directly with the centurion that Matthew tells. But how remarkable that the local Jewish leaders actually intercede for the man, trying to convince Jesus to do him a favor.

The centurion is not asking for Jesus' help for himself. He has a slave who has taken ill. Now, if the slave was merely a useful tool for the centurion, I doubt he would have done much, because such slaves can be replaced. It seems—again pointing to what kind of man he was—that the centurion had personal concern for this slave. He may have been his assigned property, but the centurion cared about the slave as a person. And it was likely that the slave was Jewish. Pretty remarkable, actually.

Do you notice the contrast that Luke is pointing out in this story? Remember last chapter, the Jewish Pharisees—supposedly godly—didn't care about the man with the withered hand and only cared about trying to catch Jesus. But this Gentile soldier—considered not godly—cares about his slave.

**PP#5:** Luke 7:1-17 (CEB)

“6 Jesus went with them. He had almost reached the house when the centurion sent friends to say to Jesus, ‘Lord, don’t be bothered. I don’t deserve to have you come under my roof. 7 In fact, I didn’t even consider myself worthy to come to you. Just say the word and my servant will be healed. 8 I’m also a man appointed under authority, with soldiers under me. I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and the servant does it.’

And the centurion treats Jesus with respect, as also a leader who has authority. The Jewish Pharisees condemn Jesus, the centurion respects Him. But it's the centurion, a man himself under authority, who really understands Jesus' ability to wield authority. This story is about the centurion's faith, yes, but here he also serves as a witness who points to Jesus' command and authority. To verse 8 write the note, “Affirms Jesus' authority.” He believes that all Jesus has to do is say the word, and it will happen. What faith!

<b>PP#6:</b> <u>Pharisees</u>	<u>Centurion</u>
Chapter 6	Chapter 7
Jews (godly)	Gentile (ungodly)
Come close	Stays distant
Doesn't care	Cares about the person
Condemns Jesus	Respects Jesus
No faith	Faith in Jesus

More contrast: the centurion considers himself humbly *below* Jesus, whereas the Pharisees consider themselves haughtily *above* Jesus. To verse 7 write, “Me too.” The Pharisees show up in person to judge Jesus, the centurion is content to stay at a distance and not burden Jesus.

Jesus sees a striking contrast! He notices that the Pharisees, Jewish leaders, struggle to see God in Him, but the Gentile centurion has full-on faith! The centurion totally believes that Jesus can, and most likely will, heal the servant. Jesus was impressed. This is a teaching moment.

**PP#7:** Luke 7:1-17 (CEB)

“9 When Jesus heard these words, He was impressed with the centurion. He turned to the crowd following Him and said, ‘I tell you, even in Israel I haven’t found faith like this.’ 10 When the centurion’s friends returned to his house, they found the servant restored to health”

So Jesus turns to the whole crowd following Him and proclaims, “I tell you, I’ve been with the Jews and I have not found the depth of faith like in this Gentile soldier.” Now, Jesus heals the slave, but that’s not the real miracle here. That happens in the background. The miracle here is the faith of the centurion. Luke, who is keen to point out how Jesus is the Savior for both the Jews and non-Jews, sees in the centurion a confirmation by Jesus that true faith came from an outsider! And this is the kind of faith Jesus is looking for!

<b>PP#8:</b> <u>Pharisees</u>	<u>Centurion</u>
Chapter 6	Chapter 7
Jews (godly)	Gentile (ungodly)
Come close	Stays distant
Doesn’t care	Cares about the person
Condemns Jesus	Respects Jesus
No faith	Faith in Jesus
<i>If you are here....</i>	<i>...become this!</i>

Application, of course: what kind of faith do you have? Are you like the Pharisees or centurion? Remember, Luke *uncomfortably*—and perhaps being a bit too honest—has us identify with the Pharisees. Jesus invites us to become centurions. What a great question for us as we begin Lent.

**PP#9:** Map identifying (or arrows pointing to) Nazareth, Capernaum, Mt. of Beatitudes and Nain

Now, hang on. Luke next shows Jesus taking things to a whole new level! We’ve just began to understand that Jesus has power to heal: both physically and spiritually. Pretty amazing! But remember, Jesus’ miracles always validate His authority. Is He a healer? Is that what the Messiah is? A preacher and healer? Well, buckle your seatbelts. Things are about to go exponential!

Jesus was preaching at what we now call the Mount of the Beatitudes. He then goes back to Capernaum. Now, Luke says, Jesus headed southwest, just a few miles south of His hometown of Nazareth, to a village called Nain.

Now, this story is only told in Luke. For some reason, the other writers didn’t choose to include it. But Luke is a doctor, and is very interested in medical issues. He perhaps more than any of the others, understands that physicians and healers work with people who are sick, but still alive. Once they die, there is nothing they can do. Miracle Max in *The Princess Bride*: if they are *mostly* dead, they are still slightly alive, and there is hope for healing. “But if they are *all* dead, then there’s only one thing you can do: go through their clothes and look for loose change!”

So, Luke knows the hopelessness that death brings. If they are “all” dead, there is no healing that can work. So, is Jesus a healer? Is that why He has come?

**PP#10:** Luke 7:1-17 (CEB)

11 A little later Jesus went to a city called Nain. His disciples and a great crowd traveled with Him. 12 As He approached the city gate, a dead man was being carried out. He was his mother’s only son, and she was a widow. A large crowd from the city was with her. 13 When

He saw her, the Lord had compassion for her and said, “Don’t cry.” 14 He stepped forward and touched the stretcher on which the dead man was being carried. Those carrying him stood still. Jesus said, “Young man, I say to you, get up.” 15 The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.

Also, side note, this is the only Biblical reference to the town of Nain. There is still a town there by that name to this day, by the way. Pretty cool. Anyway, turn to Luke 7, verse 11.

“11 A little later Jesus went to a city called Nain. [Not really a city as we think of it today...think Columbus.] His disciples and a great crowd traveled with Him. [See, very popular.] 12 As He approached the city gate, a dead man was being carried out. He was his mother’s only son, and she was a widow. [Luke includes this detail, because he knows the extra hardship this means. She’s in deep grief, yes, but also now she no longer has any source of provision in that society structure. She’s in trouble. To verse 12 make the note: “See Deut. 10:18.” God has always had a special concern for the vulnerable widow. We keep going.] A large crowd from the city was with her. 13 When He saw her, the Lord had compassion for her and said, ‘Don’t cry.’ [Make a note to verse 13 and write on the side, “Jesus’ compassion.” This is huge. We’ll come back to this. Verse 14,] He stepped forward and touched the stretcher on which the dead man was being carried. [Now, once again Luke records the personal touch of Jesus. This time Jesus touches what the Jewish laws declare unclean—a dead body and anything touching it. A good Pharisee or rabbi would have not touched it. And, note, Jesus doesn’t touch the person. It’s not that Jesus needs to touch the person to bring healing. Like with the Centurion’s slave, He can do it simply by choosing to do it. No incantations, no rituals, just choosing to do it. It really shows His authority, doesn’t it? We keep going in verse 14,] Those carrying him stood still. Jesus said, ‘Young man, I say to you, get up.’ 15 The dead man sat up and began to speak [Not just brought back to life, but also fully healed and restored], and Jesus gave him to his mother.”

Jesus just raised a guy from the dead—“all” dead! That’s way different than healing. This is another whole authority and power. Jesus is not just a preacher and healer. Like all of us He has power over life—we can all *take* life—but here, Jesus shows He has power over death! No human has ever been able to do that. In the Old Testament, there are just two people who raised the dead: the prophets Elijah and Elisha. And in both of them it was clearly God’s power that did it through them. Only God can raise the dead. And now, Jesus just did. We have to rethink everything about Jesus!

**PP#11:** Luke 7:1-17 (CEB)

16 Awestruck, everyone 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 region.

Like the crowds there on site, we are awestruck! Verse 16, “Awestruck, everyone praised God. [Luke has an ongoing list of people praising God. Remember the angles of Bethlehem? All over Luke’s Jesus story people—and other beings—are bursting out praising God! They liken Jesus to Elijah or Elisha,] ‘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 region.”

Only God can raise the dead. Death is just so powerful! There is nothing we can do to change it. At best, we can remember those who have died. But that’s it. We are powerless before death. Cancer, and dementia, and gut-wrenching sorrow are all forms of death. Even the belief that there are worse things than death requires a faith in God.

**PP#12:** *Image of the dead man from Nain hugging his mother after Jesus raises him.*

Jesus, casually walking down the street, happens upon a person *all dead*, and as we see Jesus walking away, we see the dead man hugging his mother!

What manner of Messiah is this? Who is this Jesus? He is not just a healer. He is not just a teacher. He commands the very power of life itself. Who does that? Only God! He didn't even touch the guy! He only speaks, and life abounds. Reminds me of Genesis 1.

**PP#13:** “But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.” -Psalm 86:15

“Behold! What kind of love the Father has given to us in that we should be called God’s children, and that is what we are!” 1 John 3:1

Okay, you, me, people in the crowd, what kind of Messiah is this? Is the Messiah Himself God? If He is, then what do we see in Him about God? We see a God who has Himself personally come among us. He must care about us in a way we will never be able to grasp. He goes around seeking us out! When He encounters sickness and need, He heals and provides. He is moved by compassion! What other God has ever done that? The gods of history only care about themselves and have to be coerced, begged–bribed–to help. Jesus, in Nain, wasn’t even asked! The only thing this miracle was about, was to show Jesus’ heart of compassion, His power over life and death, and His identity as God. What do we see? Like the crowds, we burst out exclaiming, “God has come to help His people!” This is the Gospel! This is our hope, our life! “God has come to help His people!” This is the real miracle here. These two miracles early in Luke, they show us the person and character of Jesus. What kind of God does this? Only a God of true love. This is what love looks like!

**PP#14:** *Image for earnestly taking Jesus as our God.*

All I can say is that I’m going to stick with this Jesus! I need God’s word, His path. I need Jesus’ healing. But I also need the life that only Jesus can bring. I don’t understand it all, and I don’t fully understand Him, but I no longer just want Him as one of us. I want to be one of His!

If you feel a bit like this, too, then we are ready for Lent. We are ready to be honest about our lives, and get honest about Jesus. The miracle for us today is not in these stories. Like the centurion, the real miracle is the faith He opens in our hearts when we turn to God. In this journey of Lent, let’s not just follow Jesus as our teacher and healer, let’s become one of His!

Amen.

**CLOSING SONG:** *I Have Decided* -Sanctify

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** -Pastor David

Wednesday night: Ash Wednesday! Soup bar & Ash Wednesday service

Next Sunday’s message: New series in Luke: “Miracle! The Faith of the Non-Followers”

Read ahead: Luke 7:1-17

**MEMORY VERSE** -Pastor David

“Awestruck, everyone praised God. ‘A great prophet has appeared among us,’ they said.

“God has come to help His people.” -Luke 7:16

**BENEDICTION** -Pastor David

**POSTLUDE** -Sanctify