



## WEEKLY STUDY

### WEEK ONE

We have come to Luke chapter 7 in our close look at the Gospel of Luke. We'll hear about the story of a Centurion who had no real role in the story of God's people. But he finds himself in need and has come to develop a belief that Jesus can do something. Without having a face to face encounter with Jesus, the man's faith is communicated through intermediaries and Jesus takes notice. The person who needs healing is healed! Whether or not you find yourself feeling disconnected from Jesus, I pray that you will find great hope and confidence in the story of the Centurion.

Peace of Christ,  
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt.

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### DAILY STUDY

#### MONDAY: LUKE 7:1-10 (NIV)

*When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum.<sup>2</sup> There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die.<sup>3</sup> The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant.<sup>4</sup> When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this,"<sup>5</sup> because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue."<sup>6</sup> So Jesus went with them.*

*He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof."<sup>7</sup> That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.<sup>8</sup> For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."*

<sup>9</sup> When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, “I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.”<sup>10</sup> Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

- The humility of the centurion really stands out in this story. He knew that if Jesus (a Jew) entered the home of the centurion (a Gentile) that the Jew would be considered unclean. He didn't want to cause this great man to lose his ability to teach and heal others, so he sent friends to let him off the hook. This communication system may seem strange to us, but there is a kindness and respect in it that is rare. He wanted healing for his servant but he also had an eye to the bigger picture.  
**Have there been times when you felt like too much of an “outsider” to ask Jesus for help?**
- *Jesus, I come to you directly today, lifting up those that I love who need your healing touch. I invite you into my home and theirs that we all might have a fresh encounter with you. Amen.*

## **TUESDAY: MATTHEW 8.5-13 (NIV)**

When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. <sup>6</sup> “Lord,” he said, “my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly.”

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, “Shall I come and heal him?”

<sup>8</sup> The centurion replied, “Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup> For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

<sup>10</sup> When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, “Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. <sup>11</sup> I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>12</sup> But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would.” And his servant was healed at that moment.

- Compare and contrast this account with Luke's. It seems that the point of both of these accounts is not the healing of the servant, but the faith of the Centurion. Here, the encounter is face to face. Here, Jesus declares the man's faithfulness to his own followers. In Luke the servants of the Centurion were part of the audience. **What could account for these differences? If you put them side by side, what does each account teach us about Jesus? About ourselves?**
- *God, I desire a face to face encounter with Jesus today. Open my eyes to the ways in which he is present and willing to bring your healing. Amen.*

## **WEDNESDAY: JOHN 4.46-53 (NIV)**

Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. <sup>47</sup> When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

<sup>48</sup> “Unless you people see signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.”

<sup>49</sup> The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”

<sup>50</sup> “Go,” Jesus replied, “your son will live.”

The man took Jesus at his word and departed. <sup>51</sup> While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. <sup>52</sup> When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, “Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him.”

<sup>53</sup> Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and his whole household believed.

- This story carries a lot of the same characteristics of Luke and Matthew’s accounts. What is the difference between a servant and a son that needs healing? The official seems to have the same level of urgency in coming to Jesus. **Do you experience the healing of someone in your biological family differently than the healing of someone in your extended circles?**
- *God, today may I see the stranger as my next of kin. Give me a heart filled with compassion for each one of your beloved children. Amen.*

#### **THURSDAY: JEREMIAH 30.17-18 (NIV)**

*But I will restore you to health  
and heal your wounds;*

*declares the Lord,*

*‘because you are called an outcast,*

*Zion for whom no one cares.’*

<sup>18</sup> *“This is what the Lord says:*

*“I will restore the fortunes of Jacob’s tents*

*and have compassion on his dwellings;*

*the city will be rebuilt on her ruins,*

*and the palace will stand in its proper place.*

- In these words recorded by the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah we can see the consistency of God. In the account from Luke 7 this week, the Jews were seen as the insiders, but historically (and in many ways still today) God’s people were called outcasts. God saw them and had compassion on them in the same way the Son of God had compassion on the outsider in his day. **Who are among the outsiders today? Who would Jesus offer healing to today? How might the insiders respond to his compassion?**
- *Lord God, You have shown such mercy to those called outcasts. Were it not for the loving kindness and willing sacrifice of your Son, I would still be rightly called an outcast myself. Rebuild the ruins of my life and restore the city where I live. Amen.*

#### **FRIDAY: ACTS 2.1-4 (NIV)**

*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

- This was Pentecost Sunday—the marker of the gift of the Holy Spirit which empowered the disciples and gave birth to the church. The Spirit of God is present in all kinds of healing. Here, there is a healing of the confusion caused in the Old Testament story of the tower of Babel. **How have you experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in your life?**
- *God, I will wait for your Spirit today. Send it like a loud wind or a quiet whisper. I want to live and worship in a community empowered by the Advocate and Helper that Jesus promised you'd send. Amen.*

### **SATURDAY: PSALM 103.1-6 (NIV)**

*Praise the Lord, my soul;*

*all my inmost being, praise his holy name.*

<sup>2</sup>*Praise the Lord, my soul,*

*and forget not all his benefits—*

<sup>3</sup>*who forgives all your sins*

*and heals all your diseases,*

<sup>4</sup>*who redeems your life from the pit*

*and crowns you with love and compassion,*

<sup>5</sup>*who satisfies your desires with good things*

*so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

<sup>6</sup>*The Lord works righteousness*

*and justice for all the oppressed.*

- **How do these words from the Psalmist relate to the passage from Luke 7:1-10?** The Lord forgives our sins and heals our diseases. He redeems us from the pit. The Lord works righteousness and justice for the oppressed. **As you consider this in light of the centurion's servant, how does it feel to see the servant of the “enemy” become the oppressed who God rescues?**
- *Lord, I pray for those who could be counted among my enemies. It is difficult to see my enemy as someone who also struggles. I long for the fresh wind of your Spirit to restore us all as you work righteousness and justice. Amen.*

### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Read together the full passage from Acts 2:1-42. You may take turns reading the passage and hear it with different voices.

- How did the Holy Spirit show up to the gathering of early followers?
- How does the Holy Spirit show up in your gatherings today?
- Have you ever been surprised by a particular person or group that God seems to welcome in the story of redemption?
- In what ways are you living out the Acts 2 vision for Christian community right now? What elements of that Spirit-empowered community do you long for?