LUKE 7

The Word That Heals, Raises and Forgives

a centurion who asked only for a word, a widow's only son, a prophet in prison, and a sinner at Jesus' feet

> *"For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."*
> LUKE 7:47

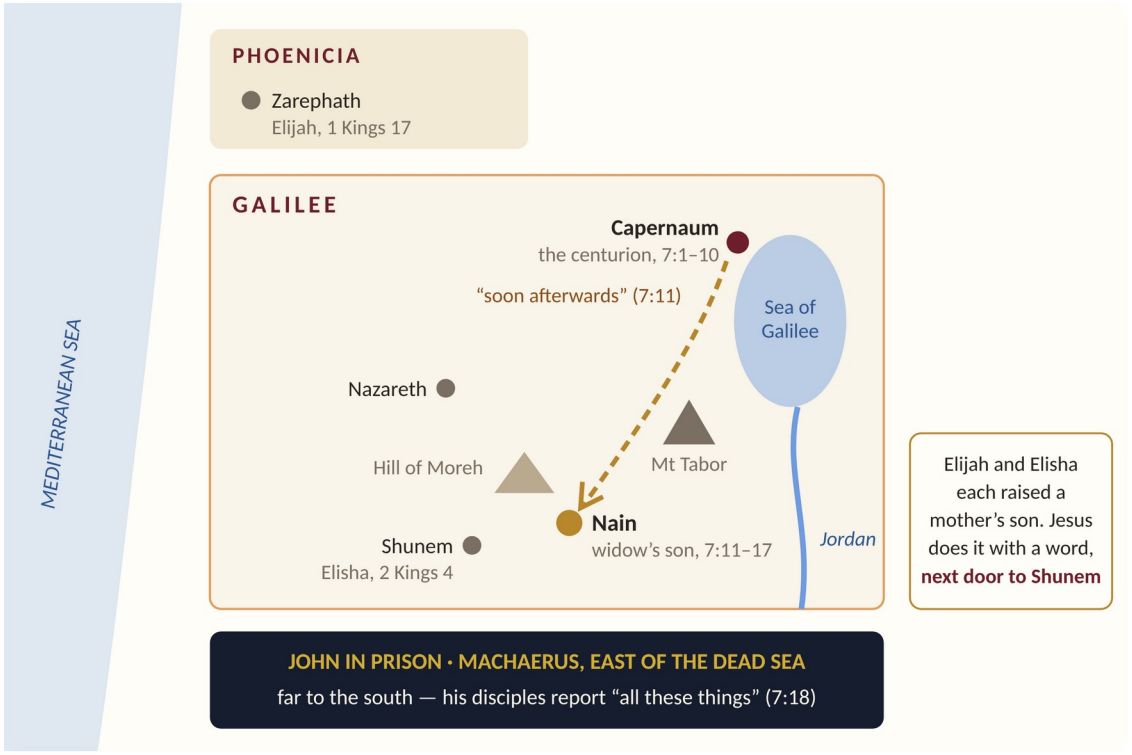
A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where we are in Luke

1. Luke 6 ended with the Sermon on the Plain and its last picture: the man who hears Jesus' words and acts on them builds on rock (6:46–49).

2. The first two scenes have Old Testament echoes Luke's readers would hear.

3. Meanwhile John the Baptist was in prison (3:19–20) — Josephus says at Machaerus, Herod's fortress east of the Dead Sea.



Just Say the Word

A Gentile officer, a dying slave, and faith that Jesus' word is enough

LUKE 7:9

Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith."

DAVID GUZIK

Elders said worthy, he said not; strong faith and humility fit together.

R.C. SPROUL

Not a wolf of an employer; he understood grace; Christ heals by a word.

C.H. SPURGEON

Christ so great he felt unworthy; best pearls from the darkest caves.

MATTHEW HENRY

Christ cares for poor servants and rules all creatures.

ἄξιος · ἱκανός

AXIOS · HIKANOS

The elders say the centurion is axios (v. 4), "worthy, deserving" — a word of merit: he loves our nation, he built our synagogue.

Young Man, Arise

Two crowds meet at the gate of Nain — and the Lord of life stops the funeral

LUKE 7:13

When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, "Do not weep."

DAVID GUZIK

He breaks up funerals; resuscitated, not resurrected; death is an enemy.

R.C. SPROUL

The Lord saw her; He touched the bier; when the Bishop comes.

C.H. SPURGEON

No time or place finds Him unable; conversions are miracles.

MATTHEW HENRY

Mercy and power; His goodness as well as greatness is to be feared.

ἐσπλαγχνίσθη

ESPLANCHNISTHĒ · "HE FELT COMPASSION"

From splanchna, the inward parts — the gut.

Are You the Expected One?

A question from prison, and an answer from Isaiah

LUKE 7:19

Summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?"

DAVID GUZIK

John confused about the Messiah's work; Jesus answers with works.

R.C. SPROUL

Obviously John was confused; Isaiah 61 is the job description.

C.H. SPURGEON

Offended with the Redeemer — what madness! (on Matt 11:6)

MATTHEW HENRY

He left His works to praise Him; is He the One to save sinners?

ὁ ἐρχόμενος

HO ERCHOMENOS · "THE EXPECTED ONE"

Literally "the Coming One," the present participle of erchomai, to come.

Jesus' answer to John

JOHN ASKED A QUESTION · JESUS ANSWERED WITH ISAIAH (7:22)

"Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?" (7:19)

the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT	→	Isaiah 35:5; 61:1 (LXX)
the lame walk	→	Isaiah 35:6
the lepers are cleansed	→	(Elisha and Naaman, 2 Kings 5; Luke 4:27)
the deaf hear	→	Isaiah 35:5
the dead are raised up	→	Isaiah 26:19 · Nain, 7:15
the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED	→	Isaiah 61:1

"Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me" (7:23) — the list stops short of "liberty to captives" (Isa 61:1).

Each line of Jesus' reply (left) points John to a promise in Isaiah (right); the works themselves are the answer.

More Than a Prophet

Jesus honors John — and exposes a generation that would not dance or weep

LUKE 7:28

"I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

DAVID GUZIK

The least in the gospel stands higher; friend of sinners — gloriously true.

R.C. SPROUL

Greater in blessedness; fussy children; justified means shown true.

MATTHEW HENRY

We live in a state of trial; wisdom's children are unanimous.

ἐδικαίωσαν

EDIKAIŌSAN · "ACKNOWLEDGED GOD'S JUSTICE"

Dikaioō, to justify, to declare right.

Her Sins, Which Are Many

A Pharisee's dinner, a flood of tears, and two debtors

LUKE 7:47

"For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."

DAVID GUZIK

Her love was evidence of forgiveness; hard to believe we're forgiven.

R.C. SPROUL

No payment could earn it; kiss the Son instead of despising Him.

C.H. SPURGEON

He spoke up for her; doubtful of a dry-eyed faith; go in peace.

MATTHEW HENRY

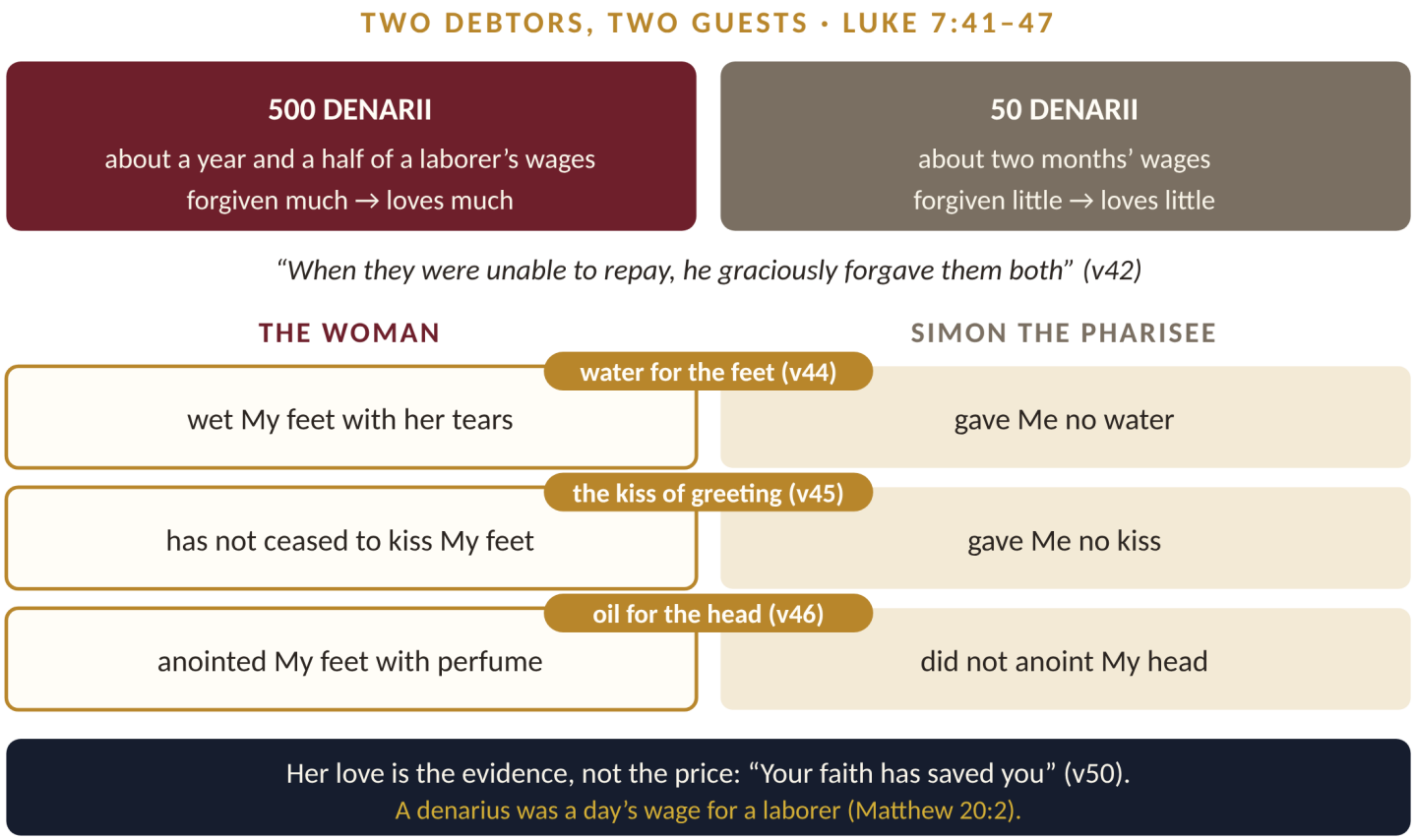
Silver and gold won't pay the debt; penitents love Christ dearly.

ἐχαρίσατο

ECHARISATO · "GRACIOUSLY FORGAVE"

From charizomai, to give freely, built on charis, grace.

Two debtors, two guests



Read across each row: everything Simon left undone as host, the woman did — and Jesus says the difference is how much each knew he or she had been forgiven.

What to carry from this chapter

1

Worthy and not worthy.

The elders called him axios, deserving; he called himself not hikanos, not fit.

2

Distance is no problem for His word.

“Just say the word” (v7).

3

The widow did not ask.

No one requested the miracle at Nain.

4

Greater than Elijah.

Elijah stretched himself over the child three times and cried to the LORD (1 Kings 17:21); Jesus touched the coffin and spoke.

More to carry

5

Honest doubt is not unbelief.

Sproul: “Obviously, John was confused.”

6

The answer is the works.

Henry: “Christ left it to his own works to praise him in the gates.”

7

You can refuse God’s purpose — for yourself.

The Pharisees “rejected God’s purpose for themselves” (v30).

8

Love is the fruit, not the root.

The parable puts forgiveness first and love second (vv42–43); verse 50 credits faith.

Talk it through

1. The elders said the centurion was “worthy”; he said he was not. Which voice do I listen to when I come to Jesus — my record or His word?

2. Jesus raised the widow’s son without being asked. Where have I been grieving silently, and what does it mean to me that “the Lord saw her”?

3. John asked an honest question from a prison cell. What question would I ask Jesus from my hardest place — and where in His Word would I look for the answer?

4. The people of Jesus’ day criticized John for fasting and Jesus for feasting. What excuse do I use to keep God’s messengers at arm’s length?

5. Am I more like Simon or the woman — someone who thinks he owes 50, or someone who knows he owes 500?

CLOSING

Luke 7 asks the question the dinner guests asked: "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" He is the Lord who heals with a word, stops a funeral, answers a doubting prophet, and sends a sinful woman home in peace. If you know how much you owe, you are closer to Him than you think — come to His feet.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the Luke study page.