

Luke Chapter 7 v 11 - 23

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Date: 14 October 2018

Preacher: Peter Robinson

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[3 : 00] Thank you. Thank you.

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[5 : 08] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. with free will that we're gathered here this morning to sing your praises and to worship and adore you lord no one's constrained us no one's forced us no one's twisted our arm up our backs we aren't here in one sense to win your favor or to make ourselves more acceptable to you we're here purely out of thanksgiving and joy and love we're here oh lord because we cannot help but by your spirit worship and rejoice and delight in you lord it's the most natural thing for us in the world as natural as breathing as natural as as living is lord being worshipping and delighting in you and lord we ask that you would indeed receive our praise receive our thanksgiving receive our worship as it comes to you lord in and through jesus as it comes through the the merits of jesus the goodness of jesus we've got nothing good to bring of ourselves lord as we say with paul in me there there's nothing good that lives but lord we thank you that in jesus we're accepted and received and loved in jesus lord our worship is a delight to you and a joy to you and lord we long that we might bring you joy and delight this morning not only as we sing but as we hear your word and and and increase and grow in our faith and trust in you as we celebrate and enjoy the lord's supper lord we pray that everything we do may not only be a great blessing to us but lord may bring great glory and joy to you our god for we ask these things again in the name and for the sake of jesus christ our savior amen we're going to read together now from the gospel of luke and if you have one of the church bibles that's page 1035 page 1035 luke chapter 7 luke chapter 7 we're going to pick up from verse 11 and read through to verse 23 luke chapter 7 beginning at verse 11 soon afterwards jesus went into a town called nain and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him 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 when the lord saw her his heart went out to her and he said don't cry then he went up and touched the beer they had carrying him on and the bearers stood still he said young man i say to you get up the dead man sat up and began to talk and jesus gave him back to his mother 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 this news about jesus spread throughout judea and the surrounding country 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 is to come or should we expect someone else when the men came to jesus they said john the baptist sent us to you to ask are you the one who is to come or should we expect someone else at that very time jesus cured many who had diseases illnesses and evil spirits gave sight to many who were blind so he replied to the messengers

go back and report to john what you've seen and heard the blind receive sight the lame walk those who have leprosy are cleansed the deaf hear the dead are raised and the good news is proclaimed to the poor blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me would you have open luke

and chapter 7 in your bible that will be a help to you particularly those verses 11 through to 23 that uh i read just a few moments ago from time to time uh the church here has had a table put at the front of the building and a usually a sort of a poster or a piece of paper on the front opposing uh or asking passes by a particular question and the question is this and i think other churches have done similarly and you may have seen it as well if you could ask god one question what would it be if you could ask god one question what would it be and uh the idea is that passers-by would hopefully uh stop and uh give their question and engage perhaps in a conversation and a chat about the gospel but if you think about it and many people have uh often questions of a similar that people would ask things like this why is there suffering and war in the world that's a big puzzle for many people why is there war and suffering in the world another question that people may pose and put is why are there so many different religions in the world there's one god why are there so many religions and for some people perhaps it may be much more personal to that it may be simply why am i here what is my life all about i wonder what you would ask god if you could ask him one question what would it be john the baptist was in prison he had been put in prison by herod we know that a few chapters earlier and he sent two of his disciples to ask a question of jesus are you the one who is to come or should we expect someone else i wonder what prompted him to ask that question why did he ask jesus are you the one are you the messiah really are you the the promised messiah who is to come or is there somebody yet to come are you the last and final are you god's messiah do you think perhaps it was being in prison that prompted him to ask that question he perhaps he'd lost some of his faith he was now suffering in the in the uh the prison cell of herod was it in his suffering that he doubted and doubts began to rise in his mind perhaps it was he was afraid that he was going to die in fact later on we find out that he does of course die in that prison cell was it that he expected jesus to save him and he's thinking why aren't you if you're the christ if you're the messiah why am i still languishing in prison why haven't you come to rescue me or save me i don't think either of those things are the reason why john asked the question in fact we're told what prompted him to ask the question at the beginning of verse 18 john's disciples told him about all these things in other words the raising of the young man at name from the dead the healing of the a centurion servant the teaching of jesus and so on

it's in response to what he heard that jesus was doing the reports of jesus's works and teaching that he asked this question and i would put to you that the question john is really asking is why it's a why question you see john had in his ministry been the forerunner of jesus he'd been sent by god to tell people look out the messiah is coming god's special person the king the savior of the world is coming he is going to be god's final solution to the problem of sin in the world and this is what john preached if you want to turn back just for a moment to luke in chapter 3 and verse 16 people were wondering whether john was this messiah this special one and he said this john 16 i baptize you with water one who is more powerful than i will come the straps whose sandals i'm not on work i'm not worthy to untie he will baptize you with the holy spirit and fire his winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor to gather the wheat into his barn but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire you see john expected that the messiah would powerfully cleanse the nation he would come and he would drive out all wickedness that he would come with judgment and justice with a sword and kick out sin and establish a nation holy to gods but what he heard jesus was doing was healing blessing encouraging helping these were not the things he expected this was not what he had hoped or thought the messiah would do in fact it seems from verse 23 that john was stumbling because of jesus's actions he was struggling to accept that what jesus was doing was what the messiah should be doing blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me will be caused to offend because of me clearly in reference to john in our world we are seeing great advances in understanding of this world and the universe we're seeing the boundaries being pushed back of knowledge about the human body and how it works and the human mind we've been able in the past generation or so to discover an answer to previously unanswerable questions questions relating to when where and how and what but no amount of scientific discovery or medical advancement can answer the why questions of life why was the universe created why do we live on planet earth why do we all die and if it cannot answer the big why questions then human wisdom and understanding cannot answer the more personal individual why questions why god did you allow that to happen why god have i been treated in this way why god don't you change the circumstances and situation all of us can add our why god questions our personal why god and if we

ask god and question god as we all do from time to time then dear believer we are in good company because all through the scriptures we find god's servants god's heroes of the faith struggling and wrestling with the question why god job of course most famously of all chapter 10 of that book verse 18 why then did you bring me out of the womb david the king who was a man after god's own heart says in the psalms on more than one occasion why lord do you stand off afar why do you hide yourself in times of trouble moses who led the people through the wilderness and dealt with so many different difficulties in numbers chapter 11 verse 11 why have you brought this trouble on your servant and surely most significant and striking of all are the words of the lord jesus christ on the cross the very son of god my god my god why have you forsaken me questioning god is something that god is big enough to cope with we mustn't be afraid of questioning god and it's not always wrong to question god it's not always sinful to question god otherwise jesus would never have done it himself the only man who never sinned why john's question of jesus the son of god is helpful then to us and particularly jesus's response to john's why question why are you doing it that way and not the way i expected that's really the hub of it john is confused john is puzzled by the way that god is working through jesus and that's exactly what we feel so how does jesus answer john how does he help him in his confusion well this is what jesus we're told sent back by reply verse 22 he replied to the messengers go back and report to john what you've seen and heard the blind receive sight the lame walk those who've leprosy are cleansed the deaf hear the dead are raised the good news is proclaimed to the poor on the face of it that doesn't seem to be anything new or insightful does it because the reason that john was questioning whether jesus was messiah because his disciples had told us about all the things that jesus was doing and all that jesus does is send them back saying go and tell him what i've been doing but in fact jesus's words direct john and us to the only place where we can find comfort and help in our why god questions because ultimately he is pointing john back to god's promises god's promises jesus is listing what he has been doing because every action of jesus in his ministry as the messiah was the fulfillment of what god had promised through the old testament through his prophets god had described the blessings that the messiah would bring into the world just listen to these simply from one prophet this is the prophet isaiah and see how they tally up with what jesus says to john isaiah 35 verse 5 [21 : 29] then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped then the lame will leap like a deer and the mute tongues shout for joy later on isaiah 26 verse 19 but your dead will live their bodies will rise isaiah 61 verse 1 the lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor so what jesus was saying to john is this go back you know the promises of god you know what god said what happened when the messiah comes and that's exactly what i'm doing see for yourself that the work of the messiah is what i myself am about i am the one and there is no other yet to come everything that god does all of his works all of his actions he does in keeping with his promises in his word whatever has prompted you or i to ask why god it is not because god has broken his promise or gone back on his word it's because our understanding of the works of god are not as they should be see god never promised anyone a trouble free life god never promised that we would not have tribulation or sorrow or grief in this world but what he has promised what he has assured us is this that in the midst of those trials he is with us to work for our help our comfort and ultimately for our good

Jesus was very plain and clear with his disciples when he spoke with them on that last night before his death he told them that on more than one occasion they would face tribulation and trouble as they lived and served him in this world John chapter 16 verse 33 I have told you these things what would happen to them so that you in me you may have peace in this world you will have trouble but take heart be encouraged take comfort I have overcome the world in other words I'm bigger and greater than the world I'm more powerful than all the things that take place in the world when we know the word of God when we turn to the word of God in our why God questions we find encouragement to trust him that he is at work according to his promises and when we do that we see again

God's power the place of our peace the place of our comfort is in God's promises and God's power Jesus is reminding John that all that he has done is only possible because God's power and authority is with him in other words he's saying to John tell John I've done these things it's clear and obvious that this can only be because God is with me and because I have the power and authority of God himself that's why I haven't particularly spent a lot of time looking at the raising of the widow's son because that miracle itself shows and illustrates the absolute sovereign that is

complete power of Jesus in the situation just look at it for a moment and we can see that everything that happens is at the initiative of Jesus okay one the widow didn't send a message for Jesus we looked at that previously didn't we the centurion sent a message to Jesus come and heal my servant there's no message sent to Jesus from the widow saying come and help my son or heal my son or raise my son so he takes the initiative notice as well that he comes at exactly the right time when all hope was lost verse 12 as he approached the town gate a dead person is being carried out in other words this young man is being taken to be buried it's the funeral procession the funeral service surely now there is no hope there is no help to be found humanly but in that moment Jesus is there and even when he's there and he sees her and speaks to her even then she doesn't say to him please help me even then she expresses no faith in him to help her as remember the centurion had great faith and even then the young man had no faith did he to be healed he was dead so into that absolutely helpless hopeless situation

Jesus comes of his own volition of his own will of his own purpose of his own power of his own decision and he raises that young man to life the crowds who often were not a very good gauge of spiritual understanding understood very well what was happening God has come to help us the only place that we find peace when we are confused in the disturbances of our lives is in the sovereignty of God the absolute absolute complete authority of God over all things to do all that is in his heart to do we may not find that easy to accept we may find that a struggle to understand but absolute faith in God's sovereignty is the only place we can rest you see if we put our faith in a

[27 : 52] God who can be caught off guard by the circumstances of life or a God who is at sometimes powerless to stop the things he opposes then we have an empty faith in an empty God God who can only help sometimes when the time is right or when he's in the right place at the right time a God who is not able to bring all things under his hand is not God at all but we do have a God a God who does exactly what he wishes in the lives of his children in Daniel in chapter 4 King Nebuchadnezzar a man who had no faith in God at one time came to understand this and he says of God he does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth no one can hold back his hand or say to him what have you done because everything that God has done he has done because it is his will so the promises the power but then there's one more thing here forgive the use of peas

I would have used other vegetables if I could have found them God's passion God's passion that's witness there isn't it particularly in the raising of the young man when Jesus came to the gate of the city as a funeral procession was coming towards him as he saw at the front the widow by herself with her son laid out on that would have been like a stretcher a shoulder height his heart went out to her and if you've got the AV he was moved inwardly his bowels were moved for her the seat of emotions that's what was thought was actually intestines there's a sense in which his heart went out to her he felt compassion for her he was moved for her he was moved to help her why did Jesus come to that woman and heal her son why did he act in the way he did with sovereign power and authority why did he intervene in the situation which was seemingly so hopeless was it so that people would praise him was it so that he could fulfill

God's promises was it so that he might be recognized as the Messiah all those things to a certain degree may be true but the only motivation that we're told about the only reason we're told that Jesus did what he did was because of his passion for her his love for her is being moved with deep concern for her above all dear friends our confidence and comfort in all that God brings into our lives and those circumstances that cause us to ask why God is in this fact God loves us us that's that's the reality on every page of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation wherever you turn ultimately what we are reading is the love story of God for his people the overwhelming message that he longs for the world to know and for us to settle our minds upon is that he loves us in all the events that we read of the great historical events the great momentous events we find again and again that it is God exercising his sovereign power fulfilling his promises because of his love for his people Deuteronomy in chapter 7 in verse 8 where God explains through Moses why the people were rescued from Egypt it was because the Lord loved you and kept the promise he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt and if we doubt that everything God does he does because of his love for us then we have completely misunderstood the very birth the life the death and resurrection of Jesus for 1 John chapter 4 says this is love this is the pinnacle of love this is the full expression of love this is the absolute epitome of love not that we loved God but that he loved

us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross is the most confusing event in history for there the sinless perfect son of God who was immortal and everlasting was put to death and murdered for the sake of wicked sinful people it doesn't make reasonable sense that God should have done that but he did it because he promised to because of his passionate love for us what happened in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ was exactly as God had promised to reveal his power and passion this is how Peter describes the death of Christ in Acts chapter 3 this is how

[33 : 55] God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets saying that his Messiah would suffer repent then and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out and that times of refreshing may come from the Lord that he may send the Messiah who's been appointed for you even Jesus and that's why we're going to come to the Lord's Supper now we're going to turn our thoughts now to this greatest work of Jesus the greatest act of God the provision salvation of salvation forgiveness and eternal life by the one sovereign act of Jesus Christ the Messiah let us sing as we prepare to come to the Lord's table for I'm convinced that neither death nor life neither angels nor demons neither the present nor the future nor any power neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in

Christ Jesus our Lord Amen