

~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:

You can't help but appreciate this centurion. He cared about his dying servant. He loved the nation of Israel. He paid for the construction of the synagogue in Capernaum. He didn't consider himself worthy to come to Jesus personally to make his request, so he sent some Jewish elders on his behalf. And it bothered him when he learned that Jesus was taking His valuable time to visit his house, and so he sent some friends to tell Jesus that it wasn't necessary; all he wanted Jesus to do was to speak the word so that his servant might be healed.

Jesus was certainly impressed with this Gentile's faith. He "marveled at him" (7:9), declaring that his faith was greater than any Israelite He had yet encountered. Quite a compliment. When I read such stories, I always wonder what we're missing out on because of our lack of faith. Why do some professing Christians bristle when it is suggested that lack of faith might be the reason they are failing to receive what God has promised?

I love this story of Jesus' raising the widow's dead son at Nain. It was a major miracle, and the news of it spread far and wide. Can you imagine seeing someone come back to life at his funeral? But Jesus was doing many other miracles besides this one. Everyone in Judea was talking about Him. God was testing hearts.

Have you ever heard my Latin song titled Everything Changes that includes a verse about this miracle of the widow's son? If not, why not? You owe it to yourself to download the MP3 here! Please pardon the vocalist and enjoy the lyrics.

A few of my remaining Calvinist friends have told me that I've been too hard on Calvinists in this daily commentary. I do confess that picking on Calvinists is a weakness of mine. But today I've decided to lay down my arms. I will resist the temptation to point out the fact that Luke wrote that "the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John" (7:30). Out of sheer kindness, I will not mention how obvious it is that God's purpose for all of them was to repent and be saved, but they resisted God's grace in salvation, a grace that Calvinists claim is irresistible. (Oops! I guess the devil made me do it!)

How was a woman able to wet Jesus's™ feet with her tears, wipe them with her hair, kiss His feet and anoint them with perfume as He was eating a meal with others around a table? The answer is that in Jesus's™ day, people ate their meals lying down, propped up on one arm, and fed themselves from food at a center table with their free hand. Thus the expression: "They reclined at table" (7:36).

If Jesus was only a "good man" or "a great moral leader," as some say, He would not have allowed this woman, or anyone for that matter, to worship Him. Good people don't allow other people to worship them, as they know only God is worthy of worship. And that is precisely why Jesus didn't stop her from worshipping Him.

Contrasted with the worshipping woman, Simon the Pharisee did not believe Jesus was the divine Son of God, evidenced by how he treated the Lord. In fact, he treated Jesus as being undeserving of even the common courtesies that would have been extended to any invited guest, such as having His dusty feet washed. Again we see that inward beliefs are revealed by outward actions.

Simon judged that Jesus was not a prophet, and judged the worshipping woman to be "a sinner" (7:39), probably because he knew she was a harlot. But both his judgments were wrong. Jesus knew much more about the worshipping woman than he did. Jesus knew that she had repented, and He had already forgiven her. She was no longer a sinner, but saved (7:5). Beyond that, Jesus knew what Simon was thinking, which is why He told him the parable of the two debtors. In God's eyes, Simon was the sinner! The harlot was a saint! Amazing grace!