

Blessed is one who is not offended because of Me (Luke 7:1-23)

We have been studying the Gospel of Luke. Today we will study the first half of cp. 7, from verse 1-23. The theme is “Blessed is one who is not offended because of Me”.

1. Are You the Coming One?

In the New Testament time, or in the days of Jesus, people thought that teachers of the law understood the law very well, and that the Pharisees strictly obeyed the law. And they rejected Jesus. They considered Jesus as one who doesn't obey the law, God's Word and who blasphemes God. Finally they crucified Jesus as a criminal.

This was the time, the situation in which Theophilus received this book from Luke and was reading it.

And Luke also recorded that the teachers of the law and the Pharisees rejected Jesus and also rejected the actions of Jesus' followers. (5:21, 5:30, 6:1-2, 6:7)

Theophilus had been reading these incidents. Then he read Jesus' teaching.

“Blessed are you poor, Blessed are you who hunger now, Blessed are you who weep now, Blessed are you when men hate you, But woe to you who are rich, Woe to you who are full, Woe to you who laugh now, Woe to you when all men speak well of you.” (Luke 6:20-26)

It's a hard teaching to understand. Moreover, Jesus continues to teach “Love your enemies”, “Bless those who curse you”, “If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn the other also,” etc. According to common sense, it may sound total nonsense! It gives an impression that Jesus is a crazy philosopher, or an unrealistic thinker whose thought is seemingly meaningful, but actually useless. In fact the teachers of the law and the Pharisees rejected Jesus. And the society also considered him as a criminal and crucified him.

Is this Jesus really Christ? This is a natural question.

7:19

¹⁹ he sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"

Luke didn't hide from Theophilus that there was someone else who also had that question. He also recorded the name of the person. That was John the Baptist. He supposed to understand Jesus well. But when he got this question, he was in prison. The reason he was shut up in prison is that he pointed out Herod's wrongdoing. He remained in the prison for the rest of his life. In the end he was beheaded. (3:18-20)

Jesus answered to John:

7:22

²² So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

Jesus didn't explain at great length. He simply told them to report to John what they had seen and heard; the things which had been done through Jesus.

7:23

²³ Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."

There are people who are offended because of Jesus. There are people who think they can't possibly believe the Word of Jesus, they think there is no way they can take His Word seriously. There are people who think what Jesus is doing is not right, strange, unreasonable, they think there must be some problems with Him.

Seeing the same work of Jesus, hearing the same Word of Jesus, some people are offended because of Him, but others are not.

Luke recorded two miracles of Jesus in the first half of cp. 7 before this conversation between John's disciples and Jesus. He took two precautions so that Theophilus would not be offended because of Jesus.

1) Faith is to accept the authority of the Word of the one you believe.

- 2) The fact that Jesus and God the Father are one, that shows Jesus is Christ.
Let's look at them one by one.

2. Faith is to accept the authority of the Word of the one you believe.

7:9

⁹ 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."

Jesus said, "Such great faith". What did Jesus mean when he said "such great faith"?

7:7-8

⁷ 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. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ 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."

Listening to it, Jesus said, "such great faith". That is, according to Jesus, faith is to accept the authority of the Word. Faith is not how you perform what kind of rituals, or how you do what kind of religious activities. And of course, faith is not what kind of doctrine you learned or what kind of creed you confess with your mouth weekly. Faith, according to Jesus, is to accept the authority of the one you believe. Let's look at another example.

Jonh 4:46-50 (NKJ)

⁴⁶ So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." ⁴⁹ The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my

child dies!" ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.

Here it says, "The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way." So "he believed Jesus" means that he accepted the authority of Jesus' word.

When he believed Jesus, his faith showed itself in his action. In other words, even though he says he believes Jesus, if he doesn't listen to Jesus' word or doesn't do what he says, he doesn't actually believe him.

We cannot separate the two things: to believe a person, and to accept the authority of that person's word. And when we accept the authority of the person's word, or when we believe the person, our faith will show itself in our action.

Then, do we have to accept the authority of Jesus' Word? If so, why?

7:22

²² So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

Each of these works shows us why we need to accept the authority of Jesus' Word. In previous chapter Luke explained why so.

Luke 5:21, 24-25

²¹ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

²⁴ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...." He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ²⁵ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God.

Jesus healed the man. That was the evidence that Jesus has authority on earth to forgive sins. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees said, "God alone has authority to forgive sins?" And Jesus said, "That you may know that I have authority to forgive sins", and he healed the man.

The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised. Each of these works of Jesus shows that Jesus has authority to forgive sins, that Jesus is God. Because Jesus is God, so we accept the authority of his Word. That is the reality of our faith when we say we believe Jesus.

Because we understand that faith is not to perform rituals based on the Bible nor to do religious activities, but it's to accept the authority of Jesus' Word, so we are not offended because of Jesus. We are blessed.

3. The fact that Jesus and God the Father are one.

Luke mentioned about Virgin birth at his first chapter. It's impossible in human theory! No science can solve this mystery. This did not happen because Mary believed it strongly nor she asked for it earnestly. This happened by the power of God.

No matter how sincerely Mary believed, if the one she believed doesn't have power to do it, nothing happens. No matter how earnestly Mary asked for it, if the one she asked doesn't have power to do it, nothing happens.

Some people think "Whatever you believe in, the result will be the same. It is important you believe!" That is not true! That is a lie! The power of our faith, the result of our faith depends on the one whom we believe. Depending on whom we believe, the result will be different.

For example, imagine you go for a haircut. The result of the haircut, what your hairstyle will be like, does not depend on how earnestly you ask the hairdresser by showing him the picture or explaining to him, but after all it depends on the skill, the ability of the hairdresser.

No matter how strongly you believe that the hairdresser is very good, from the bottom of your heart, and express your faith by singing praises to him, he is able to do only what he can do. If you go to the good hairdresser, your hair will look good. If you go to the poor hairdresser, you may cry each time you see a mirror. The power of faith, the result of our faith does not depend on us who believe, but it depends on the one we believe.

God created this entire universe and everything in it from nothing, and He still sustains it. He created all plants, animals and people where there was no life. For Him to create one new life in Mary's womb is no problem at all.

Romans 4:20-21

²⁰ Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

The power of faith does not depend on us who believe, but on the one we believe. In other words, how powerful the one we believe is determines how powerful the power of our faith can be.

Then, what was the power of Jesus like? How powerful was the power of Jesus?

7:12-15

¹² 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. ¹³ When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry." ¹⁴ Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" ¹⁵ The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

This is the power of Jesus. Jesus had power to even raise the dead. Then, it is no wonder that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear. And each of these miracles shows the greatness of Jesus. And each of these clearly shows how great His power is. And the greatness of His power determines how powerful the power of our faith can be.

But, if we try to adjust what God does to our knowledge, theology, experience, feelings, preference or common sense, we may be offended because of Jesus.

For example, Jesus said, "Love your enemies." "Do not judge others." These are not just ideals Jesus spoke, but he actually did those things. He loved His enemies. He did not judge, but came to save them. That's why He died on the cross. That's why we have been saved.

Jesus had power to do these things. And he did these things. Moreover, He gives power to do these things to those who believe in Him, and He will make

them live like that. That is the power of the gospel. However, “Love your enemies.” “Do not judge others.” Those words don’t agree with human feelings, preference, and common sense. So people refuse to be transformed by God.

“Love your enemies.” “Do not judge others.” Jesus did these things. But it doesn’t agree with our experience. It may be ideally so, but we experience that it won’t go so well in reality. So we bring up our theology, and decide that the power of God doesn’t work in reality.

Then, we are offended by the Word of Jesus and actions of Jesus. We are offended by Jesus not because Jesus is the cause of offence, but because we try to adjust what God does to our knowledge, theology, experience, feelings, preference, and common sense.

John 10:32

³² but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?"

Jesus says the works he has been doing are from God the Father. And he continues.

John 10:37-38

³⁷ Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. ³⁸ But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."

The point is not how we humans understand, explain, feel or receive each work of Jesus, and each Word of Jesus. Nor should we judge Jesus’ works and words according to our theology, experiences or our spiritual sensibility. The point is whether each action of Jesus and each Word of Jesus agree with God the Father or not.

John 8:29

²⁹ The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."

Jesus says his works show that he is the one sent by God the Father. Jesus is “the Coming One”, the Christ.

7:22

²² So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

Each of these actions of Jesus agrees with God the Father. Jesus said "I and the Father are one. (John 10:30)" Jesus is truly one with God the Father. Each work of Jesus, each Word of Jesus shows that Jesus is one with God the Father.

To believe in Jesus is to accept the fact that Jesus and God the Father are one. And, Jesus is the one sent by God, he is the Christ. Because we understand this, we are not offended because of Jesus. We are blessed.

Today we studied the first half of Luke cp. 7. The theme was "Blessed is one who is not offended because of Me".

Each work of Jesus, each word of Jesus shows what authority Jesus has.

The question is whether we accept Jesus' authority or not. To believe in Jesus is to accept His authority. And our faith will show itself in our actions.

Each work of Jesus, each word of Jesus shows that Jesus is one with God the Father. And, this fact shows that Jesus is Christ. The question is whether we accept Jesus as we accept God the Father or reject Him.

And the power of faith in Jesus doesn't depend on us who believe, but it depends on Jesus whom we believe. The greatness of Jesus' power determines how powerful the power of our faith can be.