



Growth Group Questions
February 25, 2024
“A Prophet in Our Midst”

Context:

In Luke 4:18-19 Jesus quotes from Isaiah as he is about to begin his earthly ministry. *“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”* These are no longer words about the one who is to come. Jesus is now fulfilling what Isaiah had prophesied.

In Luke 7 we see Jesus at work, healing and raising the dead. The healing in Luke 7:1-10 of the centurion’s servant and the raising of the son of the widow in verses 11-17 happen amongst those who would have been perceived as outcasts. A Gentile who was a member of the army of occupation, and a helpless widow.

In our text Jesus encounters a poor widow who has lost her son and is leaving the village of Nain to bury him. This woman is devastated and is on her way out of town while Jesus is on his way into town. He stops and is filled with compassion. He says nothing. She says nothing. And yet, the boy is raised from the dead. This is pure grace. Jesus meets this unnamed woman in the midst of her despair and brings healing and hope even when no words are spoken.

The crowd cannot believe it and say that a great prophet has appeared among us. Literally the word for awe has to do with fear, but it is a “holy” fear. They have never seen anything like this. The crowd is not wrong in calling Jesus a prophet, yet they don’t realize that Jesus is even more. He is the Messiah. This story helps the crowd to see and understand that Jesus has power even over life and death. God has visited his people to bring about the fulfillment of the promises he had made to them by the earlier prophets.

Note also the similarities (as well as differences) in this “resurrection” story of Luke 7 to the prophet Elijah in 1 Kings 17:17-24 when he stretches himself over the widow of Zarephath’s son who has also died. Elijah calls on God to raise the boy from the dead and God brings him back to life and Elijah gives the son back to his mom.



Scripture:

Deuteronomy 18:15

¹⁵ The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.

1 Peter 1:10-11

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow.

Luke 7:11-17

¹¹ Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. 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 bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers 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. ¹⁶ 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.” ¹⁷ This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

Romans 16:25-27

²⁵ Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, ²⁶ but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from^[a] faith— ²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Luke 7:18-23

¹⁸ John’s disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, ¹⁹ he sent them to the Lord to ask, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” ²⁰ 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?’” ²¹ At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. 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^[a] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ²³ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”



Questions:

1. The title of this week's sermon is "A Prophet in our Midst." What does Scripture tell us about the role of the Prophet in Biblical times?
2. The Prophets in the Old Testament were given a glimpse of the future by God and many of their prophecies focused on Jesus. Share one Old Testament prophesy that you find particularly intriguing and how it points to Jesus.
3. Pastor Paul told us that not only did Jesus fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament, but he became the ultimate Prophet. What evidence can you find in the New Testament to support this statement?
4. Luke 7:11-17 tells the story of how Jesus raised a widow's son from the dead. What lessons can we learn from this story?
5. What is the "mystery" that the Apostle Paul refers to in Romans 16:25 and how has it been revealed?
6. In Luke 17:18-23, we see John the Baptist's expression of doubts about Jesus as Messiah in his question: "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?". Why do you think John was experiencing doubts about Jesus?
7. What can we learn from Jesus's response to John's question?
8. How can our doubts, if properly handled, help us grow in our faith?
9. Pastor Paul said that Jesus is big enough for our doubts. What does that mean to you?

Extra Credit:

In the February 22nd entry in Pastor Chad's Lenten Devotional, we read about how power was used by both Pharaoh and Herod when they felt threatened. Pastor Chad asked the questions:

- How would you define power?
- How does God's definition of power differ from how humans seek and define power?

Spend time in your Growth Group discussion your answers to these thoughtful questions.

