

## **The Answer and the Faith**

Luke 7:1-10

The Second Sunday after Pentecost, May 29, 2016

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

There is one that you love who is ill. This person is sick unto death.

You have heard the reports about Jesus. You have heard about how he encountered demon possessed people. You have never seen a demon possessed person, but you believe the accounts of those who report that Jesus encountered such people. You have heard that Jesus commanded the demons to leave the person whom they possessed and the demons obeyed Jesus.

You have heard about how Jesus entered into Simon's home only to find Simon's mother-in-law sick with a fever. You have heard about how Jesus rebuked the fever. You did not know that diseases were something that could be rebuked until you heard about Jesus rebuking a fever. You have heard that the fever left her so Jesus must not have been that off base to rebuke a fever. She was so well afterward that she returned to her vocation and served them a meal.

You have heard the reports about how Jesus healed the sick. You have heard the report of Jesus encountering a leper. You have heard the report that the leper said to Him, "Lord, if You are willing, you can make me clean." You have heard the request of the leper. You know that the leper called Jesus "Lord." You know that the leper believed that if the Lord willed it, the leper would be cleansed. You have heard that the leper believed that Jesus had the power to make him clean. You have heard the report of the Lord's response, "I am willing. Be clean!" You have heard that the leper was cleansed of his leprosy from the moment the Lord made that declaration.

You have furthermore heard the report of the paralyzed man. You have heard about how his friends brought him to Jesus. You have heard that Jesus saw their faith. You have heard that Jesus told him that his sins were forgiven. You have heard about the ensuing argument between Jesus and the Pharisees about whether or not He had the authority to forgive sins, but the part that interested you the most is that Jesus healed the paralyzed man when He said to him, "Get up. Take your mat and go home." You have heard the reports about how the paralyzed man got up, took up his mat, and went home.

There is one that you love who is sick and ill. This person whom you love is sick unto death.

Furthermore you have heard about all of the other healings that Jesus did. You have heard about all of His other healings. You have heard about Him purifying ten lepers. You have heard about Him giving sight to the blind. You have heard about Him opening the ears of the deaf so that they could hear. You have heard about Him restoring the lame so that they could walk.

You have furthermore heard all of the reports of other miracles that Jesus did that did not involve healing. You have heard and believed the accounts. You have heard that He raised dead people back to life. You have heard and believed that He did that more than once.

You have heard and believed that Jesus Himself rose from the dead. You have heard and believed that He ascended into heaven. You have heard and believed that He sits at the right hand of the majesty in the heights. Surely from there He could hear prayer. Surely from there He still has the power to heal just like He did of old when He walked among us.

And there is one whom you love. They are sick. They are sick unto death. And you pray for them.

You pray to the One who sits at the right hand of the majesty in the high places. You pray to Jesus who healed the sick of old. You ask for healing.

You pray to One that you cannot see. You pray to One who does not speak audibly to you, but rather speaks to you through emissaries. You pray to One who when He gives His answer it is an answer that you can see, but you cannot hear it. If He gives an audible answer at all He delivers it to you through emissaries.

When you pray to Him, you call Him Lord. I hope that when you call Him Lord that is not simply a polite thing for you to say to Him. I hope that when you call Him Lord you are not doing so because it is social convention here at Immanuel Lutheran Church to call Him Lord. I hope that is not out of mere politeness that you call your father "Dad", your mother "Mom," me "Pastor," and Jesus "Lord." It would be even worse if you did it out of habit without any thought to what the word may mean.

When you pray to Him and call Him Lord you are confessing His divinity. I talked about this for a long time last Sunday and I will not belabor it again. Everything that we confessed in the Athanasian Creed last Sunday can be boiled down to calling Jesus "Lord." Lord is what the Jews called God in their Greek translation of the Old Testament. "Lord" is what the Romans called Caesar when they wanted to confess that Caesar was a god on earth. Therefore when anyone calls Jesus "Lord" they are confessing that Jesus is God and that everything that the Athanasian Creed and the other Christian creeds say about Him is true.

If Jesus is Lord, He can hear your prayer. If Jesus is Lord, He can answer your prayer. If Jesus is Lord, He has the authority to hear and answer your prayer. After all Jesus has ascended to the right hand of the majesty in the high places.

He commanded the wind and the waves and they obeyed Him. He commanded the water and it became wine. He commanded the loaves and the fishes and they multiplied. He spoke with authority and the people of His earthly appearance spread the report to you that He spoke with authority. If He spoke with authority then, how much more does He speak with authority now. He Himself announced after His resurrection that all authority in heaven and on earth was given to Him. If all authority in heaven and on earth is still His then He still commands the wind and the waves and they obey Him. He still rebukes fevers and they leave people. He still commands the lame to walk and they do. He still tells the dead to rise and they rise.

He is like a commander in the military. He receives his commands and obeys them because he is under authority. He also has soldiers under him. He tells one to go and he goes. He tells another to come and he comes. He tells one of them to do something and they do it. They are soldiers under authority. The commander in the army understands authority.

You, understand authority also. Your Lord has all authority in heaven and on earth. If He says it will happen, it will happen. If there is anyone to whom you should pray when someone you love is sick and the sickness is heading toward death, it is the Lord.

And so you pray.

When you pray you cannot see Him. You pray and the only assurance that He hears you is that He has ascended on high and has all authority. Surely someone who has ascended on high will hear your prayers. When you pray you cannot see Him. There is no vision. There is no encounter. Even the ancients who prayed and interacted with Jesus had more to go on than you do.

You have the reports of His miracles. And you have your prayers whenever it is that you schedule your time to pray them. That is what you have.

When the Lord gives an answer, He does not give it directly. The Lord does not shout the answer down from heaven. The Lord does not appear to you in a vision. The Lord does not leave you a note on

your pillow or a letter in the altar for me to deliver to you. The Lord does not send you a text message. There will be no facebook post from Him.

When the Lord does give an answer, He gives it through the emissaries that He has designated to deliver His answer. They do not have authority of their own. They have only the authority with which Jesus sends them. Their message is not their own. Their message is the one that Jesus told them to deliver. And when they deliver the message the message contains news of resurrections. There is news not only of His resurrection which is remarkable enough in and of itself, but of the resurrections of others. News of His resurrection may not be all that surprising. After all, was He not a righteous person? Wasn't He perfect in every way? Wasn't God pleased with Him? It is not surprising that such a one rose from the dead. But when we pray for the sick whom we love, we are praying for sinners. We are praying for the unrighteous. We are praying for those who have no claim that Jesus should do anything for them.

That is why it is remarkable that the reports that have come to you about Jesus are reports that contain not only the account of His resurrection, but also of the account that He raised others. The people that Jesus raised from the dead are more than one. More than one had this privilege of receiving the Lord's resurrection. That means that His resurrections are not limited. There is resurrection enough to go around. Others will rise. Others did rise when He died. And He is risen. He has authority over all. He has authority to raise anyone. He has authority to raise the one for whom you pray.

And so you pray. Pray for the sick one whom you love. Pray in the confidence of the authority of the One who rose from the dead. And even if the one who sick for whom you are praying should die, do not stop praying. Do not say at that moment that all is done and there is nothing more to do. Keep praying. If you stop praying when they die, then did you understand or believe the accounts of the Lord that have come down to you? Keep praying for the healing of that person because you are praying to the One who has all authority in heaven and on earth. You are praying to the One who raises the dead.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.