Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 73.6%

Weekly Readings will cover:
Sunday: Matthew 7:12 – 14
Monday: Matthew 7:15 – 20 & Luke 6:43 – 45
Tuesday: Matthew 7:21-29, 8:1 & Luke 6:46-49
Wednesday: Luke 7:1-10 & Matthew 8:5-13
Thursday: Luke 7:11-17
Friday: Preparation Day
Saturday: Sabbath

Current # of email addresses in the group: 730

We are back with another reading program week! Yay! I hope you all had a great Feast of Tabernacles wherever you were. I appreciate your patience with this program as I do my best to keep it going while trying to navigate all that life can bring. This week we will finish the Sermon on the Mount and continue into the days following.

As I start this program again, there are others who also have to start working on this program again. James Malizia in posting these online and putting the audio files together so people who prefer to listen instead of read has that option. Giovanni Troisi in Italy in translating this into Italian. There are likely others that I'm not even aware of that are helping this be utilized in other areas/countries. I thank everyone who is helping on this project. But as I get ready to send this out again, I want to specifically thank my friend and brother in Christ, Lud Kiramidjian. He goes through my draft and he fixes many typos, but also suggests edits to sentences to make them more coherent. He spares you all my many mistakes and I greatly appreciate his weekly dedication to helping this project be more useful. Thank you!

I hope you have enjoyed diving deep into this section of scripture (Sermon on the Mount). I know I learned a lot and will never view this section of scripture the same way.

Lastly, we are living in interesting times in the world right now. Much is happening and changing, and while we don't know what will ultimately come of it all, often prophecy advances from moments like this versus the status quo. Europe, Israel, the US, and other places too, are going through massive shifts. This is not a time to be lax in study, prayer or fasting. May God be with you all and may you ever be drawing closer to Him!

Current and archive of this reading program is available at:
https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/announcements/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep

The audio archive information is also available on our UCG Bay Area YouTube page here:

https://youtube.com/@ucgbayarea5792?si=EA_tacLBfv1XR3jH
You may actually prefer accessing it directly from this Playlist tab:
https://www.youtube.com/@ucgbayarea5792/playlists

3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 121

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 818 – SUNDAY: November 8th

Matthew 7:12-14

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 12 – This verse is often referred to as the "Golden Rule". As has already been mentioned in past Daily Deep Dive studies, the word "therefore" is a very important connection word that should cause us to consider what this teaching is building from. Clearly Jesus is connecting this teaching to His previous instructions to His disciples. Let's consider this in its immediate context. Jesus has just explained that God is a deeply loving Father who gives good gifts to His children. Jesus says God is that way to us, even though we are "evil" (verse 11). We not only want God to be good to us, but we want other people to be good to us, even though we are flawed humans and make mistakes. God is pushing us to raise our standards to treat other evil people in a good way, even though they too are evil and may not "deserve" it. Many commentaries also think that this "therefore" is meant to build not just on the previous verses, but on the previous two chapters. Back in Matthew 5:17, Jesus claimed, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill." We commented when reviewing that verse that this familiar Jewish phrase "Law and the Prophets" was used to apply to the entire Old Testament. We also spoke there that not only would He not do anything against or take away from all the words of the Old Testament, He would actually bring them to their "full" or "intended goal". With Matthew 5:17 and Matthew 7:12 forming bookends in a way, Jesus has challenged us to examine our actions, motives and heart --- and not just to look for the minimum requirements of God's law, but to push to become LIKE God

and Jesus Christ. Here, in the simplicity of all those teachings, we are shown that we should be treating people in positive/good ways, just like we want people to treat us. That's what God does to us even though we know we don't deserve it (and we all want that of course). Another interesting tidbit that I found interesting is that this teaching already existed, but in a more negative way. A Jewish teacher Hillel who lived around the time of Jesus Christ is credited in the Babylonian Talmud as saying, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor". The book of Tobit (4:15) says something similar. But that's stopping short of what Jesus taught us. The negative version says don't do harm to your neighbor, but the positive teaching of Jesus teaches us even more. Not only should we not do harm, we should do good. For example, not gossiping about someone is good, but going further than that and speaking highly of someone or defending their reputation is far better --- and that's what we would all wish someone would do for us.

Not stealing from someone is good, but helping someone who is struggling financially is far better. Jesus is describing righteous that doesn't just not do harm or avoid wrongdoing, but actively seeks to do good and seeks opportunities to love. Doesn't that summarize the teachings we've been covering in Matthew chapters 5 and 6?

Another important facet to remember here is this isn't just about giving everyone what they think they want. God doesn't do that. He gives us what is good for us. So, within this teaching is the maturity to examine what would truly be good and helpful for someone in the long term. Jesus is teaching us here that God's laws were all designed to produce a particular way of thinking and treating others. The entire Sermon on the Mount has been an effort by Jesus Christ to get us to consider who we truly are at our core and in our heart, not just outward obedience.

Verses 13-14 – Most believe that here Jesus now shifts into a new section of His sermon. Previously Jesus has challenged us to dig deeper into our motivations and hearts and examine whether we are really

becoming like the Father. He now shifts to asking us to choose our response.

In our translation of the Greek we can miss something with the word "Enter". It's a command in Greek (aorist imperative). Jesus isn't just explaining there are two choices. He's commanding us to enter through the one particular gate. This command in Greek allows that this decision isn't just made once (for example when we were first called) but occurs many times over the course of completing this action in totality. It's clear that Jesus expects us to be constantly making a choice to do what He has taught us over these previous chapters --- and clearly tells us what we should choose. Jesus is now going to present that choice through the following comparisons of two gates, two trees, two responses and two builders/foundations. Over-and-over throughout this new section, Jesus is emphasizing that we must choose.

We should also note that Jesus presents this right choice of following Him as BOTH a gate and a road. The gate suggests entry. The road suggests a journey. The world presents the idea that there are "many" paths to salvation, as if you can hold different religious beliefs, but they all lead to the same place. That simply is NOT true. Peter said clearly in Acts 4:12 "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Jesus Himself reveals He is the door to salvation in John 10:9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture." This narrow Way requires following Him, learning from Him, becoming like Him. This verse also tells us that after becoming a Christian the path is a difficult one. Many have wrongly believed in a health and wealth gospel. That following God and being obedient means we will be free of illness, or at least get healed if we are sick, and that we will have good jobs and make lots of money. The Bible truly teaches in Acts 14:22 "…. We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." This was said just after

showing that Paul was stoned and left for dead. The Greek word translated "tribulations" here is related to the Greek translated "difficult" in Matthew 7:14 (the same word family). This verse clearly shows that this is the door and the path we should choose, but that it's a narrow and difficult one. But it is absolutely the ONLY one that leads to life. This will never (during this age) be the popular and easy path. That is why He says there are "few who find it".

Jesus contrasts the correct door/path with another choice, wide gate and path that many go down that leads (per the Greek word used) to destruction, ruin, or loss. It's the age-old choice between life and death (compare Deuteronomy 30:15, 19 and Jeremiah 21:8). Jesus is not introducing an entirely new idea. This wrong choice certainly fits what many in the world choose. However, in the context of Matthew 5 & 6, I think we must understand that today many religious appearing people still choose the broad path. I'll remind you what we read in Matthew 5:20, "unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." Jesus has just spent two chapters explaining what God's righteousness actually looks like. Many of the Pharisees were not becoming truly like God. They had an appearance of righteousness but were on the wrong path. The choice is not just choosing to be religious or irreligious. This is an important warning.

As Jesus begins to conclude the Sermon on the Mount, He brings His listeners to a point of decision. It is not enough to understand God's righteousness; we must choose to live it. The Golden Rule reminds us that genuine obedience is more than simply avoiding sin. It means actively treating others with the love, mercy, and consideration we would desire for ourselves. But Jesus also warns that this way of life will not always be easy or popular. The broad road offers fewer restrictions and attracts many, while the narrow way requires self-denial, commitment, and perseverance. Yet only one leads to life. The question

for each of us is not whether we know where the narrow path is, but whether we are faithfully walking on it.

Day 819 – MONDAY: November 9th
Matthew 7:15-20 & Luke 6:43-45
Daily Deep Dive:
Matthew 7:15 – It's interesting that immediately after showing us the two paths, one narrow and difficult, and one wide, that Jesus now warns us about false prophets. This order and warning is significant, because it reveals that there are some walking on the wide path to destruction, that will be actively misleading others that this is the correct path to be on and that it leads to life (when it truly leads to death). False prophets can make the broad way appear righteous, acceptable and even desirable. Satan did this to Eve in the garden. The danger isn't always an obvious choice to abandon God. Sometimes it comes from someone who is claiming to represent Him.

Paul makes this so clear in his second letter to Corinth (2 Corinthians 11:13-15) where he wrote, "For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel (messenger) of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works."

The Greek ψευδοπροφήτης (pseudoprophētēs) is made up of two words, one meaning false or deceptive, and the other meaning someone who speaks forth a message, especially one claiming divine authority. We often think of a false prophet as claiming something will happen that then doesn't come true. That certainly can be a part of it as we see in Deuteronomy 18:20-22 (and I've certainly seen some of those in my lifetime around the world). But the biblical definition is broader than this. In Deuteronomy 13:1-5 God even shows that people

shouldn't follow someone who has even performed signs and wonders IF that person encourages them to follow other gods. The two scriptures together form a fuller picture. Is the prophetic claim true? Is the person directing people toward faithfulness to the true God? We will see Jesus return to this great idea of true faithfulness tomorrow in our reading of Matthew 7:21 through 23.

We understand that Sheep are often associated with God's people (compare John 10:1-16) where a wolf is a predator of the flock. The Greek here in Matthew 7:15 for "ravenous" is ἅρπαγες (harpages). It contains the meaning of greedy, predatory or inclined to take by force. It's a word that describes someone that is seizing or exploiting others. Jesus is not simply describing someone who misunderstood a passage of scripture. He's describing someone who looks one way outwardly, but it's a disguise of their inner motives and intentions. The disguise leads people to believe they are SAFE when they are in great danger. For this reason, Jesus tells us "beware", meaning, pay attention, be on guard or watch carefully. We don't want to be suspicious of everyone, but we also can't be naïve and ignorant in thinking that everyone is what they pretend to be.

Matthew 7:16 – Fruit is shown to grow and be a manifestation of the unseen process that goes on largely hidden. I have plants in my yard that look very similar. In fact by appearance alone, I would not know what fruit they would produce without knowing what they grow. It's the fruit they produce that reveals what that plant really is. The Greek idea of "know" used here (ἐπιγνώσεσθε - epignōsesthe) contains the idea of recognizing, identifying or coming to know. It's not someone's charisma, popularity, speaking ability, etc, that is the evidence of what's inside. It's their fruit --- the visible product of what the tree actually is. This shifts from appearance to results. Jesus here doesn't provide a list of fruits. We know that lists exist in God's Word, such as Galatians

5:22-23. We also have the Old Testament examples that we considered a bit ago where one is either leading people to obedience to the true God or away from Him. Does the teacher do "good to others" as we looked at this week in Matthew 7:12? Most of us through life have seen both. Jesus' clear point is that a plant produces according to its unseen nature.

Matthew 7:17-18 – This passage isn't meant to say that a Christian will never sin (compare 1 John 1:8), however the overarching governing direction of their life should reflect the transforming work of God's Spirit leading and working within them. Just as a healthy good fruit tree in your backyard may occasionally produce a bad, unfit for use, but it's still a good tree that produces good fruit.

It's also worth noting, numerous passages show that someone can repent and change, and begin yielding to God's Spirit and go from producing bad fruit to producing good fruit. But that isn't the context or focus of what Jesus is teaching here. The context here is that our hearts bring forth a type of fruit (either good or bad), and by observing a person's fruit over a period of time, we can know whether this is a person/teacher we should be listening to and learning from.

Matthew 7:19 – In Matthew 3:7-8, John the Baptizer said, "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance," Notice the connection to a coming "wrath to come" (judgement), but that they had a choice to repent and bear fruits worthy of that repentance.

The clear teaching is that fruit MUST be produced in one's life. Christianity is demonstrated by one's actions/works. A Christian in name only, that does not bear fruit, has a clear end if they do not repent and change.

Matthew 7:20 – Jesus repeats the statement from verse 16. This literary technique is called "*inclusio*", and the repetition marks the beginning and end of a section so as to reinforce the central idea. Here that central lesson is that genuine spiritual discernment requires examining fruit rather than relying on appearances.

Luke 6:45 – Luke's account focuses on something we understand but is still worth noting. Good fruit is because the heart is good and right. Evil comes because the heart is corrupted. What we store in our hearts (minds), eventually is what is shown to come out of our mouth and in our actions. The words "treasure" and "abundance" are connected through the idea that treasure deals with a "storehouse" where we keep things, and then as that accumulates in great abundance, it eventually overflows due to the excess. It's like a bowl that we put things in will eventually run out of room --- and things start spilling over from the bowl out onto the table. If we allow bitterness and evil to be what we store, it's only a matter of time before that comes spilling out in our lives. Throughout this Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has tried to get us to go beyond what is shown to spill out, and to get us to dig deeper to say, "but where did that ultimately come from?" Our hearts. That's what needs to be addressed when we see something we don't like.

Day 820 – TUESDAY: November 10th
Matthew 7:21-29, 8:1 & Luke 6:46-49
Daily Deep Dive:
We now come to a section of scripture that will bring us to the end of the Sermon on the Mount. Within this section we will cover some of the most sobering words of our Savior. Within this section of scripture is not a compare and contrast with irreligious people, but instead is

contrasting those who profess to follow God with those who actually follow Him.

Matthew 7:21 – Why is "Lord" repeated twice? Wouldn't it be enough to say, "Not everyone who says to me 'Lord', shall enter the kingdom of heaven"? In the 1st century, repeating someone's name or title was a common way of expressing urgency, affection or intensity (compare Luke 10:41 and 22:31). Therefore, this is meant to convey not just a casual profession of Jesus as Lord, but a real intensity and conviction that they see Him as Lord. This actually makes Jesus' statement even more sobering. A person can sincerely believe that they belong to Jesus Christ and still not enter the kingdom of God.
Jesus then contrasts this profession, with someone who "DOES THE WILL" of His Father. He therefore is showing that it's more than belief or profession of Jesus as Lord, but it's a transformed life that demonstrates through that life that the person is oriented to obeying the Father and becoming like God and Jesus Christ. This is consistent with other passages such as Matthew 12:50.

Sometimes people explain God's Will as something mysterious. Jesus has just spent His entire sermon explaining who we are to become and what God wants from us. The Father's Will for us therefore includes the very righteousness from our hearts and in our actions that Jesus has been teaching throughout these last three chapters. Those who become and do this will enter the Kingdom of God, and by contrast, those who don't, but simply, and maybe sincerely, profess Jesus Christ and His way, but don't do and become, will not.
That should be sobering.

Matthew 7:22 – Notice again the repetition of 'Lord'. In WHAT day will they say this ("that day")? The expression "in that day" is used throughout scripture to speak of the time of judgement. A future time of accountability for our lives and choices. Notice who we will have to

give account to: Jesus Himself. He will be Judge (compare John 5:22). "In that day" people will be making their case before Him. They will claim, we "prophesied in Your name", "cast out demons in Your name" and "performed wonders in Your name". But we shouldn't miss that **in all of this are accomplishments, NOT internal transformation**. As a minister of Jesus Christ, I will have a long list of accomplishments that I did in the name of Jesus. That's not enough. Paul Himself said in 1 Corinthians 9:27 (a scripture I remind myself of frequently) that "But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." Preaching to others can be an accomplishment. God used Paul to give me messages that turned many lives to Jesus Christ. That's wonderful. But at the end of the day, if he (Paul) didn't also become transformed and become like Jesus Christ in his heart/mind and in good works, then he would still be "disqualified" for the Kingdom of God. Again, notice what these individuals did NOT say. They didn't appeal to their growth in loving all mankind made in the image of God, they didn't appeal to their growth in humility, mercy, obedience, etc. Three times it talks about what they did in His name, but this exposes the contradiction between acknowledging Jesus authority verbally, but rejecting it internally in our hearts, mind and actions.

Matthew 7:23 – This verse contains some of the scariest words of the Bible for one who in sincerity believes in Jesus Christ: "I never knew you". Obviously, this isn't about not knowing someone exists or even information about someone. The Greek ἔγνων (egnōn) is about "recognizing" --- and can communicate more than just intellectual awareness. It here implies a personal relationship and acknowledgement of that relationship. If we are to become like Jesus Christ as a disciple of Him, then we should all be a recognizable reflection of Him. He should see us and see a reflection of Himself. That was discipleship in the 1st century.

There is something else very important here. This verse reveals that these individuals "practice lawlessness". This describes someone whose life is characterized by living outside of what Jesus has just taught throughout this sermon. This is meant to be in contrast to those who "do the will of the Father" in verse 21 to those who essentially do not. These scriptures blow away any ideas of "once saved always saved" or "free grace". Here, a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ should produce a life that increasingly looks like Jesus Christ and His Father.

It's also worth again noting, that not only did Jesus never do anything to abolish or diminish God's law, He condemns those who practice living outside of God's law. Jesus upholds God's law --- and throughout this sermon helps us to see more clearly the great calling of being a disciple of Jesus Christ and the internal transformation that it must produce.

Matthew 7:24 – In His final section of teaching as part of this sermon, Jesus brings it all home to again our choice in the matter. We can hear/read all three of these chapters, we can even understand and agree with them, but that is not enough. We MUST put these into action in our lives. These instructions must become our lives' devotion! Our lives should be characterized by these instructions and the fruit that grows will serve as proof that we didn't just hear and nod along, but that these words transformed everything about us.

Matthew 7:25 – Earlier this week we looked at the "difficult" path and the connection to trail/tribulations. Notice here, after the house is built, choices are made, storms came. Rain descended, floods came, winds blew, and it all BEAT on that house. But here in this verse, the foundation was solid, this life/house was built on the right things. This person became like Jesus Christ because they not only heard His words, but they applied them deeply.

In Israel, even in the 1st century, rain tended to come in just a few months and not all year long. During the dry seasons, dry streambeds and valleys could appear stable, but the ground you built upon could go from seeming stable to something altogether different when the rains came. Considering this ground only during the dry time wasn't enough. Thought had to be given to what it would be like in the midst of a storm. The lesson's obvious point is that the true quality of a foundation may not always be obvious until it is tested.
Both houses experienced the same storm and difficult events, but one stood, one did not. As Christians we WILL experience difficult situations. If we have built our lives on the sure foundation of Jesus Christ and applied His words in our lives, we will stand because of the sureness of that Foundation (Jesus Christ).

Luke 6:46 adds an additional statement before leading into the same general parable. He includes: "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?" It's the same point, emphasizing the same contradiction between simply professing versus actually putting these teachings into practice. Calling Him 'Lord, Lord' acknowledges His authority, but that only matters if we listen, obey and become what He has called us to become.

Luke 6:48 - Another detail Luke adds is that the builder "dug deep". Luke is emphasizing the deliberate effort to penetrate deeply in order to be secure. This takes time and effort. It's fairly easy to listen to sermons and nod, but to apply sermons takes great effort. Most Christians understand we must forgive, but to actually forgive takes great effort. I could go on, but you all understand the point here.

The great contrast through this Sermon on the Mount is not between those who know Jesus Christ and the rest of the world who don't. It is between a claim to be religious and right with God and what that really looks like. Which will we be? It's our choice.

Matthew 7:28-8:1 – These teachings of Jesus Christ in the last 3 chapters astonished those who heard. His teachings stood out from what they typically heard. They also stood out because of how He taught. The NET Notes on this states: "A study of Jewish rabbinic interpretation shows that it was typical to cite a list of authorities to make one's point. Jesus addressed the issues directly, in terms of his own understanding, without citing other teachers." Jesus didn't explain common teachings or what others believed. He taught with authority (which He of course had directly from God the Father). As chapter 8 begins we find that a great multitude follows Him as He comes down from the mountain. But it's important to understand that just because they followed Him does not mean they applied what they heard. It's great that they heard, and it's great that they followed, but His warnings here would have to be applied. They would have to apply what they heard and become a reflection of His teachings.

Day 821 – WEDNESDAY: November 11th

Luke 7:1-10 & Matthew 8:5-13

Daily Deep Dive:

Luke 7:1 – After finishing His sermon, Jesus now returns back to His home base in Capernaum. I'll remind you that Capernaum was a town located on the Northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. This was a major trade and economic center at the time. Jesus most likely operated out of Simon Peter's home. If you want more of a refresher, we covered more on Capernaum in Sunday and Monday of Week 113.

Luke 7:2 – A centurion was a military officer who was typically responsible for approximately 100 soldiers (although the exact unit strength varied). NET Notes state: "The Roman troops stationed in Judea were auxiliaries, who would normally be rewarded with Roman citizenship after 25 years of service. Some of the centurions throughout

the region may have served originally in the Roman legions (regular army) and thus gained their citizenship at enlistment." [END]
In excavating Capernaum, they found the remains of a small military garrison. This centurion likely commanded this small garrison/military base. With Capernaum strategically located at the Via Maris, it makes sense that Rome would want a military presence in this city to ensure peace, but also protect the taxes that were collected from all the trade and services that took place here.

This man had a servant/slave who is sick to the point of being about to die. I spent some time digging into the value or relationship that the centurion had to this slave. The Greek ἔντιμος (entimos) that can mean honored, highly valued, precious or dear. As we consider how Luke meant for us to read this, based just on this one word, there would normally be two options. One would be to say that this was a very valuable slave to the centurion (perhaps based on his reputation, knowledge, experience, etc.) and that the centurion didn't want to lose that value. However, I believe there are a couple of clues that reveals that the centurion likely cared personally for this slave. A personal dative pronoun is used which ties the worth of the slave that is subjective to the centurion's perspective (not necessarily the world's perspective). But perhaps the strongest linguistic clue is that while the word "slave" (Greek **δοῦλος** - *doulos*) is used in verse 2, but in verse 7 when it says "But say the word, and my servant will be healed", the word is no longer "slave" (Greek **δοῦλος** - *doulos*) but is changed to the Greek παῖς (pais) meaning contains the foundational meaning of "child" or "boy". Scholars note that this softens the relationship, implying a familiar bond or paternal affection. In the Roman world, and under Roman law, if a slave became sick or crippled, they were usually neglected or discarded to save on food and medical costs. The actions of the centurion go against this typical norm. He doesn't discard him, or neglect him, but instead uses his significant social influence and goes out of his way to try to save the life of this person. While a minority of

commentators argue the text strictly implies economic value, the strong consensus across translation history concludes that Luke intended to highlight the **centurion's extraordinary personal compassion.**

Luke 7:3-5 – We will see a difference in Luke and Matthew's accounts that we need to talk through a bit. In Western writing, like the United States, we want details listed chronologically, and we want details preserved exactly. We get uncomfortable with the idea that events can be moved around or details omitted in order to focus on a particular message or lesson being taught. But ancient writers, including the Gospel writers, often approached history differently. Their goal was not always to provide a precise, moment-by-moment account of everything that happened, but to faithfully communicate what took place and, just as importantly, what those events meant. They might summarize conversations, leave out intermediate steps, or emphasize different aspects of the same event depending on the point they wanted to convey. That doesn't mean they were being dishonest or that their accounts contradict one another. It means we need to be careful not to impose our modern expectations of historical writing onto ancient texts. Sometimes, what initially appears to be a contradiction is simply two writers telling the same true story from different perspectives, emphasizing different details to teach us something important.

One additional point worth understanding when comparing this account in Luke with the parallel account in Matthew 8:5-6. In the ancient world, someone acting as an authorized representative could be described as though the person who sent him had acted personally. It was common to attribute action or statement to the person who authorized it, even when someone else physically performed it. Adam Clarke's commentary states: "In the parallel place in Matthew, he is represented as coming to Christ himself; but it is a usual form of speech in all nations, to attribute the act to a person which is done not by

himself, but by his authority." [END] This is known as the "principle of agency". One example of this we've already seen is that Jesus Christ is accredited with baptizing more people than John the Baptizer (John 4:1-2), but then it tells us, "though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples." The baptisms could be accredited to Jesus because they were done by His authority.

So when we look at these two accounts, Matthew records as if Jesus is speaking directly to the centurion, where Luke includes much more details around a delegation and friends being involved. Matthew may not want His account to get bogged down in the details of delegations/friends, when the real point he is capturing is about the faith of the centurion. Luke's account seems much more detail focused, as we discussed in the introduction to his account back when we started the New Testament.

Regarding these "elders of the Jews", Adam Clarke's commentary states: "These were either magistrates in the place, or the elders of the synagogue which the centurion had built (see Luke 7:5). He sent these, probably, because he was afraid to come to Christ himself, not being a Jew, either by nation or religion." [END] It's also worth noting that since this centurion worked closely with the Jews, and obviously has their respect, and likely would have known and considered that Jews didn't go into a Gentile's home due to their belief that it would make them ritually unclean. This teaching is not found in the Old Testament and came from oral tradition (man-made fence around the law).

It's interesting the case they make for Jesus to help this centurion. They show him to be a good man ("deserving") and that he has an unusually close relationship with the Jewish nation/people --- and has constructed a synagogue for them. We don't get a lot of details here. Some commentaries believe this centurion must have been a proselyte to their religion. It's generally assumed that this centurion used the

soldiers under his command, during down times, to construct this synagogue. Some assume the centurion funded it. We don't know. The focus is that these Jews are advocating that Jesus help this man's servant --- and that they have an unusually close relationship to him due to his good qualities.

Luke 7:6 –The humility of the centurion should be noted throughout the story. Others have praised him and touted his good deeds and character, but he himself isn't praising himself. This shows that a person can be highly respected by others and still possess genuine humility before God. I believe we are to notice that difference. As Jesus nears his home, the centurion dispatches friends to stop Him.

I want to also note that while the Jewish tradition said that Jesus would be unclean by entering this Gentile's home, Jesus did not follow those traditions. He perfectly followed God's law, but often He and His disciples came into conflict with the Jewish man-made traditions.

The message of the centurion is one of authority and power. And in addition to the faith of the centurion, it's central to the story. The centurion believes that whatever is causing his servant/slave to be suffering MUST respond to Jesus' command. He understands that Jesus doesn't need to travel to his house, touch the servant, perform some elaborate ritual --- He only needs to give the command. This is unique. Throughout the Gospels, many sought to touch Jesus or get Him to come to their particular location to perform a miracle. There is nothing wrong with those requests, but the centurion understood something they didn't. Jesus wasn't limited by physical proximity. This is profound for anyone, but remarkable for this centurion.

Matthew 8:11 – The word "sit down" is not in the Greek. The Greek says "to lean back" or "lay". Other translations capture this:
Young's Literal Translation states: "shall come and recline (at meat)"

The NET chose to do: “to share the banquet”. Here’s the NET Note on why they made that choice: “*Grk* “and recline [at a meal].” First century middle eastern meals were not eaten while sitting at a table, but while reclining on one’s side on the floor with the head closest to the low table and the feet farthest away. The phrase “share the banquet” has been used in the translation to clarify for the modern reader the festive nature of the imagery.” [END] The image is that these people (Gentiles) from all over the world would be at the banquet with the Forefathers of the nation of Israel, showing clearly that these individuals are faithful and pleasing to God, just as the Jews would clearly understand about the Forefathers.

Matthew 8:12 – In contrast, Jesus clearly shows that many are direct decedents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (“sons of the kingdom”), would not qualify to be at that same banquet.

Day 822 – THURSDAY: November 12th
Luke 7:11-17
Daily Deep Dive:
Verse 11 – Nain was about 6 miles southeast of Nazareth or 20 to 25 miles from Capernaum (commonly identified with the modern village of Nein). An interesting geographical connection is that Nain was not far from Shunem, the location associated with Elisha raising the Shunammite woman’s son (2 Kings 4:18-37). This might be connected to the crowd’s comments in verse 16.

Verse 13 – This is an amazing statement. Jesus sees the mother of the dead son. Unlike the previous story of the Centurion, here there is no plea or asking of anything by this poor widow. Jesus sees her and considers her situation. As a widow, she already had lost her husband, and now she’s lost her only son, which means she has lost the family provider. It’s worth noting that the Greek uses a word for “only son” that can often mean “only child” period. She’s now likely all alone. Her

life is about to become much harder, and Jesus has compassion. This is consistent with the nature of the God Family where God's law repeatedly emphasizes God's great concern for widows (consider Exodus 22:22-23, Deuteronomy 10:18 and Psalm 68:5). Jesus is demonstrating the very compassion toward the vulnerable that God repeatedly commanded His people to show --- and He does so without anyone asking. The Greek indicates a "deep emotion" that Jesus felt, often associated with internal organs. This wasn't just intellectual sympathy. This entire miracle originates with the deep compassion and profound concern of Jesus. Luke will use this same verb with the parable of the Good Samaritan and the father's response in the Prodigal Son.

I'll also note that burial usually happened very quickly. It's very likely that the young man had died just that day and they typically buried them outside the city (inhabited areas).

Verse 14 – The KJV says that Jesus touched "the bier" and NKJV says "open coffin". The Greek is a bit general for a container or carrier of the dead, but often this term was used for open frame, board or couch used to carry the dead out to burial. That appears to be likely here. This is likely more of an open stretcher than a ridged enclosed coffin.

There was no elaborate show or process. Jesus simply commanded the dead young man to rise. The boy was dead and couldn't hear of course --- and yet it didn't matter. Jesus commanded and the dead young man came back to life. There was no gradual recovery or rehabilitation, the boy rose and began to speak. What an exciting time the resurrections picture in God's plan when again Jesus will command and the dead will rise. There too, it will be dramatic and complete healing in a moment.

Verse 15 – It's interesting that Jesus presents the young man to his mother. This seems to be a clear allusion to 1 Kings 17:23 where Elijah

raised the widow's son at Zarephath. After the boy is restored to life, Elijah brings him down and gives him to his mother. This makes verse 16 seem like the next logical connection for the people.

Verse 16 – Consider the miracles of Elijah and Elisha in 1 Kings 17 and 2 Kings 4. The word translated "fear" can also mean "reverence" or "awe" depending on the context. Clearly here in seeing them glorify God, it is more "awe" than "fear" (such as dread).

As we consider this account, and close out our reading plan week, we should be encouraged not only by Christ's power over death and the hope of the resurrection, but also by His tender concern for those who are hurting. The same Jesus Christ who noticed this widow's sorrow understands our suffering today.

Day 823 – FRIDAY: November 13th
Preparation Day

Day 824 – SATURDAY: November 14th
Sabbath