

BIBLE READING DAY 13, FRIDAY: MARCH 11

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant & Raises a Widow's Son

Matthew 8:5–13; Luke 7:11–17

Now as Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him pleading, "Sir, my servant is lying at home paralyzed and in great distress."

"I will come and heal him," said Jesus.

"Sir," replied the centurion, "I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. For I, too, am a man under authority, and I have soldiers under me. And I say to this man, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

When Jesus heard this, he marveled, and said to those who were following him, "I tell you truly, I have not found such great faith in all Israel. I say to you, many will come from the east and the west and sit down around the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the heirs of the kingdom will be cast into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Then he said to the centurion, "Go your way; it shall be done for you just as you have believed." And the servant was healed that moment.

Soon after that, Jesus went to a town called Nain, with his disciples and a large crowd. As he drew near to the town gate, a man who had died was being carried out for burial, the only son of his widowed mother. Many people from the town were with her. When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity for her.

"Do not weep," Jesus said, walking up and putting his hand on the funeral pallet, and the pallbearers stopped. "Young man," said Jesus, "I say to you, rise." The man who had been dead sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. And all the people were filled with reverence and awe, and they began to praise God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has visited his people!"

And this report concerning Jesus spread through all Judea and all the surrounding country.

Jesus Defends John's Ministry, Luke 7:18–35

The disciples of John told him of all these things. Then John called two of his disciples to him and sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to look for another?"

When the men had come to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptizer sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to look for another?'"

That same hour, Jesus healed many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits and gave sight to many who were blind. So he said to the messengers, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard—how the blind receive sight, the lame walk, lepers are healed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is the man who finds in me no occasion to take offense."

When the messengers of John had departed, Jesus began to speak to the people about John:

*"What did you go out to the wilderness to see—a reed shaken by the wind? What did you go out to see—a man dressed in expensive clothes? Behold, those who wear fine clothes and live in luxury are in kings' courts. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you—and more than just a prophet! This is he of whom it is written, '**Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way before you.**' I tell you, among those born of women, there is no one greater than John. Yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." And all the people who gave heed to John—even the tax collectors—acknowledged the*

justice and righteousness of God by submitting to John’s baptism. But the Pharisees and the scribes, by refusing John’s baptism, rejected God’s purpose for them.

“To what shall I compare the men of this generation? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling one to another, ‘We played the flute for you, but you did not dance; we sang a funeral dirge, but you did not weep.’ For John the Baptizer came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He is demon possessed.’ And the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Behold, a glutton and a wine drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified by all her children.”

Jesus Welcomes the Weary Matthew 11:25–30

At that time Jesus said, “Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I praise you for hiding these things from the ‘wise’ and the ‘learned’ and revealing them to children. Yes, Father, such was your gracious will.”

“All things have been put in my charge by my Father,” Jesus said, “and no one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart. You will find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Jesus Anointed at Simon’s House Luke 7:36–50

One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, and Jesus entered the Pharisee’s house and sat down at the table. And a certain woman in the town—a sinner with a bad reputation, when she learned that Jesus was having dinner in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of perfume and came and stood behind him, beside his feet, weeping. And she began to wash his feet with her tears and to wipe them with her hair. And she kissed his feet and anointed them with the perfume.

When the Pharisee saw this, he said to himself, “If this fellow were really a prophet, he would know who this woman is who is touching him and what kind of person she is, for she is a notorious sinner.”

“Simon,” said Jesus, “I have something to say to you.”

“Speak, Master,” he replied.

“A certain money-lender had two debtors, one of whom owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they were unable to pay, he excused them both from their obligations. Now which of them will love him most?”

“I suppose,” answered Simon, “the one whom he excused from the larger debt.”

“You are right,” replied Jesus. Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house as a guest, and you gave me no water to wash my feet; but she has washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss; but from the time I came in, she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil; but she has anointed my feet with perfume. Therefore, I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for her love is great. But he to whom little is forgiven has little love.”

Then Jesus said to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven.”

Then those who were sitting at the table with him began to say to themselves, “Who is this fellow who even presumes to forgive sins?”

But Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

Approximate Timeline of Jesus’s Public Ministry

EARLY LIFE	EARLY MINISTRY	1 st Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	2 nd Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER	3 rd Feast of BOOTHES	WINTER	FINAL PASSOVER
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DEVOTIONAL DAY 13 (FRIDAY MARCH 11)

The Only One We Have to Fear is ... God Himself

Based on Matthew 8:5-13, 11:25-30; Luke 7:11-50

Hey, would you look at that: Day 13 falls on Friday, unofficially making it Friday the 13th! Superstitions are funny things to those of us who don't put any faith in them. But, to many, these are real concerns, and they live their lives in such a way as to avoid violating or crossing paths with any superstitious phenomena. What in life do you live in fear of? Is it a real fear, or is it a phobia? Is it likely, or unlikely?

Fear is real. No matter what your fear and where it comes from, it has a real place in our minds and lives. Why is fear so significant? Why do we let it control our lives or impact choices we make? Partially, because God made us that way. God gave us fear for a good reason, but like everything else in this world we live in, it is in a fallen state. Fear has become a thing that can be far more harmful in our lives than God ever intended.

Do you have sin in your life that you fear God's wrath over? The sinful woman who anointed Jesus' feet with oil certainly did. Her response over that sin was the best she had to offer, and Jesus forgave that sin. Sin is a fact of the fallen state of our world and our souls before salvation. We no longer need to fear sin if we are in Christ, yet we should not let that lack of fear lead us into more sin.

What about the fear of illness? Well, that seems to be a timely question! Remember the centurion's words to Jesus, *"Just say the word and I know it will be done, for I am a man under authority myself."* Realize that God can and will do all that He says without fail! Even so, God does have a plan and that may sometimes include suffering illness. Jesus also said, *"in this life you will have trouble, but do not fear, for I have overcome the world."*

Life leads to death; it is inevitable, right? Certainly, without Christ it is. Why do we, as Christians, fear death? We shouldn't, for Christ has come and He has died and risen. Yet, the fear remains because we still live in a fallen world.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Jesus, however, said, *"Fear the one who can destroy the body and soul in hell."* That is something truly to be feared.

In the end, there is much that we can take comfort in. The Word is our strongest foundation, a fortress in which we may find refuge. Through that Word, Christ, and our ability to connect with Him in prayer is revealed. Let us have faith like the centurion to know that Christ is on our side and that if He decides to do something, He will. And remember, it is said that the Bible contains the command, "do not fear," 365 times in some form or fashion, one for every day, whether it is lucky or superstitiously unlucky! I think God wanted to drive that point home, don't you?

Most Gracious Heavenly Father, remind us throughout each and every moment of every day that You are in control and that the answer to our fear is trust in Your good will. Renew in us a spirit of prayer; strengthen and embolden us in that spirit. Remind us that You eagerly await anything we might desire to bring to You in prayer. Finally, Father, prove to those of us in doubt that fear is a healthy part of our lives and protect us from broken fear that might lead us astray. We love You, Father, and we thank You for all the blessings that we fail to see. Amen.

--By David Bertrand

WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ:

WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME?

PRAYER: WHAT DID I SAY TO GOD?

ACTS OF PRAYER: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION (How God Can Supply Needs)

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