

**“Least in the Kingdom” (7-30-2017)**

**Special Notes:** Communion, DR report, and Kid’s announcements: 3<sup>rd</sup> class & Christina

**Open: A garden & A home in the rubble of Olivares**

**Main Text: Luke 7:16-28 (Preview the Passage – John in prison, Jesus raised the dead & gaining notoriety)**

**Luke 7:16-19 (ESV)**

(16) Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" (17) And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country. (18) The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, (19) calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

**Note:** Sometimes, you just have to ask – Jesus, what’s the deal?

**Luke 7:21-22 (ESV)**

(21) In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. (22) And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them."

**Note:** Jesus shows & tells . . . healings, preaching, dead raised!!! He addresses and encourages John in the midst of his doubts and personal trial. Also, you would think the dead being raised would be the climax, but there is one thing worse than being dead . . .

Being alive but hopeless, but through Jesus the poor receive good news!

But that’s also not the last thing Jesus says . . .

**Luke 7:23 (ESV)**

“And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

**Note:** A better translation is “scandalized” or a stumbling stone. Blessed are you if you don’t lose your way

**C.G. Moore (reflecting on Luke 7:23)**

“I know of no hours more trying to faith than those in which Jesus multiplies evidences of His power and does not use it . . . there is need of much grace when messengers come back saying: “Yes, He has all the power, and is all that you have thought; but He said not a word about taking you out of prison.”

**Note:** Jesus simply reminds him that a special blessing awaits those who do not fall into the trap of hope deferred but continues by God’s grace to trust.

**Luke 7:24-27 (ESV)**

(24) When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (25) What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts. (26) What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. (27) This is he of whom it is written, "'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'

**Note:** Jesus has confidence in John, and he honors him before the crowd. Jesus says remember John isn't in the King's court! He's just in range to hear the lavish parties (including the one that will soon lead to his death) while sitting in a lonely prison cell.

**Luke 7:28-30 (ESV)**

I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. (29) When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, having been baptized with the baptism of John, (30) but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

**Note:** Jesus levels the playing field . . . the least in the kingdom is on par with John. He brings people to their own decision point, and the least praise God, while the "greater" reject God's purpose over their lives.

**Closing: Christina from Olivares . . .**

A **garden** among the rubble

A **home** among the shacks

A **woman** among the hopeless . . . one of the least of these – a faithful follower of Jesus

(Then, show her picture)