

Whose Child Are You?

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[0:00] Which is on the pages. Page 1034 in the church. Bibles. So Luke chapter 7. At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, illnesses and evil spirits.

And gave sight to many who were blind. 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 are cleansed. The deaf hear. The dead are raised. The good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.

After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John. What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see?

A man dressed in fine clothes? No. Those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? A prophet?

[1:34] Yes, I tell you. And more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it was written. I will send my messengers ahead of you who will prepare your way before you.

I tell you, among those born of women, there is no one greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right because they had been baptized by John.

But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves because they had not been baptized by John. Jesus went on to say, To what then can I compare the people of this generation?

What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other. We played the pipe for you and you did not dance. We sang a dirge and you did not cry. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine.

And you say, He has a demon. The son of man came eating and drinking. And you say, Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners. But wisdom is proved right by her children.

[2:50] That's the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thank you, Darren. Good morning, St. Silas. Great to be with you.

We're ticked over into the afternoon. Good afternoon. Great privilege to be opening up God's word. My name's Tim on staff here. Let's pray as we come to these words of Jesus in Luke 7. Father, we thank you that you're a God who speaks.

You haven't left us by ourselves to work out, to guess who you are or what you've done for us, but you've given us your word. And sometimes we come to your word and we get passengers that are, that get under our skin a little bit.

And we pray that that would be the case today as Jesus talks about wisdom. Father, we ask that you would help us to see him clearly, that we might learn wisdom, that we might live with wisdom.

We pray that in Jesus' name. Amen. If you really want to insult someone, and I appreciate that's not how most sermons begin.

[4:01] If you really want to insult someone, you question the morality of their parents. If you think back to your high school days, which was in very recent memory for all of you, if you think back to your high school days, the bit of fun, the argument with a friend that starts, it's jovial until someone mentions the mother, and then it fires up, right?

It all gets very intense. And it's not just a thing of playgrounds. Classic works of art throughout history have reflected the insult of the parents. In Monty Python and the Holy Grail, there's that scene where there's the French knights, and they're taunting King Arthur and the English as they come up to the castle, and they say, you don't frighten us, sons of a silly person.

Your mother was a hamster, and your father smelt of elderberries. One of the great lines in all of cinema. Beautiful stuff. If you really want to insult someone, you question the morality of the parents.

And although they're quite ridiculous insults, and they're a little bit silly, the logic of the insult is something like this. You are who you are, and you behave the way that you behave because of who you have been formed by.

Your mum and your dad, your friends, the institutions of which you were a part, a person is known by the company they keep.

[5:30] And as we continue our journey in Luke's Gospel today, as we come to Luke chapter 7, we come up with a really, we come up against a really interesting question.

I think it's actually a really probing question for us, if we allow it to be. Whose child are you?

Whose child are you? At the end of our passage, at the very last verse, verse 35, Jesus says, but wisdom is proved right by all her children. Some are the children of wisdom, and some are not.

Whose child are you? Now, last week, we jumped ahead a little bit in Luke to look at chapter 8. This week, we're back in chapter 7. Three points for us.

They're in the outline, which is in the service sheet you received on your way in. Abraham's children meet Israel's servant. That's the first section of our reading. Then former heirs are surpassed by kingdom children.

[6:41] That's the second section. The final one is folly's children and wisdom's children. They're sort of contrasted a little bit. Here's a tip. As we meditate on this passage, as we let this get under our skin a little bit, the last verse in each of those sections is particularly helpful for us as we ask and answer that question, whose child are you?

So let's get started. The outline's there. Bible's open, I hope, to Luke chapter 7. Open them up now if they've fallen shut. Point one, Abraham's children meet Israel's servant. Verse 18 of Luke chapter 7.

John's disciples told him about all these things. Jesus has been healing people. Jesus has been performing miracles. And John the Baptist's disciples have reported back to him.

Calling two of them, he sent them to the Lord, to Jesus, to ask, are you the one who is to come? Or should we expect someone else? John the Baptist has popped up on a few occasions through Luke's gospel so far.

You might be forgiven for thinking that he's one of those sort of minor characters that you can easily just forget about, you don't have to pay too much attention to. But John the Baptist is really significant for us in understanding who Jesus is.

[8:02] Because John, he stands as the last prophet, the last prophetic voice of Israelites who were looking forward to the coming of the Messiah.

So he's more like the prophets of the Old Testament than he is others in the New Testament. And so he's looking forward to the coming of Jesus. He's in each one of the four gospels.

And he does the same thing in each one of them. And Luke chapter 1, verses 16 to 17, tells us what John's role would be. He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God.

And he will go on before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

John's ministry is about helping people, helping Israel to repent of disobedience and anticipate, wait for the Messiah.

[9:18] And then when John pops up on the scene in chapter 3, he challenges people as to whether they are actually true Israelites. So as he refers to them, Abraham's children. Are you truly Abraham's children?

Luke 3, verse 8, produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our father. For I tell you that out of these stones, God can raise up children for Abraham.

John the Baptist's question to people of his day as they're awaiting Jesus coming, whose child are you? Are you a child of Abraham? If you are, then you will repent of your disobedience and you will wait for the Messiah.

So by chapter 3, John has this growing body of disciples around him. He has baptised them. They're living for the kingdom of God. They're Abraham's true children.

And then we don't hear about him at all as Jesus' ministry picks up in chapters 4 and 5 and 6 and into chapter 7. But then John comes again and he asks Jesus, Are you the one who is to come?

[10:26] Are you the Messiah? Are you the one we've been waiting for? Or should we expect someone else? And Jesus replies back in our passage now with a list of six things in verse 22, all of which are listed in Isaiah, the Old Testament book, as things which would be done by Israel's servant, Israel's true servant, Israel's Messiah.

And they are all things that we see in Jesus' ministry through the gospel. And Jesus says to John, the last verse of our section, Blessed is anyone, John, who does not stumble on account of me.

Blessed is anyone who does not stumble, fall over, trip up on account of me. The next step for Abraham's children is to come to Jesus.

And to not come to Jesus is to stumble on your walk. It's to miss out on being a true child of Abraham. Those who have truly had Abraham as their spiritual father who'd been moulded by him, shaped by him, will be longing for Abraham's Messiah.

They will come to Jesus. If they've been reading the Bible carefully and they've been looking in the book of Isaiah for who the Messiah is, then they will come to Jesus.

[12:04] Now we don't hear again from John the Baptist in Luke's gospel. And presumably that is because at this point, John the Baptist hands his disciples over to follow Jesus.

The one who we were waiting for has now come so I can step back and you can follow him. Scripture is now fulfilled.

That's the mark of a Christian leader, incidentally. Stand on the authority of the Bible and be happy to step back so that people only see Jesus.

Some of you might have heard the news through the week and Alan mentioned Gafcon in his prayers, intercessions. Gafcon, which is the body of global Anglicans to which St Silas belongs, released a statement encouraging biblical Anglicans to come together and stop looking to the Archbishop of Canterbury as an instrument of communion.

Our communion, our union together as Christians around the world, as Anglican believers around the world, should come, as Anglicanism has always done, from the gospel as it is laid out in the plain words of Scripture.

[13:23] I'm so thankful that we are affiliated with Gafcon. I'm so thankful that the church plant will be as well. But here's the point. There are decisions to be made in 2025 about who you look to for spiritual leadership.

And who you look to for spiritual leadership will mould you and will shape you. You become its child. And as Jesus sends the reply back to John the Baptist, his expectation for Christian leaders is that they will stand on the authority of Scripture and live in response yearning for people to follow Jesus.

John is quoted elsewhere in John's gospel as saying about Jesus, he must become greater, I must become less. Search for leaders like that.

For blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me, Jesus says. Second point for this morning, former heirs are surpassed by kingdom children.

Verse 24, after John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John. So we're into like the second scene of our Bible reading, right? The first one was this interaction between Jesus and these people who've come from John the Baptist and he's been talking with them and he sends them back and then he turns and speaks to the crowd.

[15:00] Anyone who's taught children knows the value of the rhetorical question. Joanne modelled this for us before in our family focus. We played the game with the light, remember?

When the lights went down and Joanne asked, now if I'm going to light up the room, where do I put my lamp? And she said, do I put it under the lectern? No, Joanne, don't put it there.

Do I put it under a bowl? And all the kids are down the front and they say, no, don't do that. Do I put it on a stand? Yes! Put it on a stand, Joanne.

It's teaching something that's obvious, but it's reinforcing it to make a point. Jesus does the same thing here. Luke 7, 24, to the crowd.

What did you go out to the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? No, Jesus, that's not what we went out for.

[16:03] Well, if not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. What did you go out to see?

a prophet? Yes, Jesus, a prophet. I tell you, more than just a prophet, Jesus continues, this is the one about whom it is written, I will send my messenger ahead of you who will prepare your way before you.

I tell you, among those born of women, there is no one greater than John. yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

It's the last verse in the section, helpful for us to meditate on. None are greater than John, but the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

This is so important to get right if we're to understand Jesus. John is the model Israelite, he's the prophetic voice who has been really helpfully and faithfully doing his job of pointing people to the coming Messiah.

[17:19] You can't outperform him spiritually, you can't match him in terms of his zeal. And yet, anyone who is in the kingdom of God is greater because to be in the kingdom of God is to know Jesus as king, is to know the Messiah who John was waiting for, is to know the one who rules it all.

And anyone who knows Jesus as king is more privileged than John, who was the last person to be looking forward, because we've seen reality.

True children of the kingdom enjoy greater clarity about the universe, about God, about humanity, about salvation, about everything, than what John the Baptist had.

Because all of that is revealed in Jesus as king. Children of the kingdom of God are the greatest children that there have ever been.

Not because you're smart or beautiful or talented or because you can do so much for the kingdom, it's actually despite the fact that we fail at doing all these things that we're in.

[18:43] You're great because the kingdom that you are in is the grandest story of salvation and glory and majesty, full stop.

And it's yours. So you are great. Because you're included in all of that. If you were in the crowd on that day, as Jesus is talking about these things and he's asking these questions to the crowd, how are you responding?

When he says with the last words in each of these sections, blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me, how are you responding? Do you want to follow him?

The one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than John? What's your response? Do you want to be in that kingdom? If yes, if you're a child of that kingdom, which is just accepting that invitation of Jesus, if that kingdom and its king become your parent, your friend, your institution, your mentor, your coach, then you will start to be shaped by that kingdom, moulded by it, you become its child.

It means you no longer live here primarily as a citizen of earth, but as a temporary resident here, and your true citizenship is eternal, that changes you.

[20:38] It changes you, it changes your priorities, it changes your decision making, it changes your attitude, it produces what the Bible calls, and what Jesus here calls wisdom.

How to live rightly in God's universe. Amy mentioned before when she was giving the promo for the Roots Plus seminar tonight on dating, thinking about how the wisdom of God in the world can be applied to dating, it can be applied to anything.

Wisdom doesn't come easily, it's something that takes time and we need to work on it and grow it. wisdom is what our final section today concerns itself with.

Verses 29 to 35, folly's children and wisdom's children. Luke gives a bit of a summary statement in verse 29 as to what's been sort of going on around Jesus and John the Baptist and some of the people around him.

So, verse 29, all the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words acknowledge that God's way was right because they had been baptized by John.

[21:56] But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves. That's a strong line, isn't it? The Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves because they had not been baptized by John.

That might be a shock to you today to hear that you can reject God's purpose for yourselves depending on what you think about Jesus. What's going on here?

There's two groups. There's the tax collectors and the Pharisees. The tax collectors, they're the ones who know that they are sinners. And the Pharisees don't have that clarity.

The tax collectors and others like them, they'd been baptized by John. They had repented of their disobedience, they'd repented of their sin, they were awaiting the Messiah.

And so when Jesus comes, they're on board with Jesus. They agree with him. And then you have the Pharisees. Now at this point in the gospel, the Pharisees aren't hell-bent on killing Jesus.

- [23:10] They're just sort of armchair critics who are kind of this Jesus guy is a bit interesting, what do we make of him, do we like Jesus? They're deliberating, but they don't have a sense that anything that Jesus says is applicable to them.

Because they hadn't been prepared by John. They haven't repented of their sin, they probably don't think there's much sin to repent of. And so they're not prepared to come to Jesus as the king.

And therefore they reject God's purpose for themselves. If you're wondering what God's purpose for you is, if you find yourself wondering, what am I supposed to do with this decision?

Do I pursue this path? Do I not pursue that path? Let me tell you what God's purpose for you is, be a child in his kingdom.

And as a child in his kingdom, while you're living here on earth, do whatever seems right with as much wisdom as you can glean. And the more you study the scriptures and the spirit illuminates it so you can understand, the more you spend time with trusted, wise Christians, the more you live as a Christian and you walk that path for more years, then you'll gain more wisdom over time.

- [24:46] You'll make better decisions. You'll live a better life as a child of the kingdom here on earth. But Jesus talks about how the Pharisees don't live with wisdom.

And I think this is really helpful for us because he says, Luke 7 31, to what then can I compare the people of this generation, that is, the Pharisees, what are they like?

And he says, well, they're like children, but they're not like children of wisdom. They're like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other, we played the pipe for you and you didn't dance, we sang a dirge and you did not cry.

The point of Jesus' illustration is that the Pharisees, they want John the Baptist and Jesus to march to the beat of their drum. And they're upset that Jesus and John aren't doing that.

They aren't playing the game that the Pharisees want them to play. Verse 33, 4, John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine and you say he has a demon.

- [25:57] The Son of Man came eating and drinking and you say here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners. Don't you love that about Jesus?

The best insult that they can come up with against him is that he was a friend of sinners. That's our king. But the crowds who looked at Jesus and John with wisdom, they could see, they could see that John's simple life was a rebuke to the indulgence of the elite of their day.

And the crowds who looked with wisdom, they could see that Jesus' extravagant hospitality was part of his mission to reach the last and the least and the lost with the kingdom invitation.

That's what the crowds with wisdom who'd been prepared by John could see. But it's not what the Pharisees saw. It's not what that generation saw.

And our generation, like that generation, will always want you to play their game, to march to the beat of their drum. And they might be upset with you when you don't.

- [27:19] And that expectation can take many forms. Political parties of all persuasions will want you to follow them. Influencers want you to follow them. Media conglomerates want you to follow them.

But whose child are you? The last line of the section, verse 35, wisdom is proved right by all her children.

wisdom. Just let those words linger for a moment. Wisdom is proved right by all her children.

It's this anxiety-free statement about Jesus. Jesus. He isn't getting caught up with the need to prove himself. He isn't saying, well, Pharisees, let me give you five reasons why I am the Messiah and you're wrong.

At the end of the day, we'll see. You'll see. You'll see who's wise and who's not. He's not caught up in their game.

[28:27] He's not dictated to by their desires for him to do what they want him to do. And if you're a child of the kingdom, there's an invitation to not get caught up with the games that people around us play.

That's part of walking with wisdom. Dick Lucas recently celebrated his 100th birthday. He, for most of his life, he was a minister at St.

Helen's Bishop's Gate in the financial centre of London. His ministry gave many people real confidence that expository teaching and preaching could be the backbone of Christian ministry, especially because of his lunchtime evangelistic talk that he gave to workers in the city of London.

And most of the people who came to these talks were businessmen and business women, many of them very high-flying. A number of decades ago, there was a young assistant of his who asked him whether he ever got intimidated by the people who he was ministering to.

After all, these people who sat before him lunchtime by lunchtime were earning far more than he did, had far more influence than he had, were just far more impressive than he was.

[29:46] And he was in his office at the church at the time and so he walked over and he looked out the window and he saw people rushing this way and that way, he saw people frantic and doing their thing and he just said one word, lemmings.

Now, if you're under 30, you might have to Google that. A lemming is a creature that will follow others of its kind off a cliff because it's just following the crowd. And Dick wasn't using it to deride them.

He had compassion on them. But it was his way of saying, intimidated by these people? they're lost. They're aimless.

That's wisdom. Not getting caught up in the games that our world wants to play and not valuing the things that our world values is wisdom.

Whose child are you? What are the things that are moulding you and shaping you? As the gospel continues, the children of wisdom and the children of folly grow further and further apart.

[31:03] And by the end, the Pharisees have put Jesus on the cross. And the scary thing is that these are not people who woke up every morning and thinking, how can I live as foolish a life as possible?

They just didn't repent of their sins like John called them to and didn't follow Jesus like he called them to. And so they ended up being the epitome of wickedness and foolishness.

The tax collectors, they stuck with Jesus. They stuck with the one who gave sight to the blind, who made the lame walk, who cleansed people with leprosy, who made the deaf hear, who raised the dead, who preached good news to everyone, especially tax collectors and sinners, and who walked to the cross gladly in wisdom, knowing that wisdom would be proved right by his actions.

Whose child do you want to be? blessed is anyone who does not fall away on account of Jesus. The one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than all who've come before.

Wisdom is proved right by all her children. Let's pray. Father, as we think about wisdom, we know it's this elusive thing, and yet we see Jesus.

[32 : 58] And so, Father, we pray that you would just continue day by day, week by week, year by year, to fill our eyes with him. and for those who are here this morning who are not walking with Jesus, but who desire wisdom, Father, we pray that you would help them to follow that path that the tax collectors did, like we all do, repenting of our sin and looking towards our Messiah.

And we pray that in his name. Amen.