





Finding Great Faith

Matthew 8:5-13

Luke 7:1-10

Life of Jesus: Miracles

Jesus has returned to Capernaum, where the nobleman lived. It is believed that this event with the centurion took place about six months after the nobleman's son was healed. It is very possible that the centurion heard about that miracle. Capernaum is also referred to in Matthew as Jesus' own city. Jesus was rejected in Nazareth in Luke 4:16-32, and afterwards he made his home in Capernaum.

Discuss:

The Jews were living in Israel, but at this time Israel was under the authority of the Roman government. Discuss what this would have looked like.

The Jewish people were able to lead themselves to some degree with local matters, but they were under the rule of the Romans, and the Romans had ultimate authority over them.

Discuss what centurion means. What is a century? (100 years)

What would it mean if you were an army officer called a centurion?

A centurion would have been the leader of 100 soldiers.

This man would have been wealthy, respected, important, and an authority in the Roman army. Talk about what type of life he would have had. Discuss his lifestyle.

The centurion was a man in authority.

The centurion could have used his authority over Jesus and sent orders to get Jesus and make him come to his house. He had a high position in the government and could have sent messengers demanding Jesus to come.

Matthew and Luke give slight differences, but we can reconcile these two accounts. Matthew tells us that the centurion came to him, and Luke tells us that the centurion sent messengers. It is common that when someone sends a representative - especially in an authority or military sense - that you would say that the leader himself "came." When someone comes representing them, it would be as if the authority was present.

Looking at Luke's account, the centurion had a servant who was very sick, and about to die. He heard about Jesus, and he sent messengers to the leaders of the Jews begging them to have Jesus come to heal his servant. The Jewish leaders respected this centurion and came to Jesus on his behalf. Notice what they say. The Jewish people thought very highly of the centurion; they said he loved the nation of Israel, and he had built them a synagogue.

To the Jews, the things he had done made the centurion very worthy and deserving that Jesus should come and heal his servant.

The centurion's message to Jesus was this: LORD, my servant is sick.

The servant had palsy, which was some sort of paralysis. It likely caused weakness and often uncontrolled seizures. We also know that he was near the point of death, and in a lot of pain. The centurion loved this servant; he was very dear to him.



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Discuss:

Notice what the centurion called Jesus. He called him Lord.

This is very important. When you call someone Lord, you are giving them the highest honor.

This man is not Jewish; he is a gentile and does not have a covenant with God.

Jesus responded, I will come heal him.

What did the centurion do that made Jesus so willingly agree to go?

He called him Lord. This is a title of honor and respect; it is the highest place.

Lord is a title for someone who is in authority over others: a ruler or a master. This centurion, this great man of authority, is willingly putting himself under Jesus' authority.

When Jesus got near his house, the centurion sent friends to Jesus with his message,

“LORD, don't trouble yourself to come here, I am not worthy (deserving, important, sufficient, enough) for you to come under my roof. Neither did I think myself worthy to come to you, but *just say the word*, and my servant will be healed.”

The centurion says he is not worthy.

What did the Jews come to Jesus and say about this man?

Why did they say Jesus should come and heal his servant? They spent time telling Jesus how important the centurion was. They told Jesus how honorable, worthy and deserving this man was, and that Jesus should come because of the great things this man had done. This centurion was humble; he did not “expect” Jesus to come because of his “great” accomplishments. He said he was not worthy for Jesus to come under *his roof*.

He is acknowledging that Jesus is higher than he is; I am not worthy that you should come under me.

Discuss:

What does “under his roof” mean?

When you invite someone to your home, who is in authority? Who tells the guests where to sit, where to put their shoes, when to eat? You do. You are in control of your home, and you make the rules.

The centurion knew Jesus' authority, and he knew if Jesus came to his home, that would put Jesus under the centurion's authority. The centurion was so humble that he was not going to allow this to happen.

He knew that Jesus was above him. Jesus' authority superseded or was over the centurion.

He respected Jesus and his rule, and he knew Jesus had authority to heal simply by His word.

The centurion begins to explain how authority works.



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He tells Jesus, I understand this. I have soldiers under me. I tell one man to go, and he goes. I tell another man to come, and he comes. I tell them what to do, and they do it.

He understood that Jesus was under the authority of God the Father, and that Jesus had authority over sickness and disease and every evil work. He understood that Jesus had the power to heal. He knew that all Jesus had to do was say it, command it, and **it would happen**.

Jesus marveled; this means he was amazed. He said, “I have not found faith like this in all Israel.”

In Matthew, Jesus says that the Gentiles will be part of the kingdom of heaven, but that many of the Jews (the children of the kingdom) will be cast out and will not be a part of the kingdom of heaven (*because they did not believe*).

Then Jesus says, go on your way, and *as you have believed*, so let it be done for you. His servant was healed in the same hour, and when the messengers went back to the house, they found the servant completely well.

Jesus in the Story



Jesus has the ultimate power and authority, but the Jewish leaders did not recognize this or treat him with respect. The Jews exalted the centurion over Jesus, begging Jesus to heal him because of the honor they gave the centurion.

The centurion recognized the power of Jesus, and he gave him glory and honor by calling him Lord. The centurion refused to exercise his worldly authority over Jesus. He knew that Jesus' power was greater than his, and he put himself under Jesus' authority. This man, who was not a Jew, understood the authority of God's kingdom much more than the Israelites. He knew that Jesus had power over sickness and death, and all he had to do was speak the Word and give the command.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me," (Matthew 28:18).

And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority, (Luke 4:32).

Lesson Questions & Memory Verses

9. So You May Know

Compare Matthew, Mark & Luke

1. Which writer tells how many people carried the man?
2. Which writers tell how the men got in the house?
3. What do all three writers say that Jesus was able to see?

Romans 5:17

For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.

10. A Withered Hand

Matthew 12:11-12

1. If your sheep fell into a well on the Sabbath, what would you do?
2. What does Jesus say about people compared to sheep?
3. What does Jesus say the law allows us to do on the Sabbath?

Mark 2: 27-28

...the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.

11. Finding Great Faith

1. Why did the Jews tell Jesus he should go to the centurion?
2. What did the centurion say about Jesus coming to his house?
3. What did the centurion say he understood because of the soldiers that served under him?

Psalms 10:17

Lord, you have heard the desire of the humble; you will prepare their heart; you will cause your ear to hear.

12. Who Is This?

Read Psalm 107

1. What does it say would happen in verse 25?
2. What does it say the people will do in verse 28?
3. What will the Lord do in verse 28?
4. How should the people respond (verses 8, 15, 21, 31)?

Psalm 107:31-32

Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Let them exalt him also in the assembly of the people, and praise him in the company of the elders.

