

Impressing Jesus - Luke 7:1-10

Luke 7:1-10 - After he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. ² Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him. ³ When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. ⁴ And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, ⁵ for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue." ⁶ And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. ⁷ Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. ⁸ For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." ⁹ When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." ¹⁰ And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

Four Perspectives

1. The perspective of the Servant

Matthew 8:6 says that the servant was "suffering terribly"

"Give me drugs, heal me, or shoot me in the head...whatever you do, don't leave me like this!"

2. The perspective of the Jewish elders

The Jewish elders were impressed with the centurion

Their opinion was that he deserved Jesus' attention.

This perspective was based on the Centurion's outward actions – "he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue."

3. The perspective of the Centurion

The Centurion's perspective was one of humility.

He recognized that according to Jewish law for a Rabbi to enter the house of a Gentile would be for him to become ceremoniously unclean.

While he could not have presented an accurate theological discussion of the Kingdom of God and Jesus' position as the coming King; He recognized Jesus for who He was and submitted to His authority.

He framed it in the only language he knew.

But even in the midst of His sense of unworthiness, he was willing to ask Jesus to heal his servant.

His love for his servant overcame his sense of unworthiness.

His love for his servant and his corresponding faith in the person and power of Jesus overcame the human tendency towards inaction.

Reasons for inaction – own strength, authority, worthlessness

Faith that is not accompanied by action is not faith.

That action was done from the place of humility. It is that heart attitude that got Jesus' attention.

It was not the centurion's outward acts of building a synagogue that qualified him for the attention of Jesus.

It was the way he humbled himself – it was his humility that qualified him.

Jesus said in His previous sermon;

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.” (Lk 6:20)

He said in His introduction of His ministry –

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.” (Lk 4:18)

The word poor means “To cringe or to crouch like a beggar. “This is not the poverty against which the will rebels but under which the will bows in deep submission. It is more than just a state or condition, it is also an attitude of the soul toward God, that attitude that grows out of the profound realization of utter helplessness and beggary as far as an ability or possession of self are concerned.¹

To this man, the Kingdom of God came

A Kingdom battle was being waged as the Kingdom of God came against the Kingdom of darkness and the battle was being fought over the life of a servant. The battle began as a humble centurion made a request of Jesus and the battle was won by a word spoken by the king!

A Centurion, a commander of men bowed before Jesus, a commander of universes

To Jesus, he said – “Just say the word and I know he’ll be healed”

To this man, Jesus fulfilled **Psalm 107:19, 20** - Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them. (ESV)

4. The perspective of Jesus

Jesus was impressed - *When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, “I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.”*

The Gospel writers only record two instances of Jesus “marveling”
This one and Mark 6:1-6

Mark 6:1-6 - He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ² And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his

¹ Lenski, R.C.H. (1955) *The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel*, Grand Rapids: The Wartburg Press p. 250

hands? ³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. ⁴ And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household." ⁵ And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶ And he marveled because of their unbelief.