

The Man Who Made Jesus Marvel

In Luke 7:1-10 (and the parallel account: Matthew 8:5-13) we find the story of Jesus healing the Centurion's servant. When this Centurion heard about Jesus, he sent some of the elders of the Jews to Jesus requesting that he heal his servant who was dear to him. Jesus went with them. When he was close to the house, this Roman soldier sent his friends out to Jesus to tell him that he was not worthy that Jesus should come under his roof. He said that all Jesus needed to do was "say the word" and his servant would be healed. He explained to Jesus how he understood the principle of authority for he was a man who had authority.

The text says that Jesus "marveled" at him (v. 9). There are only two times that the Bible says Jesus marveled at someone. On the other occasion he marveled at their unbelief (Mark 6:6). In our text, he marvels at the Centurion's faith saying, "I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel" (v. 9).

The word "marvel" means wonder or amazement. The NIV uses the word "amazed" in our text. Jesus was amazed at the great faith of the Centurion. He was no ordinary man.

If we have the same characteristics as this man, God will marvel and be pleased with our lives.

What is it about this man that made Jesus say he had such great faith? His faith (like our faith) involves not only what he believes, but also how he lives. Let's see what we learn from this man.

He Was A Man Of Power Yet Interested In The Lord

This was no ordinary man. He was a centurion (a commander of 100 men). He was a man of power who commanded respect and obedience (v. 8). Yet, he was interested in and needed the Lord (v. 3).

Too often the things of this world (such as power, fame or money) lead people astray. These and other things can impress us with our own self-importance to the point that we have no real need for the Lord. The cares of this world can choke out the word of God (Luke 8:14).

That did not happen with the Centurion. He had power and, no doubt, fame and money. Yet, there was a genuine interest in the Lord.

He Cared About Others

1. He cared about his servant (vv. 2-3). His servant was "dear to him." The one the Centurion cared about was not his superior who could do him favors like promoting him to higher rank. He apparently was not some family member.

Rather, he was a slave. A slave or servant was a "living tool" according to the Romans. He was viewed as some hand tool. He could be cast away to die if he became sick. But not this Roman soldier!

2. He cared about the Jews (v. 5). The Jew-Gentile relationship was not good. They hated each other. They were enemies. But, notice in our text that it was the Jews who went on the mission for this Gentile. They told that he loved the nation of the Jews so much so that he built for them a synagogue.

The concern this man had for his servant and the Jews was not ordinary.

We too must learn to care about others. We must treat others as we would have them treat us (Matthew 7:12). Paul tells us not to just think about ourselves, but also think about others (Philippians 2:4). Our concern for others will involve weeping with those that weep and rejoicing with those that rejoice (Romans 12:15).

If our faith is great, our care for others will also include those who may seem to be unworthy of our care. It will include those of humble living (Romans 12:16) and even our enemies (vv. 20-21).

This Man Earned The Respect Of His Neighbors

This Roman soldier was a foreigner in Capernaum. His neighbors would, no doubt, watch him closely. Yet, they learned to trust him. He was friendly to them and they to him. They were willing to go on this errand to Jesus for him. The elders of the Jews said he was worthy (v. 4). He earned the respect of his neighbors.

We ought to live in such a way that those around us have a good report about us. Cornelius, another centurion, had a good reputation among all the Jews (Acts 10:2, 22). Before men are qualified to serve as elders, they are to have a good report among their neighbors (1 Timothy 3:7). Paul told Timothy to be an example of the believers (1 Timothy 4:12).

He Was An Humble Man

1. He viewed himself unworthy before the Lord (vv. 6-7). He sent word to the Lord that he was not worthy that he should come under his roof.

2. He let God and others esteem him and not himself. Others said he was "worthy" (v. 4). He said he was not worthy (v. 7). Jesus said he had not seen so great a faith even in Israel (v. 9). He was doing what the Proverb writer said, "Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips" (Proverbs 27:2).

If God and others are going to esteem us, we must not esteem ourselves (Romans 12:3,16). If we do promote ourselves, then God and others will not speak favorably of us (1 Peter 5:5-6).

His Faith Was Great

1. He believed in the Lord that he could heal his servant (v. 3).
2. He believed that the Lord was great and worthy (vv. 6-7).
3. His faith was greater than had been seen in Israel (v. 9).

Our faith must grow and increase (2 Thessalonians 1:3). If it grows, it becomes great. If not, it diminishes in weakness. Let's grow in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18).

He Respected The Power And Authority Of Jesus

The Centurion stood in awe of the power of Jesus (vv. 6-7). He knew the power of the word of God for he said that all Jesus needed to do was "say the word" and the servant would be healed (v. 7).

He well understood the principle of authority. He was a man who was placed under the authority of his superiors. He was also a man with authority over a hundred men. All he had to do was to say "go," "come," or "do this" and his soldiers would respond.

We must learn that responding to the authority of God means doing just what he says. We must also impress upon our mind the power of God's word. When God "says the word" there is real power. God said the words "Let there be light" and there was. God said, "Peace be still" and it was. The same word has the power to convert the sinner (Romans 1:16) and keep the saved (Hebrews 10:39).

What would the Lord say about your faith? Would he say, "I have not seen so little faith"? Would he say, "I have not seen so weak faith"? Would he say, "That's good, but I've seen a lot better"? Or, would he say, "I not see so great faith. . ."?

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