

The Benefit of Genuine Faith

Luke 7: 1-10

Years ago the captain of a large vessel set sail with his family from Liverpool. His destination was New York. One night when everyone was asleep, a sudden squall arose. The storm was so intense that it almost capsized the vessel. Everything unsecured was sent tumbling and crashing, and the passengers became aware that they were in imminent peril. Everyone was alarmed, and many sprang from their beds and began to get dressed. The captain's little daughter, just 8 years old, awoke and cried with fright, "What's the matter?" When they told her about the storm she asked, "Is Father on deck?" Assured that he was, she dropped back onto her pillow without a fear and was soon fast asleep.

That is the attitude that all believers should possess. We all face storms and trials in life, but our Father stands at the helm of our vessel and we must trust Him by faith.

Faith is a subject that is dealt with extensively in the Bible. [Hab.2:4](#); [Rom.1:17](#); [Gal.3:11](#); [Heb.10:38](#) all teach us that [the just shall live by faith](#). Faith is defined for us in [Heb.11:1](#) – [Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen](#).

Clearly this passage deals with faith. Jesus has the ability and power to meet the needs of everyone—Gentile or Jew, rich or poor, young or old, ruler or slave. The one essential element for securing His help is faith. A person must have faith in Christ if we are to experience His power. I want to take a moment to consider the basis of real faith as we think on the thought: [The Benefit of Genuine Faith](#).

I. The Appearance of the Centurion (1-5) – Very little is said concerning this man, but we find several clues in the text that reveal much about him. I want us to consider the centurion from two separate aspects.

A. Socially

1. His Position (2) – [And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die](#). This man was a [centurion](#), an officer in the Roman army. He was a man of position and power. There were 100 soldiers under his command. He was sent to Capernaum to maintain order among the Jews and establish Roman law.

- This may not seem significant in our text, but often people feel that they are the one in charge of their destiny. They assume that power and influence will secure all that they need and desire in life.

- The centurion possessed all of that and yet he realized that he needed more than his earthly position could provide. Man will never achieve enough power and position that he doesn't need the Lord's help. We achieve His help by believing in His ability through faith.

2. His Recognition (4-5) – *And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.* Those who came to Jesus and besought Him were the elders of the Jews. Keep in mind that the Jews and Romans did not share a particularly good relationship. But this was an unusual relationship. Here the elders declared that the centurion was worthy of Jesus' help. He loved the nation and the people. This centurion was different.

- Now we all know that none are worthy of the grace of God. We are all born in sin and our lives are lived at enmity with God prior to salvation. However, the point I want to make is that the centurion was a man of faith. He was recognized and admired by those who should have despised him.
- Wouldn't it be great to be recognized as one who sought the Lord? Clearly not for our benefit or recognition, but that we might be a positive witness to others who need the Lord. If we would live out our faith so that the world could see, it would make an impact on those around us.

B. Personally

1. His Compassion (2) – *And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.* He had a servant, literally a bond slave, who was at the point of death. In those days servants were the property of their masters. They were bought and sold as personal property and could even be put to death without the master having to give account. But there is something different about this situation. We find that this servant was *dear* to the centurion. That has the idea of “*being held in honor, to be prized or precious.*” This man of faith had compassion for a slave.

- That ought to be a challenge for each of us today. We need to have compassion for those around us who desperately need the Lord. They may be in no position to pray for themselves. They may not even know Christ. Consider where we were when Christ came to us with compassion.

2. His Intercession (3) – *And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.* We don't know if the centurion was saved or not, but he had heard enough of Jesus to know if anyone could help in his situation, He could. He immediately made intercession for his servant. He was unable to help himself and the centurion interceded for him.

- Oh how we need those who do know the Lord to intercede on behalf of others. There are many around us today who are lost and undone. They don't even realize their need of a Savior. Someone needs to touch heaven on their behalf. There are those among us that are saved but are unable to intercede for themselves. Maybe they have drifted away from the Lord and have no desire to seek Him. Maybe they are facing a trial and simply are unable to pray. Whatever the case may be, we need to become a people of faith as we pray believing that God will hear and answer our prayers.

I. The Appearance of the Centurion (1-5)

II. The Admission of the Centurion (6-7) – This man knew some things about Jesus that contributed to his faith in Him. Notice:

A. His Confession (6-7) – Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. Keep in mind that this is a man who is used to giving orders and having others submit to his commands. He is used to getting what he wants just by speaking the word. Here we find a man of authority who has humbled himself before the Lord. He is well aware that he is undeserving of anything that Jesus could provide.

- We too must possess that humble spirit as we go before the Lord. We are not worthy of His grace and mercy. We have no right to demand anything of a holy and righteous God. We are not in a position to bargain or “make deals” with the Lord. We must realize that He is worthy of our praise and adoration and humbly seek Him for the needs in our lives. He doesn't answer our prayers because of who we are but who He is!
- How many times have we prayed and expected God to immediately answer our prayer? How many times have we gotten bitter because He hasn't answered in the way that we thought He should? Listen, a delay doesn't always mean a denial and when the Lord says No, He may have a better Yes in store if we will only remain patient and sincere.

B. His Confidence (6-7) – The centurion declared that he was not even worthy for the Lord to come unto his house. He didn't want to trouble the Lord with his problems, but he knew that if Jesus would but speak the word his servant would be healed. He wasn't looking for a great sign or wonder, just for Jesus to bring healing by speaking the word. This is coming from a Gentile soldier who is used to providing for himself on the field of battle. He has openly declared his confidence in the Lord's ability to heal.

- Does that not challenge you today? Here we find a man who has had no real encounter with the Lord. He is likely basing his confidence in Jesus on the rumors and reports of other people. We have met the Lord. We have witnessed His power many times in our lives and yet we allow doubt and fear to shroud our confidence in the Lord.
- I don't know much, but I do know that I serve a sovereign Lord who has all power. He is well aware of every situation that we face and He is able to meet our needs. We just need to trust Him by faith! Notice [Lu.12:22-31](#).

I. The Appearance of the Centurion (1-5)

II. The Admission of the Centurion (6-7)

III. The Approval of the Centurion (9-10) – Here we find the benefits of the centurion's faith. He sought the Lord and Jesus honored his faith.

A. The Lord's Admiration (9) – *When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.* Jesus *marveled* at his faith. That isn't to say that Jesus wasn't aware of his faith or that Jesus didn't know that he possessed such faith. It means that Jesus admired the centurion's faith. It pleased the Lord to find such faith.

- *He declared that He had not found such faith, not even in Israel.* That says a lot concerning the centurion's faith. This was a Gentile, a Roman soldier, supposed to be an infidel by the Jews, and yet he possessed greater faith than those whom Jesus had revealed Himself unto.
- Are you seeking to please the Lord? Do you desire a life that honors Jesus? One of the greatest ways that we can do that is to live a life of faith. [Heb.11:6 – But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.](#) That's kind of tough isn't it? We can't please the Lord without faith, but we are promised that He will reward those who come to Him in faith.

B. The Lord's Restoration (10) – *And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.* These returned to find the servant whole from his infirmity. What made the difference? It wasn't the fact that his master was a Roman centurion. It wasn't the fact that he had found favor with the Jews and they had influenced the Lord. The servant was healed because of the centurion's faith. He made a difference in the life of one he cared for through his faith.

- Faith has that ability! Do you remember the account in [Mark 2:1-12](#) concerning the man sick of the palsy who was brought by four of his friends? [Mk.2:4-5](#) – [And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.](#) Faith will make a difference. Jesus will honor faith. If there is a need in your life or the life of a loved one, Jesus stands ready to meet that need, but we must come to Him in faith.

I don't know where you stand today, but the Lord does. There are times when our faith is weak and there are times when it is strong. Whatever the case, Jesus is the same. His power is not diminished due to a lack of faith, but it may well be hindered. We likely miss many blessings due to a lack of genuine faith.

If you have a need today, why not bring it unto the Lord? You may need to come and seek the Lord to increase your faith or to give you assurance. That is available today, but you must seek Him. Why not make your way to this altar as the Lord leads?