

May 6, 2009

FAITH THAT PLEASES CHRIST

LUKE 7: 1 – 10

¹ Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. ² And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. 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. ⁴ And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: ⁵ For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. ⁶ 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: ⁷ Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. ⁸ For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one^a, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*. 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. ¹⁰ And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick. ¹

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In the Gospel of Luke, the writer presents Christ as the Son of Man; strong, yet compassionate. It is also known as the missionary Gospel. Not only that, but this Gospel is a discipleship manual. In chapters 4: 31–5:26, we find the Son of Man proves His power. In chapters 5:27 – 6:49, The Son of Man explains His ministry. In chapters 7:1-9:50, The Son of Man expands His ministry.

The first example of the ministry expansion is the Healing of the Centurion's Servant. It is clear from verses 1 – 10 of chapter 7 that faith plays a critical role in our lives; and especially during moments of a crisis.

1. IT IS IMPORTANT TO DEMONSTRATE LOVE ALONG WITH HAVING FAITH

The centurion was a Roman Officer with a squadron of 100 soldiers under his authority. Overall, the Roman Officers were known to be independent and did not have a loving relationship with the Jews. Their slaves were clearly beneath them. However, this Officer had compassion towards his own slave. He was concerned about his slave's health. We must also take note of his love for the Jewish people in the building of their synagogues. He gained a lot of respect from the Jews because of this action. We too as 21st century Christians should not only have faith in Christ, but love. (See also 1 Corinthians 13: 1 -**13**).

2. IT IS IMPORTANT TO DEMONSTRATE HUMILITY ALONG WITH HAVING FAITH

We should not only be impressed with this man's great love, but also his great humility. Imagine a Roman officer telling a poor Jewish rabbi that he was unworthy to have Him enter his house! The Romans were not known for displaying humility, especially before their Jewish subjects. As believers and followers of Jesus Christ, it is important to be humble. Just as the Roman officer respected the authority of Jesus by not feeling worthy to have Jesus come "under my roof", we too should pattern our lives after this behavior. Simply put, titles, accomplishments, academic degrees, financial status and even length of years as a Christian must not stand in the way of our relationship with Christ. The Roman officer had the title, uniform and command over others, but still yielded to Jesus. We must adopt the same life practice as God blesses us. (See also Galatians 5:22, **23** – "meekness").

3. AS CHRISTIANS , IT IS IMPORTANT TO DEMONSTRATE OUR FAITH

After all was said and done, the characteristic that most impressed Jesus was the man's faith. The centurion's faith certainly was remarkable. After all, he was a Gentile whose background was pagan. He was a Roman soldier, trained to be self-sufficient, and we have no evidence that he had ever heard Jesus preach. Perhaps he heard about Jesus' healing power from His soldiers. They may also have reported on the miracles of Jesus since the Romans kept close touch with the events in Jewish life.

The officer saw a parallel between the way he commanded his soldiers and the way Jesus commanded diseases. Both the centurion and Jesus were under authority, and because they were under authority, they had the right to exercise authority. All they had to do was say the word and things happened . What tremendous faith this man exhibited!

If this Roman, with very little spiritual instruction, had that kind of faith in God's Word, how much greater *our* faith ought to be!

To have faith does not mean be foolish. We should use godly wisdom in exercising our faith. If the doctor prescribes medication, one is not faithless because they take it. God is able to heal! However, the healing process can be in taking the medication that God originated in the mind of humans in the medical field.

Even when our faith is tried under the pressures of life, God still proves His love for us by extending His grace. But let us demonstrate our faith in God by studying His Word.