

The Soldier Who Had Great Faith

Introduction:

1. Can you imagine what it would take to amaze Jesus Christ. After all, Jesus is:
 - a. The Person of the Godhead Who created the world, John 1:1-2.
 - b. The One through Whom God speaks to man today, Heb. 1:1-2.
 - c. The Son of God, Matt. 16:16.
 - d. One Who knows what is "*in man*," John 2:25.
 - e. One Who has "*all authority*," Matt. 28:18.
 - f. "*The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords*," I Tim. 6:15.
2. In Luke 17:1-10 and Matthew 8:5-13 (a parallel reference) we read of a Gentile soldier whose faith was such that it caused Jesus to marvel, or to be amazed.
3. Lesson title: "The Soldier Who Had Great Faith."
4. Text: Luke 7:1-10.
5. Background information:
 - a. Jesus had just concluded the famous sermon on the mount, v. 1; cf. Luke 6:49.
 - b. With the touch of His hand Jesus healed a leper, Matt. 8:2-3.
 - c. Entering into Capernaum encountered some elders of the Jews who pleaded with Jesus to come and heal a servant of "*a certain centurion*," v. 2-3.
 - (1) Capernaum was Jesus' adopted home, Matt. 4:13; a city on the Northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee.
 - (2) Here Jesus healed the nobleman's son, John 4:46-47, Peter's mother in law, Matt. 8:14, the Centurion's servant, Luke 7, and the ruler's daughter, Matt. 9:23-25.
6. Information about Centurions:
 - a. Palestine at this time was under the control of the Roman Government; a centurion was a Roman military officer in charge of 100 men.
 - b. The Centurion of our lesson was a man of honor and great faith.
7. There were four Centurions mentioned in the New Testament:
 - a. The one in our text.
 - b. The one at the cross, Matt. 27:54; Luke 23:47.
 - (1) He was probably the one in command of the detail that crucified Jesus, but had been able to observe both the conduct of the Jews and of Jesus, and who witnessed what occurred. Regardless of what the Jews believed, this Centurion learned the truth about Jesus!
 - c. Julius who took Paul to Rome, Acts 27:1,43.
 - d. Cornelius, Acts 10:1-2.
 - (1) Publius stated that the best men in the army were selected for the position of Centurion.
8. Briefly relate the story set forth in Luke 7:1-10.
9. The Centurion of our text impresses us!
 - a. He loved his servant (slave), v. 2.
 - (1) This evidently was unusual. Cicero apologized in one of his noblest orations for being concerned about a slave.
 - b. He was not racially prejudiced, Luke 7:5.
 - c. He was generous, Luke 7:5.
 - d. He was humble, Luke 7:6.
 - e. He had great faith, Luke 7:9.
10. Someone has said that every man is three men: (1) The man **he** thinks he is, (2) the man his **friends** think he is, and (3) the man his **enemies** think he is.
 - a. In our text nothing was said about his enemies.

Discussion:

I. What His Friends (elders of the Jews) Thought about him:

- A. Based on what they had seen.
 1. Being a Centurion, he was a public servant, subject to daily inspection.
 2. A Gentile, one who represented a hated foreign power.
 - a. This makes their estimation even more unusual.
- B. Based on what they Said:
 1. "*He is worthy*," Luke 7:4.
 2. "*He loves our nation*," Luke 7:5.
 3. "*He hath built us a synagogue*, Luke 7:5.

II. What He Thought of Himself.

- A. He was very humble.
 - 1. *"I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof,"* Luke 7:6.
 - a. The exact opposite of what the elders of the Jews said about him, Luke 7:4-5! Cf. I Peter 5:5-6.
- B. Why Did He have such an humble opinion of himself?
 - 1. He knew himself better than they. I Sam. 16:7; I Cor. 2:11.
 - 2. He probably judged himself by a higher standard than they. If he compared himself with Jesus, he had reason to be humble!
 - a. It is not good to judge ourselves by others! 2 Cor. 10:12.
 - 3. He probably had reached a correct, honest conclusion as to the real identity of Jesus! Cf. John 20:30-31.
- C. An Honest, Thorough Self-examination is good for all!
 - 1. *"Examine yourselves..."* 2 Cor. 13:5.
 - 2. *"If our heart condemn us..."* I John 3:20-21.

III. What Jesus Knew.

- A. Jesus marveled!, Luke 7:9
 - 1. One of only two instances in which Jesus was said to have marveled. Mark 6:6.
 - a. Twice Jesus commended people for their great faith (Matt. 15:28 and Luke 7:9), and both of those commended were Gentiles!
- B. The Centurion's great faith is evidenced when we consider:
 - 1. Who he was – a man with a heathen background.
 - 2. The occasion of his request – in behalf of his slave.
 - 3. The great need, Luke 7:2; Matt. 8:6.
 - 4. The request: *"Say a word, and my servant shall be healed,"* Luke 7:7.
 - a. The nobleman said *"come down ere my child die,"* John 4:49.
 - b. Mary and Martha said *"if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died,"* John 11:21,32.
 - c. Zacchaeus did not initially believe the angel's message, Luke 1:13,18.
 - 5. The analogy he drew, Luke 7:8.
 - 6. The results that followed, Luke 7:10.
 - 7. The Lord's commendation, Luke 7:9.
- C. What About **Your** Faith and **My** Faith?
 - 1. Would the Lord marvel at the greatness of our faith?
 - 2. Or would He marvel at the lack of it?

IV. Lessons to be Gleaned from this incident.

- A. Man is not altogether the product of his environment.
- B. Man must learn to be satisfied with the word.
- C. There is power in Christ's word!
 - 1. Distance is no barrier, James 1:21; Rom. 1:16; Psa. 107:20.
 - 2. Christ, through His word, Heb. 9:15-17, is now speaking from heaven, Heb. 12:25.
- D. The message of faith is the message of reward! Matt. 8:13.
 - 1. Faith that both acts, and is motivated by love, is the faith that blesses.

Conclusion.

- 1. The Centurion had the Lord's approval?
- 2. Do **you** have His approval?

--Bobby Witherington, June 5, 2016