



Road Trip: On the Road with Jesus in Galilee

Week 14: Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

THE TEXT: Luke 7:1-10

¹ When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people, he returned to Capernaum. ² At that time the highly valued slave of a Roman officer was sick and near death. ³ When the officer heard about Jesus, he sent some respected Jewish elders to ask him to come and heal his slave. ⁴ So they earnestly begged Jesus to help the man. "If anyone deserves your help, he does," they said, ⁵ "for he loves the Jewish people and even built a synagogue for us."

⁶ So Jesus went with them. But just before they arrived at the house, the officer sent some friends to say, "Lord, don't trouble yourself by coming to my home, for I am not worthy of such an honor. ⁷ I am not even worthy to come and meet you. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'Go,' and they go, or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this,' they do it."

⁹ When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to the crowd that was following him, he said, "I tell you, I haven't seen faith like this in all Israel!" ¹⁰ And when the officer's friends returned to his house, they found the slave completely healed. (Luke 7:1-10 NLT-SE)

- Parallel Versions: Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10

The question that arises when you compare these verses is, **did the Centurion come personally to request Jesus for his slave's healing?** At first glance, there appears to be a contradiction between Matthew 8:5, implying that the Centurion came to Jesus, and Luke 7:3 and 7:6, which say he did not.

- **It's in the details...**Luke records what actually happens and Matthew abbreviates the story.
- **Differences in perspective and audience...**Remember that Luke was writing to a Gentile audience. Luke wanted Theophilus to be aware that most Jewish people **respected a God-fearing Roman soldier**. Matthew writing to a Jewish audience wanted them to know that a Roman centurion was **sincerely respectful of Jesus**. So when viewed with these different perspectives and audiences in mind, it becomes clear that we should expect different emphases from the writers, but **the account itself actually does not contradict itself**.

- The Participants

- **The Slave...**"the *highly valued slave* of a Roman officer was sick and near death."
 - **Jewish slaves** were usually sold into slavery as the result of a debt that could not be paid. Someone would pay that debt which would give them full rights over the slave for 6 years and then they would be set free, would have some rights, but not many.
 - **Roman slaves** were much different. They were seen as tools that would be used to accomplish work. When a "tool" was broken (*sick or injured*), the owner would simply dispose of them and get a fresh slave. This makes the depth of the relationship between the Roman Centurion and his slave that much more astounding!

- **The Centurion...** *"Lord, don't trouble yourself by coming to my home, for I am not worthy of such an honor. I am not even worthy to come and meet you. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'Go,' and they go, or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this,' they do it."*
 - All Centurions in the NT are **spoken of favorably**. Centurion means "Commands a Century" and in practice, they commanded 60-80 men. They were highly respected soldiers of honor, equal to the US Army Sargent-Major.
 - **"Centurions must be seekers after danger** as men who can command, ready in action and reliable; they ought not be too overanxious to rush into fight; but when hard pressed they must be ready to hold their groups and die at their posts." ~ The 2nd century historian, Polybius
- **The Jewish Elders...** *"they earnestly begged Jesus to help the man. "If anyone deserves your help, he does," they said, "for he loves the Jewish people and even built a synagogue for us."*
 - **Carl Marx** said, "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is **the opium of the people**."
 - The Romans were **deeply cynical about religion**, encouraging everyone to keep their own religions as they were conquered. The Roman leaders thought religion actually **kept the people in order**, encouraging them to tell their own people what to do.
 - **A clearly significant relationship** existed between the the Jewish Elders and the Centurion. They knew who he was, what he had done, and how he was viewed by others in the Jewish community. It doesn't get much stronger than, "he loves the Jewish people and even built a synagogue for us."
- **The Healer...** *"When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to the crowd that was following him, he said, **"I tell you, I haven't seen faith like this in all Israel!"** And when the officer's friends returned to his house, they found the slave completely healed."*
- **The beauty of God moving through the heart of an unbeliever**
 - Unlike humans, who seek an **external advantage** to accomplish their goals, God accomplishes what he wants by **intrinsically exerting his will**.
 - **God is not limited to accomplishing his will only through believers**, as though this were "easier" than working through unbelievers. The world and all that is in it has the potential to glorify God. John the baptist realized the depth and breadth of this truth.
 - ²⁷ **"No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven.** ²⁸ You yourselves know how plainly I told you, 'I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.' ²⁹ It is the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the best man is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows. Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success. ³⁰ **He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.** (John 3:27-30 NLT-SE)
- Jesus saw the faith of the Centurion. What Jesus saw was a mix of the Centurion's admiration of Jesus and his estimation of his own goodness. **Jesus celebrated the intrinsic beauty of the Centurion's faith.**
 - The centurion showed his great faith partly by believing that Jesus could heal by a word, but chiefly in his lofty conception of Jesus as compared with himself. **The less faith we have, the less we esteem Jesus, and the more faith we have, the less we esteem ourselves.** As Jesus rises, we sink in the scale of our estimation. The centurion's faith would have been wonderful enough in an Israelite, but it was all the more wonderful when found in the bosom of a Gentile. ~ The Fourfold Gospel

- Mining the “gold” in people

- God has the **right** and **authority** to put gold in anyone he wants.
 - ² Why should the unbelievers mock us, saying, “Where is this God of yours?” ³ But we know our God rules from the heavens and **He does whatever He wants!** (Psa 115:2-3 PASSION)
- **The gold we find in each other is the will of God revealed.** The will of God is manifested in...
 - **Divine Truth**...found in the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures
 - Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you... Make them holy by your truth; **teach them your word, which is truth.** (John 17:17, Psa 25:5 NLT-SE)
 - **Divine Beauty**...revealed through Creation
 - ¹ God’s splendor is a tale that is told, His testament is written in the stars, space itself speaks His story every day through the marvels of the heavens. His truth is on tour in the starry-vault of the sky, **showing His skill in creation’s craftsmanship.** ² Each day echoes its secret to the next, night with night sharing its revelation-knowledge. ³ Without a sound, without a word, without a voice being heard, ⁴ Yet all the world can see its story, everywhere its gospel is clearly read so all may know. (Prov 25:2 PASSION)
 - **Divine Destiny**...written on the heart of every human
 - **For I know the plans I have for you,**” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. (Jer 29:11 NLT-SE)
 - **The Lord will work out his plans for my life**— for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever. (Psa 138:8 NLT-SE)
 - **Divine Works**...accomplished through man, on behalf of God
 - ¹² Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. ¹³ For **God is working in you**, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. (Phil 2:12–13 NLT-SE)
 - ¹² “I tell you the truth, **anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done**, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. ¹³ You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. (John 14:12–13 NLT-SE)
 - ²⁰ Now may the God of peace...²¹ equip you with all you need for doing his will. May he produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, **every good thing that is pleasing to him.** All glory to him forever and ever! (Heb 13:20–21 NLT-SE)
- **Followers of Jesus have a mandate to find this gold** in the world and display it to a world that is desperate for something or someone to believe in.
 - It is God’s privilege to **conceal** things and the king’s privilege to **discover** them. (Prov 25:2 NLT-SE)
 - “The Lord our **God has secrets** known to no one. We are not accountable for them, but we and our children are accountable forever for **all that he has revealed to us**, so that we may obey all the terms of these instructions. (Deut 29:29 NLT-SE)
 - You asked, ‘Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?’ It is I—and **I was talking about things I knew nothing about**, things far too wonderful for me. (Job 42:3 NLT-SE)
- **Prophetic ministry** is one of the primary ways God reveals **hidden gold** in and for people...