

## Wednesday Evening Bible Study

March 20, 2019

### The Gospel of Luke

#### *Healing the Centurion's Servant*

Topics – Luke 7; Centurion's Servant; Great Faith; Gentile Saved

Text – Luke 7:1 – 10 (Parallel passage found in Matthew 8:5 – 13)

#### Introduction

After Jesus preached the *Sermon on the Plain*, he went back to Capernaum. Capernaum was sort of Jesus' headquarters while He was in Galilee. Jesus did a lot in Capernaum:

Jesus cast out a devil from the synagogue in Capernaum (Mark 1:21 – 28)

It was in Capernaum that the four men came through the roof of a house to bring to Jesus a man that was "sick of the palsy", and Jesus healed him. (Mark 2:1 – 12)

It was in Capernaum that Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law. (Luke 4:38 – 39)

From Cana, Jesus healed the nobleman's son in Capernaum. (John 4:46 – 54)

It was from Peter's boat on the shore of Capernaum that Jesus spoke to a multitude and later caused Peter to catch a miraculous amount of fish, and this after Peter had fished all night and had caught nothing.

Capernaum was given much light, and:

*"...unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."* (Luke 12:48)

Jesus will later rebuke this great city because of their lack of faith in Him:

*"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."* (Mat 11:23-24)

This story is significant because it reveals the fact that there were some Gentiles very early in the Gospel narrative that demonstrated great faith in God. We will see more converted Gentiles in the gospels, and by the time we get through the Book of Acts, there will be thousands of them saved. This event is a foreshadow of things to come.

Another point worth mentioning is that this man was a centurion, meaning he was a high-ranking soldier in the Roman army having one hundred men under him. He worked for the government that was oppressing Israel, and that Israel despised. Yet, this centurion was actually loved by the Jewish people. It was the Jewish elders who interceded for this man. There are actually three centurions in the New Testament that had faith in Christ, including the centurion at the cross (Matthew 27:54), and Cornelius. (Acts 10).

There is a remarkable difference between Luke's account of these events and the story that is told by Matthew (Matthew 8:5 – 13). Matthew tells us that this Centurion had gone himself to talk with Jesus, and Jesus remarked to him personally about his great faith. Matthew's version is actually a more condensed version, leaving out some of the details. The differences could be explained in the fact that the man by sending his agents was really sending himself. The agents were his official representatives. This centurion did ask Jesus to do something, but he asked Him through the elders of the Jews, and then later through his servants.

The Bible tells us that Jesus marveled at the faith of this centurion. This is one of only two things that caused Jesus to marvel. The other was the lack of faith of the Israelites in Galilee (Mark 6:6)

### I A Centurion Who Cared (vs. 1 – 3)

Though this man was a soldier, he also had a heart. He cared about the needs of his servant, and he was willing to do something for him.

He used some of his previous friendships in order to pull a few strings to get Jesus to heal him. He believed that Jesus could do it, but he didn't know how to get to Jesus. He used his friendship with the Jews to get them to ask Jesus.

### II A Savior Who Served (vs. 4 – 8)

The elders wasted no time, and begged Jesus to do this. These are the same people who gave Jesus trouble at other times, but because they wanted to help this soldier a soldier, they humbled themselves to ask Jesus. They tell Jesus that this centurion was a good man who had treated the Jews well, and had even built them a synagogue.

Jesus always wants to help people so he went. The centurion sends word through some friends that Jesus did not have to make the trip because all Jesus had to do was say the word, and the man could be healed. Jesus did not have to be physically present to heal someone.

### III A Faith That Fascinated Jesus (vs. 9 – 10)

Jesus was fascinated by this centurion – he marveled.

**What about this guy would make Jesus marvel?**

- A He had a love for Israel and other people.
- B He recognized his unworthiness.

The Jewish elders said that he was worthy, but the man claimed to be unworthy. None of us are worthy.

*"Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?" (Pro 20:6)*

This man did not proclaim his own goodness, so he was not like "most men."

*"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." (Pro 27:2)*

- 1 He was a Gentile
- 2 He was a sinner
- C He had great faith – He recognized Who Jesus is.

The Jews were always trying to get Jesus to prove Himself. This Gentile had more faith than they and asked Jesus to do what he knew He could do.

Note – this is only one of two times that Jesus speaks of "great faith". The other is regarding another Gentile.

Turn to Matthew 15:21 – 28 – In both of these cases, Jesus healed from a distance.