

A Centurion's Faith

Gundry Section 55



The Situation

- Jesus enters Capernaum
 - Reputation well established
 - John 4:46-54 (heals a nobleman's son)
 - Also cured at a distance
- A Centurion
 - Literally "commander of a hundred"
 - In practice, a "company commander"
 - Sixty centurions served in a legion
 - There are grades or ranks within these

Matthew 8	Luke 7
<p>5 When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. 6 "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering." 7 Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him."</p>	<p>1 When Jesus had finished saying all this in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. 2 There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. 3 The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. 4 When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, 5 because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." 6 So Jesus went with them.</p>

Details Compared

Matthew	Luke
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jesus enters Capernaum ● A Centurion asks Jesus for help ● Jesus says He will go and heal the servant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jesus enters Capernaum ● Servant's relationship with Centurion described ● Centurion heard of Jesus ● Centurion sent elders to Jesus ● Elders plead with Jesus to help ● Elders extol the value of the Centurion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Loves our nation ● Built a synagogue ● Jesus says He will go and heal the servant

The Good Centurions

- Most the Centurions mentioned in the New Testament are shown in a positive light
 - At the crucifixion – "Surely this was a son of a god" (or "the son of God") Mat. 27:54
 - Cornelius (Acts 10-11)
 - The Centurion on the ship with Paul on the way to Rome (Acts 27)

The Worthy Unworthy

- "I do not deserve to have you come under my roof." – Centurion to Jesus
- "I have not found such great faith even in Israel." – Jesus about the Centurion
- Self Esteem versus Christ Esteem

"God sets himself against the proud, but he shows favor to the humble." So humble yourselves before God.

Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw close to God, and God will draw close to you.

Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, you hypocrites. Let there be tears for the wrong things you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy.

When you bow down before the Lord and admit your dependence on him, he will lift you up and give you honor.

*James 4:6-10
New Living Bible*

God-fearers

- Three Levels of Gentile "Converts"
 - Godfearers
 - Gentiles who favored Judaism, studied scripture, and worshipped in synagogue, without becoming full converts
 - Proselyte-at-the-gate
 - May be similar or synonymous with Godfearers
 - Tended to be people who could not fully convert (Eunuchs, for example)
 - Proselytes
 - Converted
 - Males circumcised, all immersed, generally given Hebrew names

Matthew 8

8 The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

Luke 7

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. 7 That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. 8 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

Authority of Command

- An Amazing Faith
 - The most common assumption about miracles is that they require some special incantation, some magical touch, or some charmed object
 - The Centurion had a more straightforward understanding of faith
 - Command and it will be obeyed
 - No ceremony, formula, special lighting, or touch

Matthew 8

10 When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. 11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." 13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour.

Luke 7

9 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." 10 Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

Compare details

- Greater faith than in Israel
- Many will come from east and west
- But the natural subjects will be thrown outside into darkness
- Jesus tells them to go because the lad is already healed
- Greater faith than in Israel
- The men return and find the lad healed

Why additional in Matthew

- A key reminder
 - Most of the time Luke emphasizes the Kingdom is going to be given to Gentiles
 - BUT – sometimes it is Matthew who provides the additional emphasis
- East, west, far off
 - Common code words for “Gentiles”
- Subjects of the Kingdom
 - The natural citizens: i.e. the Jews

Outer Darkness

- This is one of several descriptions of the state of being eternally separated from God
 - A place of darkness
 - No light, no life, no presence of God
 - A place of ongoing agony and suffering
 - Weeping and gnashing of teeth

Psalm 112:10

The wicked man will see and be vexed,
he will gnash his teeth and waste away;
the longings of the wicked will come to nothing.

To gnash the teeth at or against is to express
deep hostility and intention of harm
(Job 16:9; Pss. 35:16; 37:12; 112:10;
Lam. 2:16; Acts 7:52).