

## Session 2

January 28, 2024

### YIELDED FAITH

#### Luke 7:1-10

This week's lesson is interesting on many levels. It showcases a gentile's faith while gently chiding the Jews' lack of faith. It demonstrates Christ's compassion. It teaches us how authority works. It affirms the process of intercession in coming to Christ. And besides all that...it's just a great story! I broke it down into three segments.

**Faith's request (vv. 1-5).** As a physician Luke had an eye for detail and as an historian, he was careful to record those details. Here, those probing questions every historian (and journalist) learns to ask are answered. (1) When? According to verse 1, Jesus had just finished teaching the multitudes through the Sermon on the Mount. The audience for that sermon was the disciples primarily, but the people crowded around Him and were welcomed by Him. (2) Where? Capernaum. This seaside town was Jesus' adopted hometown during the early years of His ministry. (3) Who? Here, things get more complicated as a whole caste of players are introduced. There was a slave involved who was about to die. Then there was the centurion to whom the slave belonged. The centurion was a member of the Roman military responsible for leading 100 men. More importantly, he was a gentile. The fact that he "valued" the slave indicates more than treating him as valuable property. More likely, he was valued as a trusted member of the household. There were Jewish leaders mentioned (v. 3). These were emissaries who served the centurion as liaisons between the Roman gentile (whom they clearly respected) and the Lord. (4) What? A request was being made. The centurion wanted the Lord Jesus to perform a miraculous healing. And finally, (5) Why? Not only did the centurion want to save his servant's life, but he himself was clearly a God-fearing man who respected the Jews and used his influence to build a Jewish synagogue for the townspeople. For this reason, the Jewish elders felt justified in approaching Jesus on his behalf. For reflection: *Note how the Jewish elders were used to bridge the gap between the centurion and Jesus. What are some other Bible examples of this kind of intermediary between Jesus and individuals?*

**Faith's revealed (vv. 6-8).** There was no hesitancy here, as was sometimes the case (see Matt. 15:22ff, for example). Moved by their plea, Jesus accompanied them to the centurion's house. When it was known that He was close by, the centurion sent word to Him once again. First, he requested that Jesus come (v. 3). Now, he requested that Jesus not come! Two reasons are given. First, there was humility. There is no reason to doubt the centurion's sincerity. He was an important man in the military, but he had no standing with the divine Son of God...and he knew it! Second, there was authority. No one understands the voice of authority more than a soldier. No doubt, for years, the centurion was used to either giving orders or following them. The spoken command was enough, and the military's chain-of-command assured that orders were followed. Here, the faithful soldier applied that understanding to the spiritual realm. He knew that Jesus was capable of healing, for He had already done so (see Luke 6:18ff). For reflection: *Do you think faith is a blind leap, or is it based on evidence? Compare this story to the definition of faith in Heb. 11:1. How do these things work together?*

**Faith's result (vv. 9-10).** These final verses are rich in both content and in meaning. That Jesus was "amazed" (or that He "marveled") at the man is itself amazing. Jesus was not caught off guard, or surprised. Rather He was quite pleased. To paraphrase Augustine, "The one who inspired the faith is the same who now admired it." His proclamation affirming this gentile's surpassing faith is even more pronounced by the fact that Christ announced it to the "crowd following Him;" which was no doubt substantially Jewish in its makeup. Verse 10 comes as no surprise. The centurion's faith-filled request was rewarded by the Lord's faith-honoring result. For reflection: *Does faith always find such a positive reward? Does a lack of God's movement indicate a deficiency in our faith? Why or why not?*