

JESUS AND THE CENTURION // Luke 7:1-10

from the series, the Gospel of Luke

The opening verses of Luke 7 describe a setting, scene, and solution--a Roman centurion in Capernaum, who has become a friend to the Jews in that area, has compassion on his sick servant and seeks out the Great Physician, having faith that Jesus can heal. Jesus “ marvels ” at the faith shown by the centurion, a response that is unique in the gospels.

The story the centurion is positioned after the Sermon on the Mount in chapter 6. That sermon, which is a more abstract description of the disposition of the disciple, finds a concrete illustration in the practice of the centurion. This gentile soldier demonstrates a faith that “ gets God’s attention. ”

There are two notable components of this “ Disposition of the Disciple in Desperate Circumstances ”:

1. Faith in Who God Is, Not in Who We Are (v. 6)

Although the Jewish elders attempt to convince Jesus to perform a miracle for the centurion because “ he is worthy ” and loves the nation of Israel and has helped build their synagogue, the centurion recognizes his own spiritual poverty--“ I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, ” he says. His faith is based on who Jesus is, in the nature and character of God, rather than his own merit or qualifications. Our spiritual resume does not compel God to act on our behalf.

2. Faith in What God Says, Not in What We Know (v. 7)

The centurion, a man of authority with many people serving under him, recognizes Jesus as a greater authority--he is Lord, and one to whom all things, even those not seen or heard, are under submission. Based on this understanding, the centurion asks Jesus not to *do* something, but to *say* something. He has faith in the power of his word. Likewise, we too can have faith in God’s Word, in the completed canon of Scripture.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What can we do in our daily lives to help us focus on who God is and what he has said? What practices help us to take on this disposition of the disciple?
2. The centurion only knows Jesus because he has heard others speaking about him. How can we be intentional in our efforts to share Jesus with the world, to “ gossip the gospel ”?
3. Although the centurion implores Jesus not to “ trouble himself ” by coming to his house, we know that if a matter is significant to us, it is significant to God--not a trouble to him. What matters are we hesitant to bring before God because we fear they might be insignificant?