

Great Faith (Luke 7:1-10)

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Opening Illustration

Ruth's faith choice.

Introduction

Faith is essential to the follower of Jesus Christ. Only two people who encountered Jesus in the Bible were commended for their faith. One was a Roman soldier with a dying servant and his story is an example of great faith that pleases God.

Three Qualities that Reveal Great Faith

1. Genuine love can reveal great faith.

When He had completed all His teaching in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum. ² Now a centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. ³ When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to Him, asking Him to come and save the life of his slave. Luke 7:1-3

After delivering the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus returned to Capernaum, his ministry base in Galilee. This city on the northern shore of the sea of Galilee was large enough to have a detachment of Roman soldiers who were commanded by a centurion.

The Roman historian Polybius described centurions as “Not so much venturesome daredevils as natural leaders of a steady and sedate spirit, who will hold their ground and be ready to die at their posts.”

Centurions were tough soldiers, but this one loved people. His love is first shown in his attitude toward his slave. The word for slave is *doulos*, and it describes a person purchased, owned, and completely subject to the will and control of his master. The centurion also referred to his slave using the word, *pais* which means “child” or “son”. He had great affection for his servant.

Because of his affection for his slave, he was concerned about him when he was sick and near death. We learn in Matthew that the young man was ‘paralyzed and in severe pain.’

The centurion’s compassion compelled him to come in search of Jesus for help. Real love drives us in desperation to help when someone we truly care about is in pain or trouble.

He also demonstrated love toward the Jewish people which was unheard of. Most Romans and Jews hated each other but

this man respected the Jewish people. He in turn, earned their respect and from their description of him, he was personally responsible for building their synagogue.

⁴ When they came to Jesus, they strongly urged Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him; ⁵ for he loves our nation, and it was he who built us our synagogue." Luke 7:4-5

Illustration

If I had to live my life over.

2. Genuine humility can reveal great faith.

⁶ Now Jesus started on His way with them; but already, when He was not yet far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to enter under my roof; ⁷ for that reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You; but just say the word, and my servant shall be healed. Luke 7:6-7

A mark of a disciple of Jesus is acknowledging our sins. The centurion acknowledged his sins and spiritual emptiness and sent friends to stop Jesus from coming to his home.

He was too ashamed of his sins and unworthiness to have Jesus enter his house. He was like Peter when Jesus gave him a miraculous catch of fish.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" Luke 5:8

As Jesus headed for his house, the man's friends gave Him the reason why he didn't want Him to come.

"Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to enter under my roof; ⁷for that reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You; but just say the word, and my servant shall be healed Luke 7:6b-7

He thought his sins were too great and they would be an affront to Jesus' holiness. He didn't yet understand God's mercy and grace because he only knew his own unworthiness.

Many today feel identify with this unworthiness before God. They feel they're too far gone to be reconciled with God, so they've given up trying. But that is a lie of Satan! When Jesus died on the cross, He died for those sins, and to set us free from the guilt of our sins.

Now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. Romans 6:22

Illustration

I feel my own littleness.

3. **Genuine trust can reveal great faith.**

⁸ For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under myself; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." ⁹ Now when Jesus heard this, He was amazed at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." ¹⁰ And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health. Luke 7:8-10

His trust in Jesus was real as his need for Jesus to heal his servant was just as real. Rather than Jesus coming into his home, he suggested that Jesus just say the word, and his servant would be healed. He had total trust in Jesus that He could heal from wherever He wanted. He was completely confident that Jesus spoke with divine power and authority.

As an army officer, he understood authority, both in those above him and those below him. He related his authority with the authority Jesus exercised. He knew what it meant to give orders and have then fully obeyed, and He knew that Jesus had full authority over life and death.

When Jesus heard these words, He marvelled at this man's trust in Him. He turned to the crowd and declared that not even in Israel had He found such great faith. He both commended this man and indicted Israel. The centurion had little knowledge of God, yet he believed while Israel had a rich history of God working in their lives yet none of them, had the kind of committed faith as he did. And his faith truly came alive when he encountered Jesus.

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. Romans 10:17

Because he trusted in Jesus, Jesus affirmed his faith and healed his servant at that moment. Now, like Paul, he could proclaim that he is living by faith.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Gal. 2:20

A great faith is willingly submitting our whole lives to Christ and living for him by faith and not by sight. We give up to gain.

Closing Illustration

Trusting the Scent of Jesus