



FIRST LIGHT CHURCH

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Date: 9/11/2022

Series: Who Is This Man?

Text: Luke 7:1-10

BIG IDEA: Faith is the key to the heart of Christ.

ICEBREAKER: When was a time when someone showed you deep compassion/love?

CONTEXT: Jesus meets a Roman centurion in the village of Capernaum who had a servant, for whom he cared greatly, who was very ill. The centurion sent word to Jesus that he would like to have his servant healed and stated that Jesus need only say the word to accomplish it. Jesus was amazed at the centurion's faith.

PASSAGE: Have volunteers read Luke 7:1-10.

DISCUSSION:

1. A centurion was a Roman officer who was in charge of a hundred men. What might have been some of the reasons the centurion sent Jewish elders to meet with Jesus rather than going himself?
2. Why did the Jewish elders think the centurion was "worthy" of being helped?
3. Why did Jesus make His way toward the house of the centurion (a gentile) even though it was prohibited by Jewish law to enter? Why did the centurion feel unworthy?
4. What does Jesus value in this passage?
5. Have you ever been surprised to see faith show up in someone you least expected? How did you feel?
6. What does it tell us about Jesus' that his presence wasn't required for healing?
7. What is the difference between great faith and little faith?
8. What does it mean to pray boldly and why should we? (Have a volunteer read 1 John 5:14-15 for clarity.)

APPLICATION:

9. Where in your life is God calling you to trust Him more?
10. How can you live with greater faith?

K4 CONNECTION:

Sometimes we need to show others kindness and love by helping them at the expense of our comfort and convenience. Demonstrating God's love to others in practical ways opens the lines of communication and breaks down walls of division. Being able to have a genuine impact on those around you is clearly demonstrated by selfless acts. Many will see that your relationship with God is real and want to know more about your faith.

CARE AND PRAY:

- Ask God to show you ways to "live out" your faith.
- Pray for those in our faith family who are sick or injured.
- Share any prayer requests.

COMMENTARY

[v.1-3] The centurion represents someone who believes in the power of Jesus' words, and thus we see again that the kingdom is an upside-down kingdom. The most unlikely of candidates believes. When Jesus finishes the sermon (Luke 6:20–49), He travels to Capernaum. The centurion is a military officer, probably under Herod Antipas, and commands one hundred men. Luke does not state his nationality, but we see from the narrative that he is a Gentile. He has a slave who is sick and near death, one who is precious to him. Probably the slave is not only a good worker but one for whom the centurion has a special affection. The centurion has heard the reports about Jesus' healings, and, since he has a relationship with the Jewish elders in his community, he asks them to mediate for him and to request Jesus to come and heal his slave. It is not easy to narrow down the precise role of elders in the Jewish community. They are probably older men who exercise leadership by virtue of their stature in the community.

[v.4-5] The elders are more than happy to accede to the centurion's request. They entreat Jesus to go to the centurion, arguing that he is worthy of such a favor. We see here the reciprocal nature of relationships in the ancient world: healing the slave of the centurion is warranted because the centurion loves the Jewish nation, a love attested by the building of a synagogue. The centurion almost certainly provided the funds that enabled the Jews to build the synagogue. The Jews want to return the favor, granting a benefit to one who has benefited them.

[v.6-8] Jesus consents, traveling to the house of the centurion. But as He comes closer to the house, the centurion sends a delegation of friends to speak to Jesus. The friends pass along a message from the official: he does not want to trouble Jesus further (cf. 8:49). The Jewish elders believe he is "worthy" (Gk. *axios*; 7:4) enough for Jesus should heal his slave, but the centurion thinks otherwise, confessing that he is not "worthy" (*hikanos*; v. 6) for Jesus to enter his house. The centurion does not flaunt and trumpet his greatness or generosity but realizes his sinfulness.

Verse 7 confirms and strengthens the point. The centurion remarked in verse 6 that he was not "worthy" for Jesus to enter his house, and verse 7 follows up with the words, "Therefore, I did not consider myself worthy to come to you" (AT). The centurion does not think he is worthy, and thus he says that Jesus should not enter his house; nor does he feel qualified to speak to Jesus person to person. Still, he believes in Jesus' power, saying that Jesus needs only to speak the word for the slave to be healed. The effectiveness of Jesus' word reminds us of God himself, who "sent out his word and healed them" (Ps. 107:20).

The centurion recognizes Jesus' authority, for he, too, is a man who has authority over soldiers. When he commands soldiers, they do what he says because they know his word is authoritative—and thus, it is also effective. So too, the centurion knows that Jesus' word has an intrinsic authority and that whatever Jesus speaks will become reality. Again, we are reminded of God's authority; He spoke the word in Genesis 1, and the universe was created.

[v.9-10] Upon hearing these words from the centurion, Jesus is astonished and, thus, remarks to the crowd following Him that the faith of the centurion is distinctive and extraordinary, exceeding anything He has seen in Israel. After all, the man is a Gentile and yet puts his trust in Jesus' word. Furthermore, he knows Jesus can heal by His word at a distance. Healing does not require Jesus' personal presence. The story anticipates a major theme in Acts: the inclusion of the Gentiles in the people of God, in contrast to many in Israel who did not believe. We also see here the centrality of faith, as in the account of the paralytic (Luke 5:20). The narrative concludes with the report that the slave is healed, showing the power of Jesus' word.

WHERE'S THE GOSPEL?

Jesus loves people. He was willing to go to the house of a Roman centurion (a gentile) to show His love and compassion for someone who called Him, Lord. He was willing to disregard the Jewish law and risk being labeled unclean in order to help affirm a man's faith by healing his servant. He didn't have to, but He did it anyway. He didn't have to even be present, yet He was on His way there anyway. Jesus was willing to come to bring complete healing to all through His redemptive work on the cross. He didn't have to, yet He came anyway. He demonstrated His love for us by bearing the burden of our sin. He lowered Himself to our level to show His love. He did it, even though our faith is sometimes weak, our obedience is sketchy, and our motives can be questionable. He came to us in our weakness and uncleanness and healed us. As unworthy as we are, He came anyway. Thank you, Jesus.