

Immediately after Christ has delivered the well-known sermon on the mount. He has come from the sermon, being followed the apostles, other disciples and a crowd of his listeners and is confronted with this opportunity to express Himself in all His power. **And put into practice what he taught...**

NLT Luke 6:27 "But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. ²⁸ Bless those who curse you.

Jesus will be encounter another person in great need except this is a Roman centurion... An Officer in charge of 100 soldiers... a leader from the hated Roman occupiers of Israel.

- **The enemy of the Jews, to understand the animosity between the Jews and the Romans I need to give you some context...**
- **If another nation conquered us and took away our freedoms, we would struggle with that. There would be great Resentment...and animosity**
- **And If that nation replaced our police force with their occupation troops, we would resent that.**
- **Roman law, stated Roman troops could require Jews to help them any time they wanted to, For example If a Roman soldier was traveling and he wanted a Jew to carry his pack, all he had to do was tell the Jew to pick up the load. And the person was required to carry his pack for a mile. ...that would cause feelings of animosity.**
- **Everywhere Jews traveled within their own country those troops were visible reminders that they were not free.**
- **And Every time we saw an officer in charge of those troops, we would really struggle with our attitude. There was great animosity between the Roman and the Jews..**
- **This story is actually one of the clearest and most striking examples of how Jesus lived out his teaching on love of enemies, bless those who persecute you!**

Lets pick up the narrative *ESV Luke7:1* *When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum.*

- Capernaum is a coastal city on the western side of the Sea of Galilee it was of some size. Jesus often taught in the synagogue that was there – it is the one mentioned later that the centurion had built.
- Capernaum was also Jesus home base when he was in Galilee and Peter had a place of residence there, Most likely it was the residence for He and the disciples when they were in the area.

² *Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him.*

- This Centurion would be a leader used to being in control...we all like to be in control...When something goes awry we want to fix it
- He probably tried everything in his power to do, only to come to the conclusion that it was beyond him...He was desperate
- His servant whom he highly valued was sick and dying. The term highly valued is translated loved
- So There was a closeness between the master and slave. This tells us a lot about the master. **A master does not normally view a slave with much emotion, they are property**
- The centurion had become attached to the slave over the time of their relationship. (We don't know, but assume that the servant was not a Jew.)
- The servant's dearness to his master is also seen in the fact that he is sick and dying in HIS MASTER'S HOUSE. Verse 6... It was the custom in this day to have sick servants removed to infirmaries or slave quarters, not to the masters home.
- He was sick and the centurion was powerless...desperate..or as Jesus would say poor...He was prepped for the King from Kingdom of God

NLT Luke 6:20..... “God blesses you who are poor, for the Kingdom of God is yours.

- **So when the Centurion hears of Jesus...Hope arises**

ESV Luke 7: 3 When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. 4 And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, “He is worthy to have you do this for him, 5 for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue.” 6 And Jesus went with them.....

- **This centurion had great authority over the city of Capernaum, his soldiers were also the police, He was powerful politically, and oversaw tax collecting.**
- **So he would make it his business to know what was going on around him in his city. - to understand the Jewish people. He would know about their history, their customs, their Scriptures, and - most importantly - their God...Whether this was political, to get along, or whether this was spiritual and he was a proselyte, we don't know.**
- **The Jewish elders, held this Roman officer in high regard, and were really hoping that Jesus would intervene... moreover they commented that the centurion loved the nation of Israel and had also built the Jews a synagogue, indicating that the Centurion cared about the Jews under his charge and they cared about him.**
- **And apparently he heard of Jesus...and his powers**
- **He was humble and did not consider himself worthy to speak to Jesus himself as he was a gentile with no right to speak to a Rabbi**
- **And did not consider himself worthy to speak to someone whom he considered a higher rank than himself.**
- **So he sent those whom he believed might have sway with Jesus..other religious leaders**

1. and the Jewish leaders felt the same as this centurion about themselves...they are worthy of God's help because they are Jewish religious leaders and follow the law...therefore are worthy in themselves for the blessings of God.
which was Jesus issue with them...

3. How many Jewish leaders saw themselves below Jesus? How many humbled themselves before Jesus. Those who did were the lame, sick, sinners who recognized what Jesus could really do in their lives. What did they get? Salvation. Who did not submit to Christ? The Pharisees, the rulers of Israel, the powerful and rich.

4. The ruling Jews during Jesus time, refused to acknowledge Christ's authority. They questioned it. They doubted it. How many people demanded signs for Jesus to prove he was the Christ.

1. What also speaks to his character is He did not ask anything for himself. Unlike many people hovering around Jesus, this man's request was for his servant.

And Jesus went with them...walking toward the officers home.

2 The fact that Jesus says nothing about the man's occupation; he doesn't even hint that there might be anything wrong in what he does for a living.

3 Nor does Jesus demand that the centurion lay down his arms before he helps him further emphasizes Jesus' attitude of love to one who was, in natural terms, his enemy. He goes..he looks at him in his humanity ...a man in need

ESV Luke 7:6 When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. ⁷ Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed.

1. This officer... did not consider himself worthy to speak to Jesus himself...let alone come to his home..."he probably knew the law of the Jews, that it was not lawful for a Jew to go into the house of an

uncircumcised Gentile; he thought it too great a stoop for Christ to come into his house, and too high a request for him to enjoy."

2. So for the second time he sends those whom he feels might have favor with the Lord, being they were Jewish and leaders...

3. **The centurion respected Jesus' power and authority.** This man knew Jesus was over him. AND He was a Roman. And This Centurion had power himself financially, militarily and politically, but understood Jesus had greater power

As he states

⁸ For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

- The centurion assumed Jesus would know what he was talking about or he wouldn't have said it.
- He knew Christ was under authority, He had Heavenly Kingdom Authority! Just as the Centurion had Roman Empire authority ...Yet he knew Jesus authority was greater including authority over sickness .

⁹ When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to the crowd that was following him, he said, "I tell you, I haven't seen faith like this in all Israel!"

- **Wow! Jesus said : I Don't SEE THIS KIND OF FAITH IN MY OWN PEOPLE! I think that the Jewish community must have had a gut check...and a rebuke to The Jewish elders of the local synagogue who were there and I suspect other Jewish leaders.**
- The Centurion faith was Great – For his faith in the power of Jesus was unquestioned
- Because he knew Jesus could command healing if Jesus decided to command it. He also knew Jesus had the authotiy to not command healing also if he so desired. **Jesus was the shot caller!**

- **I think there is a principle here. Faith needs to be in God's ability to do, not in a confidence of His doing. Let me repeat, FAITH NEEDS TO BE IN GOD'S ABILITY TO DO, NOT IN A CONFIDENCE OF HIS DOING.**
- **So they left the discision in Jesus hands and went back to their their friend the officer. there they received his decision**

¹⁰ And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

- Did Jesus hope his act of kindness, to a foe of his people foe in a way wash away the animosity between Jew and Roman? No... **Jesus when ended up on a Roman cross, there was no friendly centurion who spoke up for him to save him.**
- **Probably Jesus demonstration of the gospel of God's love to all humanity moved the centurion toward salvation. The text does not tell us what happened next in the centurion's life.**
- **And Jesus' actions toward the centurion are certainly consistent with his befriending and kindness toward tax collectors and other fringe and less desirable people.**
- **He demonstrated to his Apostles and his followers you must meet your enemy on the ground of their common humanity**
- **It is the first step toward bringing about the repentenc of heart God desires**

In human terms, Jesus' treatment of the centurion makes no sense at all; he loved an enemy, But It is, in short, the gospel.

Luke 6:35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

Go and do likewise
end

If Christians are those who believe the gospel; who take Jesus, in all his weakness and all his strength, as their Savior; who follow him, and so take up his ways as their ways ...what choice have we but to be people love our enemies and bless those who persecute us?

Your must be in Jesus period, not whether or not He does what we want.

end

At this time in history a man could build a house and then give it to the people of a place for a synagogue and the Jews would view it as a synagogue. This may have been what the centurion had done - built a house with his own money and his soldiers labor - then given it to the Jews of the city. "The centurions mentioned in the New Testament are uniformly spoken of in terms of praise, whether in the Gospels or in the Acts.

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Does Jesus' approach make sense? Was it effective? For that centurion it was...but it did nothing to help Jesus -- he ended up on a Roman cross, with no friendly centurion to save him.

and force the soldier either to recognize the disciple's humanity or deny his own. In all these cases, Jesus opened himself to those whom, if he valued patriotism and national honor, he should have rejected. He seemed to trust that this openness of heart and hands, rather than vindictiveness and violence, would be

- There are a thousand things every day that we can control... If we are hungry we can fix something to eat... If our child scrapes his knee we can put a band-aid on it...If the cat wants to go outside we can open the door... If we don't like what is on one channel we can always find another ... We can be quite ok when there is order to our universe...until there is not! Something beyond our control
- We find ourselves wrestling with something that we have no power over
- He probably tried everything in his power to do, only to come to the conclusion that it was beyond him...He was desperate

The centurion in our account was a Roman officer, Now, as a centurion. this particular man was an outstanding Roman leader

⁶ So Jesus went with them. But just before they arrived at the house, the officer sent some friends to say, "Lord, don't trouble yourself by coming to my home, for I am not worthy of such an honor. ⁷ I am not even worthy to come and meet you. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'Go,' and they go, or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this,' they do it."

Vs. 3 "And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant."

The term beseeching is related to one of the terms used of the Holy Spirit that has the thought of calling someone along side for encouragement or assistance.

He knew that there was nothing that he could do - that he needed outside intervention into the situation to save the servant's life.

Vss. 4-5 "And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: 5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue."

It is clear that the Jewish elders held the centurion in high regard, and were really hoping that Christ would intervene.

Contemplate this picture for awhile. This centurion has authority over the city of Capernum and the population views him with high regard. The centurion must have been quite a man in his life before these Jews.

Now, consider those that have authority over us in our daily life. Can we say the same thing of them - that they are worthy of Christ's help, that they love us as a nation? Can we really say that of our city leaders, our state leaders, our federal leaders?

All are NEEDY of Christ's help, but I can't say that many of them are really WORTHY of Christ's help. I personally think this says something about our leaders today.

The comment that the centurion loved the nation of Israel is of some interest as well. The Roman empire was the greatest empire on earth in all of history to that time, yet the centurion loved the Jewish nation. He saw something in these Jewish people that he wanted to make his own. It would be of interest to know if he were a believer in the God of the Jews, and also whether he was a follower of the Messiah.

Vs. 6 "Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:"

Clarke mentions that the term translated Lord should probably be translated Sir rather than Lord. This would be the normal translation of the term when a Roman soldier is using this Greek word.

Gill mentions of this thought of the centurion being unworthy, "he might know full well the law of the Jews, that it was not lawful for a Jew to go into the house of an uncircumcised Gentile; and though he might be a proselyte of righteousness, and so his house was free of

entrance; yet considering his own meanness, and the greatness of Christ, who was become so famous for his doctrines and miracles, he thought it too great a stoop for Christ to come into his house, and too high a favour for him to enjoy."

NOTICE: The centurion felt so strongly about his unworthiness that he jeopardized the possible healing of his dear servant. He really felt that it would not be right for Christ to enter into his home.

Vs. 7 "Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed."

The centurion did not feel that he was worthy of even speaking to the Lord. He had sent the Jewish elders to speak for him. The man knew much of the Jewish protocol I would think. The Romans and the Jews did not normally mix company unless there were political issues to be settled.

Vs. 8 "For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth [it]."

Verse eight is of interest to me. Why does it exist? Both Matt. and Luke mention this. I assume that he knew Christ would know what he was talking about or he wouldn't have said it. He knew Christ was under authority, yet in authority as he was. Remember this for later, as I want to comment on it briefly.

Vs. 9 "When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Notice the difference? He respected Jesus' power and authority. The ruling Jews during Jesus time, refused to acknowledge Christ's authority though they witnessed his power. They questioned his authority. They doubted it. How many people demanded signs for Jesus to prove he was the Christ. This man knew Jesus was over him. AND He was a Roman. Not only that but one with real Power.

Faith in God and His abilities not whether or not He does what we want.

Wow! What a slam in the face of the Jewish people. The Jewish elders of the local synagogue were there as were other Jewish leaders I would suspect. I Dont SEE THIS KIND OF FAITH

IN MY OWN PEOPLE! I think that the Jewish community must have perked up their ears over that one!

So let's take a look at the alternatives the centurion had. 1. Let the servant die. 2. Find some other alternative - the only one being someone that had power over life and death - that being Jesus of whom he had heard. 3. Approach the man called Jesus that was reported to have power over life and death, and risk being identified as one of His followers, or at the least being accused of associating with Him - which wasn't all that popular.

This approach meant three things at the very least. 1. Risking his reputation as a Roman officer in his city and with his superiors. 2. Risking losing status with the Jewish community under him and in surrounding towns. 3. Having a certain amount, if not a great amount of faith in the man Jesus.

Since Christ indicates that there was a great faith, I will go with His estimation of the centurion's faith. He had great faith in the Lord's power to heal. He in his heart KNEW that Christ could raise up his dear servant. How does that relate to the faith you have when you go to prayer?

Do you KNOW in your mind and heart that God is capable of doing this thing that you are asking? Or do you toss those prayers up by the dozens hoping that God will reach down and answer one or two?

The centurion's faith was manifested in three ways: 1. Faith in the approachability of the Savior. He had confidence that his friends could go to Him and talk to Him even though he was not worthy of talking to Christ himself. 2. Faith in the healing power of the Lord. He had confidence that Christ could raise up the servant. 3. Faith in power of Christ to speak this miracle into being. He only asked that Jesus say the required word.

The Centurion asked if Christ would do this. His faith was Great - he knew Christ could do it. He didn't know if He would or not. So his faith in the power of Jesus was unquestioned...he would have faith in him either way...but he was asking him to do this healing and believing he might do it, knowing full well he did not have to do it. Jesus was the shot caller!

I think there is a principle here. Faith needs to be in God's ability to do, not in a confidence of His doing. Let me repeat, FAITH NEEDS TO BE IN GOD'S ABILITY TO DO, NOT IN A CONFIDENCE OF HIS DOING.

The fact of whether He will or not is up to Him. He will consider my need and His will and answer accordingly.

You say what is the difference whether my faith is in God's ability to provide and whether He will provide. If my faith is based on God's ability - that is fact - that is truth - that is God's attribute - He can do anything that does not contradict His character. If my faith is based on whether God provides or not then If I ask God to provide me with a needed car, and He doesn't provide, then my faith was not big enough to get God to do what I ask.

Notice the difference? Faith in God and His abilities is the key to our faith in prayer, not whether or not He does what we want.

Perhaps we may infer that Jesus hoped his act of kindness, crossing the line between friend and foe in a way that washed away animosity by recognizing only their mutual humanity, would in itself be a proclamation of the gospel of love and peace that would move the centurion toward repentance. As is generally the case with the miracle stories, the text does not tell us what happened next in the centurion's life.

But Jesus' actions toward the centurion are certainly consistent with his befriending of tax collectors and other fringe less desirable people...

The Jesus follower will meet the enemy on the ground of their common humanity and force the soldier either to recognize the disciple's humanity or deny his own. In all these cases, Jesus opened himself to those whom, if he valued patriotism and national honor, he should have rejected. He seemed to trust that this openness of heart and hands, rather than vindictiveness and violence, would be the first step toward bringing about the change of heart, and the change of actions, he would have desired from those who were hostile to his and his people's wellbeing.

Does Jesus' approach make sense? Was it effective? Apparently not -- he ended up on a Roman cross, with no friendly centurion to save him.

But the Christian faith is that this was only the apparent result, and that in the end God vindicated Jesus and his way by raising him from the death to which the authorities of the world had condemned him.

In human terms, Jesus' treatment of the centurion makes no sense at all; it is weak, foolish, ineffectual, and dangerous. It is, in short, the gospel.

If Christians are those who believe the gospel; who take Jesus, in all his weakness and all his strength, as their Savior; who follow him, and so take up his ways as their ways ...what choice have we but to be people of nonviolence and peace?

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End with??? The ground is indeed level at the foot of the cross. What a comfort to all the despised in our day, who thirst for the dignity that comes from spiritual equality in the "Christ identity." What a challenge to the church to live out, through acceptance across racial, class, ethnic and gender lines, our profession that we serve an impartial God who has sent us a universal Lord and Savior.

Let me set a context that would cause all of us to struggle with our emotions.

Now...A Roman centurion came to Jesus pleading with Jesus to help him.

- Can you picture that scene?
- Can you picture a Roman officer in the occupation force pleading for a Jew to help him?
- The Roman military did not plead for help from its captives; it ordered its captives to help.
- Can you imagine a man from a military that honored many gods asking for religious help from a man who taught there was one God?

The situation:

A Roman military officer in Palestine's occupation force who keeps the Jewish people under control has a servant who is paralyzed and in great pain.

He is so convinced that Jesus can correct the situation that he comes to Jesus to ask for his help.

The Roman Centurion asked Jesus to heal his servant. There are so many lessons here. Here are some of the things that strike me...

1. The fact that Jesus does not demand that the centurion lay down his arms before he helps him further emphasizes Jesus' attitude of openness and love to one who was, in natural terms, his enemy.
2. Jesus says nothing about the man's occupation; he doesn't even hint that there might be anything wrong in what he does for a living. In reality, however, this "contradiction" is anything but a contradiction.

3. This story is actually one of the clearest and most striking examples of how Jesus lived out his teaching on nonviolence and love of enemies. the centurion served, the Roman army ... That's what a centurion was, a Roman officer in charge of a unit of 100 men.
4. As a Jew Jesus had every right to fear and to detest this officer. The centurion was a leader in the foreign army that was occupying Jesus' country, helping to extort oppressive taxes and tribute money from Jesus' people. He was not Jesus' friend, nor a friend to Jesus' family or his disciples. He was an enemy of the Jewish nation, and therefore an enemy to any loyal Jew. If Jesus had not practiced nonviolent love of enemies -- not only personal enemies but national enemies -- he would have been more likely to draw a sword on this man than to help him out in his distress.
5. He did not ask anything for himself. Unlike many people hovering around Jesus, this man's request was for his servant. Don't get me wrong, there were many good people drawn to Jesus because of his message of hope and repentance. However, I'll bet most wanted something for themselves.
6. **The Centurion didn't ask Jesus to heal his servant so he could serve him. He said it was because the servant "lies in bed, paralyzed and in terrible pain." It implies that the Centurion cares about his servant, a sign of humility.**
7. He saw himself unworthy of Jesus' time. How many Jews saw themselves below Jesus? How many humbled themselves before Jesus. Those who did were the lame, sick, sinners who recognized what Jesus could really do in their lives. What did they get? Salvation. Not wealth and prosperity but real blessings. Who did not submit to Christ? The Pharisees, the rulers of Israel, the powerful and rich.
8. He respected Jesus' power and authority. The ruling Jews during Jesus time, refused to acknowledge Christ's authority. They questioned it. They doubted it. How many people demanded signs for Jesus to prove he was the Christ. This man knew Jesus was over him. AND He was a Roman. Not only that but one with real Power. Political, military, and money. I could learn a lesson here. .
9. **The centurion did not sit at home wringing his hands in worry. He set the logical course and acted. Had he not acted the servant would have died.**

Perhaps we may infer that Jesus hoped his act of kindness, crossing the line between friend and foe in a way that washed away animosity by recognizing only their mutual humanity, would in itself be a proclamation of the gospel of love and peace that would move the

centurion toward repentance. As is generally the case with the miracle stories, the text does not tell us what happened next in the centurion's life.

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The servant's dearness to his master is also seen in the fact that he is sick unto death in HIS MASTER'S HOUSE. It was the custom in this day to have sick servants removed to infirmaries or slave quarters, not to the masters home.

Now, as a centurion. this particular man was an outstanding Roman leader. A centurion made it his business to know what was going on around him. And over time - again, I'm speculating a little here - this particular centurion had made it his business to study the Jewish people. He

came to understand quite a bit about their history, their customs, their Scriptures, and - most importantly - their God