

Wil Owens  
Great Faith; Matthew 8:5-13  
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Introduction – Since faith is such an essential part of salvation and the Christian life, many times believers will struggle with the question of their faith. We know we are to have faith in Christ, but we question whether we have enough faith or if our faith is substantial enough to apprehend salvation in Christ. What is great faith and do we have it? Scripture clarifies the nature of saving faith so as to remove those types of doubts and second-guessing. Great faith is not about quantity but rather quality. It's not about how much faith we have, it's rather do we have faith in Christ. Great faith is not about our ability to believe as much as it is about the content of what we believe about Jesus. Great faith is not defined by our resources but rather by the Source of our faith, which is Christ. What makes saving faith great does not depend on how much faith we can produce but rather on the object of our faith, which is Christ.

In today's text we see an example of great faith.

- I. Great Faith Appeals Directly to Jesus (vv5-6)
  - a. It is both interesting and satisfying to note the two very different men who come to Jesus in Matthew 8. They both have a great need. They both seek out Jesus as the answer to their need. They both believe that Jesus is sufficient to meet a need that no one or nothing else can meet. But they are two very different people.
    - i. One is a leper. A nobody. An outcast. He has nothing. He is not well. He is dying. He is a Jew.
    - ii. The other is a man of power and status. He is a commander in the Roman army. He has charge of soldiers. He has clout. He lives well. He is healthy and full of life. He is a Gentile.
    - iii. One of the glories of the gospel is that its promises are for all who will believe. It matters not your social status. It matters not your ethnicity or skin color or background or current state. Men and women and children of all varieties and conditions and status are compelled and welcomed to come to Christ!
  - b. This centurion came to Jesus on behalf of his servant. He realized there was nothing he could do to help his servant. With all his power

and prestige and pull and influence, this situation was totally out of his hands. He had to go to a higher power, a greater authority. He needed Jesus to do what he could never do.

- c. Great faith appeals directly to Jesus. Great faith goes directly to the Source of life and forgiveness and salvation. Great faith understands some things, the best things, the most important things are outside of our grasp, outside of our achievement, outside of our ability, but they are not outside of Jesus' domain, authority, and ability.
- d. Let us learn from this centurion, whatever we need, beginning with salvation and extending to everything else beyond us, let us appeal directly to Jesus. He is the Source and Fountain of Life!

## II. Great Faith Believes in Jesus (vv7-9)

- a. Jesus' immediate response in v7 is so wonderful and thrilling, we're not expecting the response of v8, at all. We're expecting the centurion to jump at the chance to have Jesus in his home. After all, Jesus has just said He would gladly and willingly come and do exactly what the centurion just requested. So why does the centurion decline Jesus' response to come to his home and heal his servant? His reply is not arrogant or unappreciative in any way. It actually tells us something about great faith.
- b. Great faith believes in Jesus; it does not believe in self.
  - i. Great faith believes that Jesus is worthy of honor and worthy of respect and worthy of glory, and the faith that exalts Jesus to a place of great honor begins by placing self in the right place.
  - ii. You don't believe Jesus is great if you believe you are great! You don't believe Jesus is worthy if you believe you are worthy. This is a centurion. If anyone had the probability of thinking highly of himself, it was this man.
  - iii. But a high view of God begins with a low view of self. I'm not worthy to have you come under my roof!
  - iv. That's an astounding statement coming from this man. He represents the occupying nation of Rome. His country, his people are in control. Jesus is the occupied. In the eyes of men, the centurion has much greater status and authority and honor and worth than this wondering, poor religious Jew.

- v. But great faith realizes the spiritual state of the heart is more essential than the social status of the man. Great faith sees self as unworthy. Great faith sees more to Jesus than just a man. Great faith sees Jesus as God. “Lord” Imagine that! This centurion calls Jesus “Lord.”
    - c. Great faith believes in the power and ability of Jesus to accomplish what only God can accomplish!
      - i. He said just say the word and my servant will be healed. Nobody can do that but God. Nobody can just say the word and change reality but God. But if God speaks, if God speaks, the heavens and the earth are created. If God speaks, paralyzed people are walking and lepers have new, baby-smooth skin. If God speaks, dead hearts are awakened. If God speaks, repentant sinners are declared righteous. If God speaks, the impossible happens!
    - d. Great faith believes in the absolute, sovereign authority of Jesus to carry out and accomplish whatever He wills!
      - i. Think about it. Anybody can say, “Your servant is healed.” But saying it and then possessing the authority over not only the body, but over space and time, such that Jesus could stand in one place, speak the word, and a paralytic be healed in another place, is total authority!
      - ii. That’s God. That’s only God. That’s none other than God. Oh if you are apart from Christ today, believe in Jesus. He has all authority! If you are in Christ today, believe in Jesus, He has all authority!
- III. Great Faith Receives a Great Response (vv10-12)
- a. He marveled. You won’t catch Jesus off guard. You won’t surprise Jesus. He knows all things. You won’t manipulate Jesus. You won’t trap Jesus. He has total control. But the one thing that gets the attention of Jesus, the one thing that catches His eye, the one thing that always brings out a glorious response from Jesus is faith.
  - b. What makes Jesus’ response so great is that what He says about the centurion’s great faith extends far, far beyond this Gentile centurion all the way through time and all the way to the ends of the earth and all the way to 2019 to Grassy Pond and Gaffney, SC!

- c. Many of those who should believe, the sons of the kingdom, the Jews, those who witnessed the teachings and miracles and death and resurrection of Christ, who were ethnic Israelites, who had all the glorious history of redemption and the Holy Scripture, they won't believe. And they won't be saved. They will eternally perish.
  - d. But many who are far off, who are unlikely to believe in a Jewish Messiah, they will hear and they will believe and they will come! From all over the world, they will come!
- IV. Great Faith Receives a Great Reward (v13)
- a. Great faith receives from Jesus what it believes about Jesus! Great faith in Jesus receives the impossible because only God can do the impossible.
  - b. So preacher does this text mean if we believe in Jesus we will be healed and our loved ones will be healed. No friends. No. That's not what this text is teaching, and many believers have been led astray and their faith crushed because of false teachers telling them if they would have believed enough, they or their loved one would have been healed. That's a lie from Hell!
  - c. God does bring about healing in our lives from time to time. But remember the healing ministry of Jesus was not meant to be a promise that He would always heal our infirmities in this life. The healing ministry of Jesus was meant to prove to us that He is indeed God. He has authority over disease and disability. He can heal a paralytic with just a word.
  - d. The point is to believe in Jesus, that He is God, and that He is willing and able to save. He can do the impossible! He can save you. Jesus didn't come to merely make us physically whole; He came to make us completely whole!
  - e. Jesus doesn't mean to heal you so you can have a decent 70 or 80 or 90 years of life. He means to heal you so that you can have eternal life!

Conclusion – Believe Him today. Trust Him today. Turn to Him today. Great faith receives a great reward!