

THE FAITH OF THE CENTURION

INTRO: This event is recorded for us by the Gospel writers Matthew & Luke. The obvious context in Matthew is the various healings of Jesus. In Matthew and in Luke the emphasis in this healing is the faith of the centurion. We have the necessity and the bliss of such faith.

I. **GREAT FAITH DEMONSTRATED**

- A. It is the faith of a centurion.
1. He is a Gentile who loves the Lord and has done much for the Jewish people and their faith.
 2. He has a servant whom he loves and cares for.
 3. He has heard of Jesus and believes that he is not only able but also willing to heal his servant.
- B. The humility of his faith.
1. As a Gentile he does not dare approach Jesus himself, but has Jewish elders approach Jesus with his request.
- Luke is interested in the man's character, specifically his humility.
 2. When Jesus says that he will come and heal his servant, again the centurion exclaims that he is not worthy.
 3. Probably concerned that a Jew entering his home would be considered defiled.
 4. But is it not the case that no one is worthy of Christ coming to us because of our sin?
- C. It is faith in Christ's authoritative Word.
1. The comparison: "I **also** am a man **under** authority."
 2. As the centurion acts under the authority of the emperor, so Jesus is under a higher authority: God.
 3. What a confession of who Jesus is, the promised Messiah. He has an understanding that Jesus spoke with the authority of God.
 4. Because under that higher authority, therefore the word of these men carry authority:
 5. The Word spoken by them is effectual! "Speak the Word only, and my servant shall be healed."
 6. The Word is the instrument. "Even I can secure action from a distance!"
- D. Jesus marveled. Jesus is astonished!
1. This word "marveled" is only used twice of Jesus: here because of great faith, once because of unbelief (Mk. 6:6).
 2. God is never amazed, but this is Christ in our human nature; he has taken on our human emotions.

II. **THAT FAITH CONTRASTED**

- A. "Verily"
1. "Indicates that the statement following is important.
 2. Pay attention, heed this carefully.
- B. "with no one".
1. These words come first in Jesus' statement to give it emphasis.
 2. Not in Israel.
 3. The contrast is between the Jews who should have looked and accepted Jesus, and now this Gentile!
 4. "So great faith", literally, 'such', such in quantity and in quality.
 5. The word "faith" is found only eight times in Matthew: it points to trust in Jesus ability and readiness to help.
- C. The contrast.
1. Many Jews recognized Jesus' great abilities as healer and teacher.
 2. But after all his works in Capernaum, they did not acknowledge him as under authority from God.
 3. The Jews did not acknowledge Jesus as God's Messiah who brings God's Word of salvation to be obeyed.
 4. There are false views of faith in the church today: faith is mere belief w/o submission to Christ's authority.
 5. The centurion understood that faith necessarily implies obedience. Obedience is the fruit of faith.
 6. God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble (James 4:6).

III. **CHRIST'S PROPHECY**

- A. The true sons of God.
1. Many shall come from the east and the west: many Gentiles from distant lands.
 2. They shall come. Their movement shall be unto Christ to be with him. They come under his authoritative Word.
 3. They shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.
 4. They shall recline at the banquet table. A picture of resting and enjoying fellowship with the host.
- B. The contrast:
1. "Children of the kingdom" – a phrase that speaks of the Jews with all of their benefits (Rom.9).
 2. They reckoned themselves to be children, cut in the flesh but not in the heart. They are children in name only.
 3. They shall be cast out into outer darkness. This is figurative language depicting their eternal state and condition.
 4. They are separated from the fellowship and blessedness of God's love.
 5. The kingdom would be taken away from Israel, and the kingdom will be gathered from the nations.
- C. The real sons of the kingdom today.
1. We live today where many are called Christians.
 2. They pride themselves in being members of a church, baptized, and maybe even go to Church.
 3. They do not think it is important what they believe or do, as long as they belong to a church.
 4. Cast out they shall be. "I never knew thee."
 5. Real sons of the kingdom are those who believe, by grace have a great faith with the fruit of obedience.
 6. Spiritually they are children of Abraham, and will enjoy the blessedness of resting in the kingdom of heaven.