

Matthew 8:5-13: When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, ⁶ "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly." ⁷ And he said to him, "I will come and heal him." ⁸ But the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ For I too am a man 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." ¹⁰ When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. ¹¹ I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹² while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹³ And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

Intro: I remember hearing Mark Dever say once that if you could see a photograph of Jesus in a crowd, you wouldn't be able to pick him out from those in the crowd (**Isaiah 53:2:** he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him). But Dever said if you could see the people in the picture move and live their lives – then there would be no doubt which person was Jesus in the picture. He loved and served and obeyed and cared for people like no one ever has and like no one ever will!

Mark 2:15-17: And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶ And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹⁷ And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Today we see: 1) Jesus' love for all nations and for all kinds of people; 2) Jesus' supreme, unparalleled authority; 3) Jesus delight in humble faith; 4) Jesus declares that multitudes of Gentiles will be saved with and as God's people; 5) Jesus' warning to the sons of the kingdom (Jews) and those like them who rest in their religious rituals and have no vital, living relationship with God; 6) Jesus' sovereign healing power: His power over all creation

1. A Troubled Roman Soldier In Capernaum

Matthew 8:5-6: When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, ⁶ "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly."

a. Jesus entered Capernaum: 1) This was Jesus' base of operations/new home town once He started His public ministry: **Matthew 4:13:** And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea

2) Jesus taught and did many miracles in Capernaum: He taught in the synagogue; delivered a man from an unclean spirit; healed Peter's mother-in-law as well as many others; a paralyzed man was let down through a roof to be healed; Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead here; Dyer and Hatteberg note that more of Christ's recorded miracles were performed in Capernaum than in any other city!

3) Yet many in Capernaum still did not believe in Jesus: **Matthew 11:23-24:** And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴ But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.

b. We meet a centurion: He was a Roman soldier; a commander and leader of soldiers (100 soldiers); a Gentile

Daniel Doriani: [Centurion's were] Central players in the alien occupation of Israel, centurions were roughly equivalent to a Nazi captain in the Netherlands or France in World War II. (Why would Jesus help him!)

c. The centurion pleads for help: Verse 6: Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.

2. A Compassionate, Universal Savior

Matthew 8:7: And he said to him, "I will come and heal him."

These words can be translated like the ESV has it – an affirmation by Jesus that He will come and heal the servant. Or they could be translated as a question: “Shall I come and heal him?” (The centurion didn’t ask Jesus to heal)

Either way, Jesus is affirming that He would come and heal his servant or answering in such a way as to draw out the faith of this Gentile Roman soldier (like the Canaanite woman).

Here we see Jesus’ love for all nations and for all kinds of people!

This emphasis, that Jesus came for all nations & people’s, is how Matthew’s Gospel begins & ends! It begins with Gentile Magi bringing kingly gifts to Jesus. It ends with the great commission: **Matthew 28:19-20:** Go therefore & make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. & behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Revelation 5:9: they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation”

3. The Humble Faith Of The Centurion

Matthew 8:8-9: But the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ For I too am a man 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."

a. The centurion confesses his own unworthiness: Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof

Luke’s account: the Jews speak of the centurion saying: “He is worthy! He loves our nation! He built a synagogue!

Not this man! He is humble! He knows he is unworthy! **Matthew 5:3-4:** Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

- **Luke 17:10:** So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.”

- **Matthew 15:26-27:** And he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷ She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

- **1 Peter 5:5:** God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

- **Isaiah 57:15:** For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.”

George Muller’s biographer: Nothing is more marked in George Muller, to the very day of his death, than this, that he so looked to God and leaned on God that he felt himself to be nothing, and God everything.

b. The centurion confesses Jesus’ supreme, unparalleled authority: Verses 8-9: but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man 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."

Doriani: To paraphrase, the centurion tells Jesus, “I am a lord & you are a lord; I command & soldiers obey. You command & creation obeys.” We do not know exactly what the centurion grasped at this stage, but he clearly understood Jesus’ power is so great that even his word has great power. Evidently, the centurion had meditated on what he heard about Jesus in light of his experience in the Roman system.

That system held that each command came down in an unbroken chain that began with the emperor himself. The centurion believed Jesus has a similar chain, beginning with God himself. As the soldier's word had the emperor's authority, so Jesus' word had God's authority.

Wiersbe: It would seem that everything about this man would prevent him from coming to Jesus. He was a professional soldier, & Jesus was a Man of peace. He was a Gentile, & Jesus was a Jew. But this soldier had one thing working for him: he was a man of great faith. This centurion understood that Jesus, like himself, was under authority. All Christ had to do was speak the word & the disease would obey Him the way a soldier obeyed his officer.

So we see Jesus' supreme, unparalleled authority! We just thought about Jesus supreme, unparalleled authority in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus uses that supreme, unparalleled authority for the good of all His children!

4. A Humble Faith That Makes Jesus Marvel

Matthew 8:10-13: When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. ¹¹ I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹² while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹³ And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

a. Jesus marveled at the centurion's humble faith: Verse 10: he marveled and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith."

Jesus delights in great faith, which is humble faith! Those who have great faith are humble people!

Hebrews 11:1, 6: Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen . . . ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Noah, Abraham, Moses: **Hebrews 11:24-26:** By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.)

R. T. France: The faith of this Gentile is superior to that of any Israelite, so much so that Jesus marveled, a strong word used of Jesus only here and in Mark 6:6 (where it was caused by lack of faith among his own people!)

b. Jesus declares that multitudes of Gentiles will be saved with and as God's people: Verse 11: I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven

Genesis 12:1-3: Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Isaiah 25:6-9: On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. ⁷ And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. ⁸ He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. ⁹ It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

c. Jesus' warns the sons of the kingdom (the Jews) and those like them who rest in their religious rituals and have no vital, living relationship with God: Verse 12: while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Commentator: The Lord is looking for servants like this centurion: 1) Who have an exalted view of Christ-He is the sovereign Lord of authority, and thus they trust Him for the impossible.
2) Who have a lowly view of themselves-they are unworthy and insufficient, but they know Christ as gracious and all-sufficient.
3) Who have a caring view of others-they are helpless, and thus need compassion. Christ's authority and grace extend to those whom society may despise.

Hudson Taylor: All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them.

d. We see Jesus' sovereign healing power: His power is over all creation: Verse 13: And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

GOSPEL: Disease is an analogy of sin. We thought about how we were all once unclean like the leper in our sin last week (Question from last week: We are all sinners, why do we not all have leprosy?) We were also once spiritually paralyzed and morally lame in such a way that we could not do anything but sin!

Leviticus 21:18-23: For no one who has a blemish shall draw near, a man blind or lame, or one who has a mutilated face or a limb too long, ¹⁹ or a man who has an injured foot or an injured hand, ²⁰ or a hunchback or a dwarf or a man with a defect in his sight or an itching disease or scabs or crushed testicles. ²¹ No man of the offspring of Aaron the priest who has a blemish shall come near to offer the LORD's food offerings; since he has a blemish, he shall not come near to offer the bread of his God. ²² He may eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and of the holy things, ²³ but he shall not go through the veil or approach the altar, because he has a blemish, that he may not profane my sanctuaries, for I am the LORD who sanctifies them.

But God! **GOSPEL!**

Christ Jesus Saves From Every Nation
Soldiers, Servants, Every Station
The Humble Come With Faith Oblation
Know Their Worth Humiliation
Trust Christ's Might No Limitation
Yet He Took Hell's Condemnation
Died And Rose For Our Salvation
Outer Darkness And Damnation
You Won't Face But Jubilation
Trust In Christ Our Captivation
Faith Gives Him Joyful Elation
In Christ We Are His New Creation
He Is Our God And Celebration!