

# Scripture Lesson Text

**LUKE 7:1** Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

**2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.**

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.

**4 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.

**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:**

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

**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.**

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.

**10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.**

## NOTES

# Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

Lesson Text: Luke 7:1-10

Related Scriptures: Matthew 8:5-13; Acts 10:23-29, 34-35; Mark 7:24-30; Luke 17:11-19

TIME: A.D. 28

PLACE: Capernaum

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**GOLDEN TEXT**—"When Jesus heard these things, he . . . said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Luke 7:9).

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## *Lesson Exposition*

### **EVIDENCE OF GOODNESS— Luke 7:1-5**

**Strategic move (Luke 7:1).** We are about to study Christ's faithful healing ministry. Luke 6 covers a number of Jesus' activities in and around Galilee. Afterward, He entered the city of Capernaum and received an unusual request. Capernaum became somewhat of a home base for Jesus and the center from which He expanded His ministry.

**Critical need (Luke 7:2-3).** A centurion was in charge of one hundred Roman soldiers. This particular centurion exhibited a concern for his servant that many centurions would not have shown. He had a genuine heart of concern for his servant and did not view him as someone who could be easily tossed aside and replaced.

Luke specifically recorded that this servant was dear (highly valued) to his master and was sick to the point of death. So he sent some Jewish elders to Jesus on his behalf. He sent them as soon as he heard Jesus was in town.

**Intercessory request (Luke 7:4-5).** The Jewish leaders wasted no time presenting their request to Jesus: "they besought him instantly." Their high regard for the centurion was displayed in their explanation that this man was worthy of receiving Jesus' help.

An interesting change was subtly taking place in Luke's Gospel. Up to this point Jesus has been portrayed as dealing exclusively with the Jews, but now He is shown beginning to pay attention to Gentiles.

What seems to have been most important to Luke at this point were the attitudes being displayed. A miracle was coming, but it is mentioned only briefly in Luke 7:10. Here we are seeing the attitudes of the centurion toward the Jews, toward Jesus, and later, toward His authority.

### **EVIDENCE OF FAITH—Luke 7:6-10**

**Humble recognition (Luke 7:6).** Jesus was already near the centurion's home when the Roman sent some friends with another message.

Whatever his reason, the centurion showed genuine respect for Jesus in requesting that He not enter his home.

His request also revealed his faith coupled with real humility. It is quite clear that the centurion knew who Jesus was. He had come to recognize Him as the Son of God, whereas most of the Jews had not. For this reason, he expressed the realization that he was not worthy of having Jesus enter his home. We should also recognize that Jesus Himself had no qualms about going. While the Jews—and especially their leaders—exhibited racial limits, Jesus had come for all people, Gentiles as well as Jews.

**Explanatory comparison (Luke 7:7-8).** The centurion explained his request even further by stating that he did not even feel worthy of personally entering Jesus' presence. He knew that all Jesus had to do was say the word, and his servant would be healed.

His comprehension of Jesus' authority came from his own experience with human authority. His explanation regarding Jesus' power to merely say the word to heal his servant was that he himself was under the authority of someone else. The implication here is that Jesus held ultimate authority over disease and that diseases were obligated to respond exactly the way He expected and told them to.

**Convicting observation (Luke 7:9-10).** Jesus was amazed at this insightful understanding. He "marvelled."

The Jews were supposedly looking for the coming of their Messiah, but the faith of this Gentile centurion far surpassed theirs.

When the friends who had been sent to Jesus returned to the centurion's home, they found the servant healed. Jesus had honored the centurion's faith by immediately restoring the servant's health. It was obvious

that Jesus was not impressed that someone was a Jew or held a position of religious leadership or exercised political authority. The only thing that truly mattered to Him was simple faith, specifically the ability to believe that Jesus is who He says and that God will do what He says.

Jesus found that faith in a caring, thoughtful Roman soldier. What does He find in us? The only way we can develop such an enduring faith in God is through getting to know Him intimately, and that comes through being in His Word and doing it. Then we will not doubt in the hard times.

—Keith E. Eggert.

## QUESTIONS

1. In which city was Jesus when He received a special and unusual request for healing?
2. What was unique about the centurion's attitude toward his servant?
3. Who brought the centurion's request to Jesus?
4. What explanation did the Jewish leaders give for wanting Jesus to respond to the request?
5. What was Luke seeming to emphasize more than the miracle?
6. What message came to Jesus as He was nearing the centurion's home, and who brought it to Him?
7. Why did the centurion not feel worthy to have Jesus come to his home?
8. What did the man's description of authority reveal about his understanding of Jesus?
9. What was Jesus' response?
10. What should the centurion's example challenge us to do?

—Keith E. Eggert.

## PRACTICAL POINTS

1. We are blessed to have people to intercede for us before the Lord (Luke 7:1-3).
2. Kindness, generosity, and respect can overcome nearly any human barriers (vss. 4-5).
3. We should always approach Jesus in humility and awe (vss. 6-7).
4. Recognizing Jesus' authority is a major part of true, biblical faith (vs. 8).
5. Nothing delights our Lord so much as genuine faith in Him (vs. 9).
6. Jesus' timing in meeting our needs is always perfect, even if we would prefer a different time frame (vs. 10).

—Kenneth A. Sponsler.

## Golden Text Illuminated

**“When Jesus heard these things, he . . . said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (Luke 7:9).**

Just before our golden text, we learn the centurion's reasoning for asking Christ not to enter his house. “Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof” (Luke 7:6). Read that again. This was a Roman official, someone with great power, saying that he was not worthy to have Christ under his roof!

However, the centurion recognized in Christ something that others did not.

First, this man knew who Jesus was; he knew that Jesus was the Messiah.

Second, he understood his sinful state before a righteous God. Unlike the Jews who considered themselves pious, this man acknowledged how undeserving he was to be in Christ's presence.

However, he also understood Christ's great power. This is what made the difference. He did not need Christ to come and put on a show. Unlike some who sought for a sign from Christ (John 2:18), this man's faith required only a spoken word.

This centurion believed with absolute conviction that a single word from Jesus could heal even a fatal illness (vss. 7-8). He was utterly certain of Christ's authority. There was no quibbling, no trace of doubt in his request. He was convinced that all he needed was to come and ask sincerely for that healing.

—Jennifer Lautermilch.

## RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. Why did Jewish leaders care what happened to the slave of a Roman centurion (Luke 7:3)?
2. What kinds of things can we do to build bridges to people who might otherwise be hostile to the gospel (vss. 4-5)?
3. How can we reconcile the centurion's humble feeling of unworthiness to be in Jesus' presence (vss. 6-7) with the exhortation to come boldly before the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16)?
4. How does the centurion's explanation of authority (Luke 7:8) reveal an outstanding example of faith (vs. 9)?
5. How could the servant be healed without an opportunity to express his own faith (vs. 10)?

—Kenneth A. Sponsler.