



World Christian Fellowship

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Jesus words are enough!

Matthew 8:5-13

Matthew 8:5-13, *Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, ⁶saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." ⁷And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." ⁸The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."*

¹⁰When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! ¹¹And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹³Then Jesus said to the

centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

Matthew singles out **9 miracles** as examples of the power of Jesus Christ in **Chapter 8 and 9**. They are really His credentials as the Messiah.

They are those signs which point convincingly to His deity. Only God can do the things that He does.

It comes at a very strategic point in the gospel of Matthew. Jesus has just delivered a amazing sermon in **Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7**.

A first century Jew would say this.

Who is this saying these things?

By what authority does He speak?

Matthew chapters 8 and 9 is the answer to that question.

Jesus is God!

Matthew is saying in **chapter 8 and 9** that He is God.

Matthew is showing beyond a shadow of doubt that Jesus is God.

The first three miracles:

Jesus cleanses leper – Matthew 8:1-4

Jesus Heals Centurion servant- Matthew 8:5-10

Jesus heals Peter Mother-in-Law- Matthew 8:14-15

Last week we saw the first miracle of healing the leper in **Matthew 8:1-4.**

The man came. He lost all the social stigmas. He lost all the fear of being banished. He didn't care about that anymore.

He was overwhelmed with the loathsomeness of his disease. Coming to Christ is not getting on the bandwagon, it's being wretched and knowing it.

Secondly, he came worshiping.

True conversion occurs when desperate people come worshiping God; not seeking things for themselves, but seeking God's glory, a recognition of His majesty, a sense of awe, Lordship.

"Lord it's up to You." True salvation demands that kind of wretchedness and that kind of affirmation in reverence of worshiping Him as Lord.

Thirdly, he came humbly. True salvation doesn't take the perspective of you doing God a favour. There's no self-will, no self-centeredness, no sense of worthiness, no sense of value,

no rights, no claims, no nothing. It's the meek who inherit the kingdom.

Finally, he came with faith. He believed He could do it. And you can't be saved without faith. There must be an overwhelming wretchedness in sin. There must be a worship of the lordship of Christ. There must be humility and faith. You will be touched and cleansed when you come on those terms.

Today we will look at the second miracle in Matthew 8.

The incident is also told in the Gospel of Luke.

Luke 7:1-10,

Some additional information.

1. Who spoke?

Centurion? Or his servants?

Luke says that the centurion sent word to Jesus through Jewish spokesmen, which would make sense if he was sensitive to Jewish-Roman relationship.

Also, there was a language barrier.

The Jewish elders appealed to Jesus to help him because, they said, he was very deserving, he loved Israel, and had even built them a synagogue.

Then, when Jesus drew near the house, the centurion, again with representatives, appealed for Jesus to speak the word only because he was not worthy for Jesus to enter his house.

The centurion could have been there in person but speaking through his spokesman.

So, Luke focuses more on the details of the centurion and the way he communicated with Christ.

Matthew simply records the request from the centurion and focuses more on Jesus' teaching about faith and about Gentiles in the kingdom.

2. Who was sick?

Son or Servant?

Matthew used the word '*pais*' in the Greek, which means "my child"

Luke uses the word '*doulos*', which means bond slave.

Was he his child or his bond slave?

The answer is, it was rather common to have a child slave in the house, a young boy. A boy servant, a boy slave.

So, there are no mistakes but different perspective!

V 5, Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him,

Capernaum:

The story takes place in Capernaum, the town that Jesus made His headquarters like.

Capernaum was a good-sized place on the shores of the lake, a natural site for fishing, which is why Peter had his home there (and perhaps Jesus stayed with him).

But Capernaum was also on the main road, the road that led from **Damascus** in the north down past the lake at Capernaum, through the hills and passes to the **Jezreel Valley**, and then over to the coast through more mountain passes to connect with the **coastal highway to Egypt**.

It was a main thoroughfare for caravans, traders, and military.

Since Capernaum was a significant city on the main highway, it had a military presence there, hence, the centurion. A centurion was, as the name suggests, a military officer over a hundred men. That would mean there was a sizeable military unit stationed at Capernaum.

Capernaum was also the home of Levi, called Matthew, the tax collector.

Matthew 9:9, *As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.*

There would be tax collectors in such a town, backed up by Roman soldiers, to collect taxes and tariffs from both the locals and from the traders passing through the region.

Neither the Romans nor the tax collectors would have been accepted by the Jewish population.

Matthew does not make a point out of this Roman's character, but Luke does!

This centurion was a man who loved Israel and built the people of the city a synagogue. This would happen more easily in Galilee, where people were somewhat used to having Gentiles around, than in Jerusalem where separation from Gentiles was pursued with greater zeal.

But the significance of this setting is not diminished by the goodness of this Roman. Jesus had just healed the leper, an outcast. Now Jesus turned to the servant of a Roman, a non-Jew.

Jesus was declaring that He came to seek and to save the lost, those who had no hope, outcasts, and those who had nowhere else to turn.

In turning to this Roman and his servant's need Jesus saw a marked contrast between his faith and the faith that He has seen in Israel.

Psalm 72:12-14, *For He will deliver the needy when he cries, The poor also, and him who has no helper. ¹³He will spare the poor and needy, And will save the souls of the needy. ¹⁴He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; And precious shall be their blood in His sight.*

To this passage we could add prophecies that say the Messiah will take away all illnesses and infirmities.

He will vindicate the widow, the orphan, and the stranger in the land. Jesus wasted no time in His ministry in demonstrating that He came to fulfil these, and more.

Centurion:

If it wasn't bad enough to be a Gentile, it was worse to be a Roman soldier.

If that wasn't bad enough in itself, it was worse to be one other thing, and that was this.

The soldiers of the Roman occupation army were not really sent from Rome, they were trained in the community or the area where they were being occupied. According to history, what they did in Palestine was they found non-Jewish people in that area, and they drew them into the Roman army and trained them.

This man in Capernaum was, no doubt, a soldier under the troops of **Herod Antipas**. If he was a non-Jew living in this area, it is highly likely that he was a Samaritan.

If it was bad to be a Gentile, the worst kind of Gentile was a Samaritan, because a Samaritan was a Jew who had intermarried into Gentile lines. That was to sacrifice his Jewish heritage, the worst imaginable kind of Gentile half-breed.

So here we have got a person who is a Gentile.

He is the worst kind of Gentile: a Samaritan.

He is the worst kind of Samaritan.

He is a member of the occupation forces of the Roman army who are oppressing Israel.

Now any Pharisee is going to say, “Why in God’s name would You ever do a favour for somebody like that?”

They had no perspective on the parameters of the kingdom. Jesus throws that deal wide open, and it was more than they could handle, and they hated Him until they finally killed Him.

V 6, saying, *“Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.”*

Lord there means more than sir.

There is bound up in that thought of Lord all the centurion’s thinking about the deity of Christ.

I think he’s using it in its true, divine sense.

My child is a paralytic, sick of the paralysis, grievously tormented, or suffering tremendously or suffering severely.

We don’t know whether it was polio, or whether it was a nervous system, or brain disorder, or a tumour. But he was paralyzed and in tremendous pain.

In the Roman Empire, slaves didn’t matter.

- If they suffered, it didn’t matter.
- If they lived, it didn’t matter.
- If they died, it didn’t matter.

They were of no consequence.

“There can be no friendship and no justice toward inanimate things; indeed, not even toward a horse or an ox or a slave. For master and slave have nothing in common. A slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave.” Aristotle.

the Romans viewed a slave as a thing. But not this centurion. He isn't asking on his own behalf.

Why did these Jews come to Jesus on the behalf of this centurion?

Luke 7:4-5, *And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving,⁵ “for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue.”*

He is worthy?

How can a Gentile be worthy?

“He loves our nation, and he built us a synagogue.”

Comes down to money!

He made a big investment.

He loved their nation and built them a synagogue.

This centurion is a God-fearing Gentile like Cornelius.

He realizes that he is dealing with a people who are a covenant people of the living God. So, he makes an investment in them.

He loved their nation, and he built them a synagogue in Capernaum.

Do you know what is more interesting?

The Jews knew that they can't do it but Jesus can!

Everybody knew that Jesus could heal.

There wasn't a debate about that. But the hardness of their heart didn't want to take a step further and accept Him as Messiah and Saviour.

This centurion was gentle, he loved his slave.

He was humble.

He wouldn't even come to Jesus himself, because he didn't feel worthy.

He didn't want Jesus in his house because he knew enough about Jewish ceremonial teaching that a Jew was never to go in the house of a Gentile, and he didn't want to violate that.

V 7, *And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."*

Did the centurion ask Jesus to come?

Where is the request?

V 6, *saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."*

There was no request from the centurion at all!
The centurion gave only the information! That's all!!

Jesus tells the Jews sent by the centurion that He's going to come to the Gentile's home, the centurion's house.

He is going to heal the boy.

Luke then says they all start moving down the road heading towards for the house. The centurion sees them coming, and he panics, because he doesn't feel worthy to be in the presence of Christ.

He doesn't want them to have to violate their law by coming in the house, and he can't get the boy out of the house because of his condition.

So, he sends a messenger fast.

Jesus' response: "I will go and heal him."

There are two things about this statement that are worth thinking about.

First is Jesus' willingness to go. This willingness was first introduced in the story in 8:1-4. Here he is willing to go again--but now into a Gentile's home.

The second thing to note is the confidence that Jesus has: "I will go and heal him." It will happen, no doubt about it.

The centurion's speech

V 8-9, *The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."*

I am not worthy of that.

I can't allow You to enter my house.

I can't allow You to come into my presence, I'm not worthy.

There are some people who think that they should become a Christian to do God a favour, that He needs them. We are not even worthy to enter His presence.

You didn't become a centurion by going from a desk job.

You became a centurion by working your way up through the troops, through the ranks.

Centurion was a tough man. He had to lead a hundred men, that's what a centurion did. He handled a hundred men.

He was a drill sergeant, tough, combat oriented.
But what a gentle, humble, meek, sensitive, loving tenderness
and all this for a sick slave?

But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.

Where did this centurion get this information?

I believe he knew that He was God, and that he was in the presence of God. "All You have to do is speak."

I understand Your authority. Because I am also under authority.

I understand authority, and I exercise authority.
How much more authority must You have who are not under authority at all, but are the supreme authority of the universe?

He certainly recognized that he was in the presence of someone who was much more than a prophet. He had heard of this man's power and authority, and so turned to Him for help.

So, his request was that Jesus would speak the word only. Jesus did not have to come and see the sick man. He did not have to lay hands on him. He simply had to speak.

This indicates the centurion's tremendous faith, but it is only a tremendous faith because he considered the object of his faith

powerful. He believed that Jesus had so much power and authority that His word would be sufficient for the healing.

V 10, *When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"*

You have got to have a unique kind of faith to amaze Jesus. Because Jesus knows everything. He has seen it all.

"Jesus marvelled"

It tells us that Jesus, in His humanness was literally amazed at the faith of this Gentile. He was surprised.

Because there would be a lot of other Gentiles who have had that kind of faith in Christ. Many of them are sitting right here this morning.

- You are the people of the covenant.
- You are the people of the promise.
- You are the people of the inheritance.
- You should have had this kind of faith.

But I have never found it here, not this kind of faith.

Great faith. He commends this, Gentile.

What Jesus saw very often were self-righteous and self-sufficient people, or people demanding a sign from Him to prove what He had said.

Or else people following Him for a while and then leaving when His sayings became too difficult.

Even His disciples who believed in Him exhibited a weak faith when threatened by the storms and challenges of life.

But they continued to follow Him, which in itself is a sign of growing faith.

What was it that Jesus found so amazing about this man's faith?

- Perhaps it was the simple acceptance of Christ as the sovereign commander of life and all its aspects.
- Or perhaps it was the fact that it was so intelligent, so well-reasoned and logical.
- Or in the final analysis, it may be that he simply accepted the fact that Jesus had authority.

Most Jews did not accept that Jesus had authority over life and death, that He came in the full power of God. But this man apparently did.

But this man had great faith. It is a monumental foretaste of the kingdom Jesus gives them, that Gentiles will have greater faith than Israel.

Is this true today?

The church predominantly is a Gentile church; Israel still rejects the Messiah.

V 11, *And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.*

Coming great and glorious kingdom.

There is coming a millennial kingdom and an eternal kingdom in the future.

In that kingdom, God's wonderful promise to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob will come to pass.

- They are the people of the covenant.
- They were the ones through whom God brought the covenant.
- There is an essential Jewishness in the future of God's plans for the world.
- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob represent the great covenant of faith.
- The gospel came through Abraham's seed.
- Salvation came through Abraham's seed.

We are blessed in the tents of Shem.

We are sons of Abraham by faith.

Our blessing comes in Abraham.

So, we are part of that same covenant and there is a Jewishness to the kingdom.

V 11, And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

Who are the many?

The east and the west, the main line.

You go east from Israel and west from there, and you encompass the Gentile world.

What Jesus saying is that **“The kingdom will be filled with Gentiles.”**

They didn’t believe that. That was a shocking statement. This was contrary to all their teaching.

They believed that, before the kingdom came, all the Gentiles would be destroyed. The Jews are going to sit down at a great feast, and they are going to eat behemoth and leviathan.

Now behemoth is the word for elephant, and leviathan is the sea monster, a massive whale.

They are going to have a feast like no feast ever was, where they eat elephants and whales. Now that’s symbolic of an

incredible, unlimited, massive amount of food. It's going to be the feast to end all feasts, and it's for the Jews, the great messianic banquet.

Never, for a moment, did they believe that Gentiles would be reclining at the table with them. I mean in the first place, that would mess up the meal anyway, because it's going to have to be kosher.

But the kingdom has encompassed the Gentiles. **2000 years** later, here we are, and the church is filled with Gentiles, and we will sit down someday in that millennial kingdom in the future with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Now if that isn't devastating enough, verse 12 really puts the final nail in the coffin.

V12, *But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

"But the sons of the kingdom."

Who are they?

Jews.

Acts 3:25, *You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'*

The Jews shall be thrown out into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

A very strong and devastating statement.

- They are called sons of the kingdom, because by right, they are the inheritors.
- The promise is to them.
- The privileges were given for them.

But when the kingdom comes, they are going to get thrown out.

Why?

Because they don't enter the kingdom based on a physical seed. Just because you are Jewish doesn't mean anything.

John 8, they want to argue with Jesus about that.

John 8:37-44, *“I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. ³⁸I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.” ³⁹They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. ⁴⁰But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. ⁴¹You do the deeds of your father.” Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.”*

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

We don't know how they hated Him for saying that.

The sons of the kingdom were going to be thrown out.

They forfeited their inheritance by unbelief.

They annulled their promises.

They lost their kingdom rights.

When proudly demanding entrance, they are going to get thrown out to outer darkness.

Outer darkness. A Jewish thought.

The rabbis taught that sinners in Gehenna will be covered with darkness, so says the Talmud. The Jews believed that sinners went into darkness.

Jesus says to them that is where sinners go, away from the light of God's presence.

Some people are confused, because it says that hell is a place of darkness, and a place of fire. They wonder how you can have fire without having light. That is part of the supernatural quality of hell, that there will be fire, fire of torment, and along with it, total darkness, a phenomenon created by God for eternal punishment.

Outer darkness is a place just like heaven.

The horror of that place will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The effect of the darkness:

- the loss of all happiness,
- the loss of all joy, the rage of helpless despair,
- the excruciating torment of eternal darkness,
- weeping, and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 13:42, *and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

Matthew 13:50, *and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”*

Matthew 22:13, *Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’*

Matthew 24:51, *and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Every one of those is a quote from Jesus.

He talked about that. I know people think Jesus just talked about love and hearts and flowers, but He didn't.

People say that we are too hard and strong.

With all my heart I can say that I have never preached a sermon as strong as any one Jesus preached, never.

God doesn't hear the prayer of any unregenerate man.

V 13, *Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.*

Can you imagine that little boy suddenly being healed, popping out of that little bed?

Can you imagine if the centurion believed what he believed before, what he must have believed after?

Paul believed that God could heal him.

God didn't!

That's a sovereign choice.

Sometimes He would heal people who had no faith.

The Bible doesn't say the little boy had any faith at all. He healed him for the benefit of the centurion and everybody else in history who would read this story.

I think there's one more centurion in heaven, frankly, and probably one more little boy.

Do you see what Jesus is saying here?

"I reach for lepers, and I reach for outcast Gentiles, because My kingdom encompasses those who believe, who believe, not those who are of some particular race."

Conclusion:

How to develop this kind of trust?

Through the word of God.

Romans 10:17, *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Ideally, faith is best taught in a believing home from the very beginning.

Psalms 22:9-10, *But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts. ¹⁰I was cast*

upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God.

2 Timothy 3:15, *and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

if you come to the faith as an adult, you must start as a child. This means first beginning to learn about the Lord from the word of God (for faith will only be as strong its knowledge of the object of the faith).

Seeing the life of faith modelled or lived out by genuine believers. The more you are in the word of God, and the more you fellowship with believers who have learned to put their faith into action through prayer and praise, the faster you grow in the faith.

As you grow you begin to pray and see the Lord work in your life. In the process you build even more confidence in the Lord.