

Great Faith

Text: Luke 7:1-10

Introduction:

This is the story of someone ‘*ready to die*’ (v.2). The centurion’s servant was ready to die, perhaps days or even hours from death. The man who writes this account is a physician himself: Luke.

He was ‘*ready to die*’ but when Jesus was brought into the equation, he was made *ready to live!*

Jesus can bring back things that were ready to die or on the brink of disaster; He can rescue us even when situations are extreme and seemingly irreversible.

Key to this whole miracle, apart from Jesus obviously, was the great faith found in this Centurion. That is what I want to talk to about today: how to match that kind of faith, how to have great faith?

V.9 – “*When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him*” ...

There are only two passages in the New Testament where Jesus ‘marvelled’:

- In His hometown, He marvelled at their unbelief (Mk.6:6)
- Here in this passage, he marvelled at the centurion’s great faith.

To marvel means “to be surprised by something that causes wonder, admiration or astonishment”. No one in the NT seems to have caused a greater impression with Jesus than this man.

In fact, generally speaking, Jesus wasn’t ever impressed by any man:

John 2:24-25 AMP: *But Jesus for His part did not trust Himself to them, because He knew all men; And He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man needed no evidence from anyone about men, for He Himself knew what was in human nature. He could read men’s hearts.*

However, in this instance, here is someone whom Jesus admired because of something he saw in him. There was an ingredient in his life that caused Jesus to marvel and be astonished at him: his great faith.

Jesus did not marvel because

- He built them a synagogue and had good works
- He showed understanding of spiritual principles
- But only because of his great faith! “*I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel*”

1. Faith is absolutely crucial!

- Without it we cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6)
- It is the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4)
- The Just shall live by faith (Hebrews 10:38)
- Faith is crucial for miracles!

Jesus spoke about 4 levels of faith:

1. No faith – **Mark 4:40** – “How is it that you have **no faith?**”
2. Weak faith – **John 4:48** – “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe”
3. Little faith – **Matt. 8:26** – “But He said to them, why are you so fearful, O you of **little faith?** Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea and there was great calm”
4. Great faith – **Matt. 15:28** – “O woman, great your faith! Let it be as you desire. And her daughter was healed from that very hour”

2. How to be a person of great faith?

How do you get faith? Is it something some people are born with and not others? Is it in some people’s genes to be strong in faith? Is it cultural? If not, then how do I get great faith?

We need to understand 3 facts:

a) Faith comes

Romans 10:17 – “So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God”

It is not a natural inborn attribute – it comes from God

b) Faith comes by hearing

Luke 7:3 – “So when he heard about Jesus...”

The centurion must have heard the report of all the miracles described in the previous chapter:

Luke 6:17-19 - *And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, **18** as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. **19** And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all.*

In the case of the woman with the issue of blood, it is mentioned that

“when she heard about Jesus, she came behind and touched the hem of His garments” Mark.5:27,28.

She had faith because she heard about Jesus.

c) Great faith needs a great heart

Faith has a lot to do with the condition of our hearts.

Romans 10:10 - *“with the heart man believes”* ... - not with the mind, but with the heart man believes.

Faith has a lot to do with what we hear and also with how we receive what we hear – the condition of our hearts.

Mark 6:51-52 – The heart of the disciples was hardened

Heb. 3:12 – “evil heart of unbelief”

The centurion had great faith because he also had a ‘great heart’.

- a) He was compassionate – In **V.2** it says that his servant was ‘*dear to him*’. A slave’s life was unimportant and expendable to a roman soldier. Roman soldiers were known for their ruthlessness not compassion.
- b) He loved the Jewish nation – **V.5**
- c) He was generous. He built then a synagogue. Romans built temples to their deities not synagogues.
- d) He was a man of great humility
The Elders asked Jesus to come because “*he was deserving*” (**v.4**). However, the man himself said, “*I am not worthy*”.

The centurion’s servant didn’t get healed because he “*deserved*” based on his good works, but simply because he had great faith.

The centurion’s heart was not a hardened heart. It was a compassionate heart, a generous heart and a humble heart. The soil of his heart was tender and ready for the seed of the word of God to produce great faith.

One last word

Psalms 119:32b says, ‘*You enlarge my heart*’. Make this your prayer this week: ‘Lord enlarge my heart, make it great, make it big enough to accommodate great faith’.