

08.31.25

Luke

Chapter 7 - An Unbelievable Faith
Found Where Least Expected (vs. 1-10)

Luke 7:1-10: When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum. And a centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave. When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him; for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue." Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof; for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. "For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my

slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

This is an unusual passage in many ways, but I would say the one thing that just jumps off the page to me is that Jesus marveled. Really, You marveled at something? From my understanding, there's only two places in all of the New Testament where that's made reference to, that Jesus marveled. This place and the time when His disciples didn't believe. That's pretty interesting, isn't it? When we come to this, we realize that in the context of this, and one of the things we've been following through as we've been looking through the Book of Luke is Luke kind of is an outsider in the sense that what we really believe is he's probably Syrian and by virtue of him being Syrian, he's not a Jew. So, he perceives himself as an

outsider and really comes from a perspective that is more an outsider. One of the great things about this particular gospel is that you see all the way through the pages that there are these individuals that are most unlikely to be in the kingdom of God, and yet there they are, and there are those that the Gospel of Luke just begins to pull out, that you go, "Man, I never thought we would see that person in heaven. I never thought we'd see that person in heaven." And all the way through, whether it be at the very beginning with Elizabeth, of course, the most unlikely person to have a child that would be born, that at her late age that she would even be able to have a child was a miracle in and of itself. Yet, here she has John the Baptist and out of all the people to proclaim the wonderful message of God, you would think that her husband would have done it because he was the priest. But God shut his mouth and opened hers, and she begins to proclaim the wonderful message. And whether it's Simeon or Anna, as God begins to reveal these individuals that we would never perceive, they would probably be perceived as wallflowers that nobody ever recognized, or nobody ever saw, and yet God begins to pull them out, and He says, "I

see them.” And those that you may discard and perceive as insignificant. So, as Luke has that wonderful message of the Christmas story that we so embrace, that little babe lying in a manger, we have the only picture of the first people to come to the celebration and it’s shepherds. Well, that's the most unlikely people that I would have thought that would have come to it. You would have thought that if in fact the Lord of Glory and the King of Kings, when He came to earth would be met by all the dignitaries of the earth.

The way that it's put, if you look with me in Luke 3; I often reflect on this, that Luke purposely wants you to know that God knows and that He knows all the dignitaries and the way that it lists, if you look in Chapter 3,

(Luke 3:1) “Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar...”

So, we know that Tiberius Caesar is the Caesar at this time.

“... when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea...”

So, we now have the dignitary of Pontius Pilate; we understand him.

“... and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip...”

I mean, we know all the guys that are there.

“... Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene.”

And then it goes on, it says, “And we want to let you know that we know of the dignitaries of the upper echelon, dealing with the religious group.”

So, he actually lists, if you look in verse 2,

(Luke 3:2) “in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas...”

So, wow, there they are. So, the King of Kings, the Lord of Glories is coming to earth. Let's get the dignitaries out.

Well, Luke lists them, but then he turns and he says, “But God came to John.” In the time of all these dignitaries, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, not in Jerusalem, in the wilderness. It's highly unlikely that you would give this great message to some vagabond in the

middle of nowhere, and yet he would be the one that would proclaim the great message. All of this begins to reveal this.

Jesus, in some way, if you look at Luke 4:16, when He's in His own hometown in Nazareth, He goes into the synagogue, as was His practice through His life, and of course, you know, really, can anything good come out of Nazareth? The fact that the Messiah would be living in Nazareth would be highly unlikely when you consider that, but it goes on and he says that He goes into the synagogue and in His synagogue in His hometown, where He'd grown up in Nazareth. There He goes into the synagogue, and He opens up the book and it just happens to turn to the Isaiah passage exactly where He wanted it to be.

It reads this way,

(Luke 4:16) “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.”

(Luke 4:17) And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written,

(Luke 4:18) “THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR.

HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES,

AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,

(Luke 4:19) TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.”

(Luke 4:20) And He closed the book...”

And all eyes are on Him. What a marvelous passage. They all began to say, “What a wonderful thing.” Well, it would have been a good time to just step down and sit down and go, “Good day.” No, Jesus isn't going to let it happen. No, no, no, no. After they began to praise Him for all these gracious words that are coming, they begin to go, “Wait a minute. That's Joseph's son.”

And then Jesus says in verse 23,

“... “No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me,
‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at
Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.’”

(Luke 4:24) And He said, “Truly I say to you, no prophet is
welcome in his hometown.

(Luke 4:25) But I say to you in truth, there were many
widows in Israel in the days of Elijah...”

And if you've read the Old Testament, you've read that particular incident, you realize that during the time that the sky was shut up and there was a great famine in the land that God sent him not to an Israelite. Well, I'll let you read it the passage.

“But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in
Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for
three years and six months, when a great famine came
over all the land;

(Luke 4:26) and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but
only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who
was a widow.”

We'll call her a Gentile, an outcast; somebody that wasn't a Jew, that shouldn't be hearing the message, and of course, shouldn't be taken care of. We have all these Israelites, they should be taken care of, right?

Then the next passage,

(Luke 4:27) “And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”

I wonder why Luke records this. Luke is Syrian. Interesting passage as Jesus begins to tell them that “I tell you, many will believe that you would say are highly unlikely. You're thinking in terms of the religious are those that are coming from a particular background; they have a particular teaching and training. I tell you, read the Old Testament.” That's an indictment, isn't it? When you talk to people that are supposed to really know the Old Testament. Well, why don't you read the Old Testament? Because what it says is that during these times there were days in which those that were being saved were not the ones that you thought would be saved. Well, they didn't accept it too well and they take Him to a cliff and tried to

throw Him off, and there He is, in His own hometown. He ultimately heads to Capernaum, and Capernaum will be the place in which He settles in. It will be where at least four of the disciples we know were raised and born there, and of course, we know Levi was there and his tax office in Capernaum, a place in which many of His disciples were brought to Himself and He called in this town, Capernaum. Village of Nahum is what the name itself makes reference to, and as we come into this, we begin to realize that He did many miracles in this particular house, and He begins to live in this area. He takes His family there, according to John 2, and this is where they abide.

As we come to this passage today, what we're doing is we're coming from a time when He's on the hills and He's proclaiming the message that He does and He begins to really disciple the disciples that He's called out, and as He calls them out and as He begins to tell them these things, we have this wonderful dissertation in this one chapter. We now come to Chapter 7 and the way that Chapter 7 begins is it really ties the two together.

It begins with,

(Luke 7:1) “When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum.”

Now, Capernaum is really close to where He was in the hills of that particular region. Nevertheless, it's letting us know He's going back into town, and He has had His time of discourse. The question is, what is the discourse, and why is He tying these two together? And the discourse is very clear as we've been going through that the declaration of who God is and what He loves is not the way that most people think of Him, and unfortunately, most people have a really bad view of God. They've invented their own perception of God, and I've often felt that one of the reasons why people don't have faith is because they have poor theology. What I mean by that is that they have a poor view of God. If you had a right view of God, you wouldn't have any problem with faith. So, as we come to this passage, what we're going to see is that's exactly the problem most people, they have a poor view of who God is. Even the Pharisees and Sadducees and religious leaders saw Him as somebody that they could fool. I mean, if in fact you're putting on a face, you're

being superficial, hypocritical in your life, you've got to stop and think and go, "Ok, so I don't believe that God is omniscient. I don't believe that He's all knowing. I don't believe that He's omnipresent. I don't believe." You actually have to forego all those thoughts and reduce God to just a superficial being that looks on you from the outside and go, "Well, He sure looks good." But of course, when Jesus comes on the scene, He goes, "You're just whitewashed tombs. I mean, you look right on the outside, but you're full of dead man's bones." So, the point is that this poor theology is just literally infiltrating Israel, infiltrating the Judean region in Jerusalem. So, as Jesus begins to proclaim, we begin to see these individuals that will literally pop off the page of Luke, individuals that you never thought. I mean, it will ultimately end with the guy on the cross, and only Luke records this guy, and he turns to Him and he says, "Remember me" and Jesus says, "You're going to be with Me." And we're going to go, "Wow." Of course, He turns to the Pharisees, and says, "You're sons of the devil." So, it's a stark contrast, because you think of all those people that have been so trained and have all seemingly

dedicated their life to those kinds of things, and here they're actually the ones on the outside. So, this passage just kind of stirs us into this in a very practical way, because we now go into Capernaum and we go into a particular setting that will actually tie us to the things that He's been saying.

Now, let me emphasize once again what He's been saying up to this point. We start off the prior chapter with having all the Pharisees and Jesus comes in the synagogue. Of course, they see Him, they see His disciples in the fields, and the only thing they can do is criticize; it is in this criticism that Jesus begins to reveal to them that's not what Scripture is about at all. It's not about you feeling superior. So, He begins to explain that, and as He calls the disciples, you realize why He called the disciples. Because the whole religious system was broken. So, He calls out these disciples, and as He calls them out, He says, "Ok, let Me tell you the way it really is." And He literally sets them straight.

Just by way of reminder, let me take you back here in Luke 6:20.

It says,

(Luke 6:20) “And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He began to say, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”

Once again, He's emphasizing not the sense of financial poverty specifically, but the sense of somebody recognizing their poverty. In other words, that they are in need of something, and it is those that will come to God and say, “I need You.” Those that perceive that they have everything and they boast in those kinds of things, as Luke will go on to say that the Pharisees were very wealthy and they love money. So, quite a difference. So, there is this thought process that if you will recognize your poverty, “If you'll come to terms with the fact that you have a need, how wonderful your life will be because you'll turn to Me.” So, He begins to say things that you would never think would be a part of coming into the kingdom of God.

(Luke 6:21) “Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied...”

Of course, Matthew will tack on “hunger and thirst for righteousness”. And of course, you begin to see that

desire, sort of like even David in the Old Testament, “As the deer pants for the water, my soul hungers after You.”

“Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied...”

(Luke 6:22) “Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you...”

In other words, your willingness was being shared today. You're willing to forgo the acceptance of man so that you might embrace the love of God and this is strange. I mean, it's a whole new strange way of thinking.

He ultimately goes and He says,

(Luke 6:25) “Woe to you who are well-fed now... Woe to you who laugh now...”

In other words, “When men speak well of you, obviously there's something wrong because you're not following Me.” So, one of the things He's stating in this is that “The world has turned so upside down that this whole religion thing has pulled people away from what I'm about rather than... So, you're going to be hated when you begin to do the right thing.”

Now, that's going to be clearly the emphasis as He goes on and His ultimate point in this passage is, if you look in verse 34, you may perceive that you're a really wonderful person. Actually, you go back into verse 33 as well, you think you're going to have a lot of credit if you like people that like you. Everybody does that. Then, of course, you lend to people that are going to give you back something. People do that. But He turns to them, He goes, "But you and I are different, and the way that God thinks is that He's selfless and He's merciful and He's compassionate."

In fact, ultimately, He says this,

(Luke 6:36) "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

Once again, a different way of thinking. All of this to say that He's laying a foundation, and the foundation is what He talks about at the end of this chapter. Remember us talking about it last week? If you don't lay a good foundation, then the water is going to come sweep you away. You say, "Well, what's the foundation?" Well, ultimately, what He's talking about is this solid foundation of truth. The problem, of course, with the religious leaders is everything was a facsimile. Everything was

superficial. Everything was hypocrisy. There was a facade. And let me just say this, if in fact you come to church and you don't really believe what we're talking about, you have no anchor for your soul; you have no solid foundation; when the storms come, you'll be swept away because you don't believe. See, and that's what He's talking about within the passage.

In fact, Jesus will use another analogy, and He kind of uses what we would perceive to be a mixed metaphor within the passage talking about bearing fruit. And Jesus used this in John 15, where He begins to talk about “I'm the vine, you are the branches. You stay in Me, you'll be ok, and not only will you be ok, but you'll be fed life force, and you'll bear fruit and it will stay because you're anchored in Me.” So, the foundation of our faith. Of course, the Bible tells us that the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of what? Truth. So, if you're anchored in the Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of Truth, real, sincere, genuine trust in God, you know you're not faking this. You actually believe it, and you begin to take those steps, as James will say, faith without works is dead. You don't

have anything. It's not real. But you have that real thing, and it will hold you. Hebrews will say you have need of endurance. See, you've got to anchor in the real. Stop going into the shadows. You've got to come into the real, and if you're in the real, you'll stay firm until the end. But if you're not, you won't make it. Ok. So, the foundation is basically set.

If you come to the end of the passage, the way it reads is, (Luke 6:49) “But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.”

You have to have the foundation. It has to be true. It has to be a solid rock, has to be in truth, in the true One which is Christ.

The way it's put in Luke 8, and you are probably familiar with this, the parable of the soils; if you look in Luke 8:9, He's already told the parable, and the disciples began to question about the parable of the soil.

And then He begins to explain it and His statement in verse 11 is,

(Luke 8:11) “Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.

(Luke 8:12) “Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved.”

Now, basically what we're dealing with is something that wasn't implanted, therefore had no foundation.

It goes on and says,

(Luke 8:13) “Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.”

What does that mean? They didn't really believe. Oh, they were excited about the fact that, “Hey, we get to go to church and we're accepted and people like us there and they're nice to us.” You know, a wonderful thing about church, hopefully, it's one of those places that people are

nicer to you. But if that's the reason you're believing, you didn't really believe it. See, you had no firm root.

The way that it reads,

(Luke 8:14) “The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

(Luke 8:15) “But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart...”

Have you underlined that? “Honest and good heart.”

What it's talking about is somebody's been truthful with themselves. Remember the psalmist who said, basically, when he kept silent about his sin, his body wasted away? Then, another passage where he goes, “You want to be happy? Confess your sins.” Now, here's the deal, you can't be dishonest. In other words, you can't come to God going, “Ok, I've done a few wrong things. I guess I messed up a little bit.” I mean, you've just got to pour it out and go, “You know, I just totally messed.” But he says this is where happiness comes from.

“But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with...”

What's that last word? Ah, that's that “perseverance”. That's that rock.

So, as you come to the end of Chapter 6 and you go into Chapter 7, when he had completed all this discourse.

Now, He goes to Capernaum, and now we begin to see in many respects, this played out. What does it look like to have solid faith?

So, pick up with me,

(Luke 7:1) “When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum.”

Now, just right off the bat, Capernaum is not going to be ultimately a great accepting place for Him. How do we know that? Well, I cheated. I read it a little bit further ahead. You ever do that?

So, if you look with me in Luke 10, it reads this way as Jesus is saying to the different cities that His disciples go to,

(Luke 10:12) “I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.

(Luke 10:13) “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! ...”

See all those “woes” there?

Then you drop on down to verse 15,

(Luke 10:15) “And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!”

Well, that's pretty intense. That's telling me that they weren't too accepting in this neighborhood where He lived, not unlike when He was in Nazareth. So, as we come to this passage, when He goes to Capernaum, He's going into hostile territory, even though it's a place that He now has chosen to live, and many of His disciples have come out of this realm. You begin to realize that was a miracle in and of itself in which they came.

Now, the context is in verse 2,

(Luke 7:2) “And a centurion’s slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die.”

So, the centurion has this slave. It's in the masculine, so it would have been a man that was his slave and he must have been highly regarded by him according to the passage because it says he was highly regarded by him. So, we know that he had some connection and I think it had a lot to do with honor. Because what we're dealing with is a centurion. Now, from what I understand, in order to be a centurion, it was not an easy thing to do. They were individuals that were over at least 100 men, could be over hundreds of hundreds of men, but at least hundreds of men and in order to do that, from what I read, you have to be somebody that would have proven skills in battle and you could not obviously have been a coward because your main job was to lead the men into battle. So, you had to be the first one in order to be a centurion, and the interesting thing about centurions is that they actually had to work their way up through the ranks. It wasn't like they were related to anybody or could somehow go through a school first. In order to be a centurion, you had to work your way through the ranks, which would have been a long and arduous process in order to do that. You would have to be a leader that

would be able to train because, actually, centurions carried this large stick and one of the ways that they trained their soldiers was they beat them. But you had to beat them into submission because they had to fall in line because they were going to go into battle, and they're going to be in war, and, you know, lives are at stake.

I remember I had a good friend that was a Master Sergeant in Vietnam, and he told me, he said, "I had had a troop in the middle of the worst place." He said he always had bad dreams coming up from those times, and he said, "I had one soldier that fell asleep on his guard duty at night. I grabbed him by the neck and I pulled my gun out and I put it to his head, and I said, 'You fall asleep again, I'll blow your brains out.'" And he told me, he says, "I would have done it. Because they were sending people in the camp, children with bombs on them, and if they had not warned, the whole battalion would die."

You're seeing an individual that's in a war like this, these Roman men, and what they had been through, they were trainers; they were strict disciplinarians. They were on the front lines and they had administrative skills on top of it

all. From what I understand, on the lower end, you could make a lot more money than the average enlisted man. But my readings tell me that a centurion up in the higher echelon, which we believe this particular man was; the reason why I say that is he gave a lot of money to build a synagogue, so he would have made about 15,000 to 20,000 denarii in a year. Now, if you want to figure that out, you just have to multiply it by 50. \$50 a day would be a denarius. So, multiply that by 20,000 and you're figuring they're making pretty good money and that would be in our kind of market system; the way that we would think. This individual probably is what would basically be called a Primus pilus and that would be the higher centurion.

So, it says,

“And a centurion’s slave, who was highly regarded by him...”

To be highly regarded by a centurion, you had to be extremely honorable. You had to be honorable.

“... was sick and about to die.

(Luke 7: 3) When he heard about Jesus...”

Now, that's in the nominative, which means that he has been a listener. We'll put it another way. It's like he had his ear to the ground and had been listening to all the things about this Jesus character that has been in his region. He's been almost a student of this Jesus as he's been hearing about him. So, He had his attention right off the bat. And I think one of the reasons why it is, is that he knows He's somehow connected to this Jewish faith, and we know that this particular Centurion is connected to the Jewish faith because he builds a synagogue as the passage will go on to say.

So, it says,

“When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders...”

Actually, the word “*presbyteros*” in there, we get “Presbyterian”.

“... he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave.”

“It's like this must be true about this Jesus. I've been watching. I've been listening. I've been hearing the things

that are going on.” Now, he has this particular incident happen.

So, it says,

(Luke 7:4) “When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, “He is worthy for You to grant this to him;

(Luke 7:5) for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue.”

It's a pretty grand thing, isn't it? Now, what's interesting about the passage is that really up to this point, receiving the grace of God seemed to have nothing to do with merit. But these Jews are actually approaching Jesus and they go, “You need to do this favor for him because he's worthy of it. He's done some really good stuff.” “What stuff has he done?” “Well, he was nice to us.”

It kind of takes you back to Luke 6:33, right?

“If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.”

But the way that it reads is,

(Luke 7:5) “for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue.”

So, we know where they're coming from.

Now, I want you to back up in verse 3, because there's a particular word that I want you to take note of.

It says,

“When he heard about Jesus, he sent...”

See the word “sent” there? It’s where we get the word “apostles,” *“apostellō,”* which means more an official sending. He sent these Jewish leaders. It's kind of an official lead in, so to speak. You can sense the administrative kicking in. Centurion, “We'll go down the ranks. We'll get the leaders of the Jewish people to go talk to Jesus. They have some clout.” So, immediately he's thinking strategically. I guess that's what I'm saying.

The interesting point is, if you look with me,

“When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking...”

See the word, “asking”? That word “asking” is only used when one is asking somebody to do a favor that is

perceived to be on the same plane or the same level. That's interesting, because one of the reasons why they can come to Jesus and go, "You need to do this," is because they perceive themselves to be on the same playing field as Christ.

There's actually another passage in which that's used in the same chapter.

It reads this way,

(luke 7:36) "Now one of the Pharisees was requesting..."

"Erōtaō," the Greek word that is used is the word that literally means "You're on equal footing with me. Come and eat at my house." He's not beseeching Jesus. He's not begging. He's not saying, "I'm really fortunate to have You." He's going, "As equal partners, why don't You come over?" It would be like individuals, "We're just asking friends over to eat," so to speak. This demonstrates their distorted view of God and especially of Christ. So, the initial request is actually given in the realm of disrespect, almost. Nevertheless, Jesus starts on His way. Now, I personally believe that now the centurion begins to think differently, and that's why he sends the second group.

If you look at the passage, it reads this way,

(Luke 7:6) “Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent...”

Now, he doesn't use the word “*apostellō*”. He uses another word, “*pempō*,” which is basically a general term that is saying, “We're among friends.” So, he sends his friends. I think it uses the word “friends,” right?

“... the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, “Lord...”

Now, everything has changed. Now, we're coming from the perspective of respect, and I can't help but feel that the Centurion began thinking, “Wait a minute. If He is who He says He is, then He's not on equal plane. He's Lord.”

So, the request is,

“... “Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy...”

The actual word is, “I'm not sufficient. I don't meet up to Your standards. So, You can't come into my house. I'm not worthy to have You in my house.”

And he emphasizes this in verse 7,

(Luke 7:7) “for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word...”

At this juncture, he's put Him in the category of God, “Just speak.” Now, I'm under the understanding that if he's buying synagogues, he's worshipping with the Jews and he's reading Old Testament. I think some of the passages that probably meant a lot to him were David and his honorable ways of dealing with things and David's warriors. Remember the time where David goes, “Man, I sure would like a drink from that wonderful well that I used to drink from in Bethlehem.” And they go, “We'll get it for you.” And so, as soldiers go in the midst of battle, all this fighting, and they risked their life to get him water from that well. Of course, you remember David won't drink it. He goes, “I pour this out to God. I'm not worthy to receive this from honorable men such as yourself.” Could you imagine him reading a passage like that, or maybe a passage of Jonathan? But he saw honor throughout Scripture, and he saw the honor of God, and he saw the power of God. Different individuals

throughout the Bible begin to remind us that these who have really seen God for who He is are people that are not necessarily schooled in the things of Scripture. But they've almost seen it for the first time, but they took it for what it really was. Sort of like the Thessalonians, as Paul says, "You believe it for what it really is, it's the word of God, and you actually believe that." And I think of Rahab the harlot. I mean, Rahab the harlot is the most unlikely person in the world that you would think would actually be saved, and here she is in the wall of Jericho, and somehow she's enamored by the power of God. Think about that. Because she goes, "We heard about what happened in Egypt. Whoa. I'm on your side. Save me." And you think of somebody like Ruth. She's a Moabite. Moabites can't be saved. You're supposed to dodge Moabites, and yet, here's a woman that was somehow drawn to integrity and honor and she's pulled in, and she goes, "Your God's going to be my God. I just can't not be with you." And there was a sense of devotion to her mother-in-law, and she saw that probably in some way with God. She was drawn to that. And you have an individual like an Ethiopian in Acts where, could you

imagine, here are the guys coming out of Egypt, and he's reading this scroll and Philip goes, "Where are you reading?" and he goes, "This Isaiah Passage." What passage? Isaiah 53, and you read about the sacrifice of One that was going to come to die for them, a Lamb as if slain, and he goes, "Who is this?" He's drawn to the compassion of God to sacrifice, and he's drawn to that. Well, here you have this centurion, and he's got to be drawn to this sense of honor. He's got to be drawn because he wouldn't have fit into this had he not seen honor and dignity and all those things. So, he's drawn by this and he comes through this, and he realizes that "I've either got to receive who God is..." And then he begins to think about the whole concept of honor. We've oftentimes read in the Book of Malachi where God says, "Look, a father has respect, right? And your dignitaries have honor. Where's My respect? Where's My honor?" And those kind of passages kind of wake you up about what God is looking for, right? I mean, you realize that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, that you need to understand who God is before you can believe in Him. If you don't see God as great first, then you'll never

appreciate His love for you because it is because He is so great that His love is inexplicable. That's why the fear of God has to begin always first; you have to see who God is and the power of God. So, his understanding as a centurion, he goes, "OK, I get it. He's God. So, all He has to do is say the word."

If I could just take you on a quick trip. Psalm 33, if you look there with me. I just kind of had it in my head that I personally think that this guy has read this Psalm. One of the reasons why I feel like he read it, and here again, I'm just speculating here, so forgive me for doing this, but in Psalm 33, it starts off that you need to rejoice in the Lord, playing skillfully before Him. I like the phrase that it kind of starts off "play skillfully" because I think that a centurion would go, "Yeah, you have to be skillful in whatever you do." So, it's pretty interesting.

So, it then it says this,

(Psalm 33:4) "For the word of the LORD is upright,
And all His work is done in faithfulness.

(Psalm 33:5) He loves righteousness and justice..."

Now, if you have a centurion that is all in, he's loyal and he has to be loyal. He has to be courageous. He can't be a coward and be a centurion. He just can't be. You've got to be all in, and you've got to be a patriot to the point where you're going to give your life and you're going to be the first one to do it. You're not going to ask your men to do something you're not going to do. You're going to be the first one to do it and you're going to go in.

“He loves righteousness and justice;

The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD.

(Psalm 33:6) By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,

And by the breath of His mouth all their host.

(Psalm 33:7) He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap;

He lays up the deeps in storehouses.

(Psalm 33:8) Let all the earth fear the LORD;

Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

(Psalm 33:9) For He spoke, and it was done;

He commanded, and it stood fast.”

Can you hear soldier in that? I can hear soldier in that.

(Psalm 33:10) “The LORD nullifies the counsel of the nations...”

See the word “nations” there, that simple Hebrew word “gôy,” which is “Gentiles,” which is anybody else, that could be Romans.

So, the passage goes on and talks about not only does He nullify the counsel of the nations, but he goes on and says that literally He is the one that will bless the nations.

It says,

(Psalm 33:12) “Blessed is the nation (The Gentile; the Roman) whose God is the LORD...”

I can't help it. He had to have read this.

(Psalm 33:13) “The LORD looks from heaven;
He sees all the sons of men;

(Psalm 33:14) From His dwelling place He looks out
On all the inhabitants of the earth,

(Psalm 33:15) He who fashions the hearts of them all,
He who understands all their works.

(Psalm 33:16) The king is not saved by a mighty army;
A warrior is not delivered by great strength.

(Psalm 33:17) A horse is a false hope for victory;
Nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength.

(Psalm 33:18) Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those
who fear Him...

Can you imagine, maybe as he's sending these first guys, he goes, "Wait. The eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him. Friends, would you relay to Him that I believe He's Lord? Would you do that for me?" Because only your friends could do that. Those dignitaries of the religious group were going to come shaking their finger at Jesus, "You need to do this for him."

So, his statement to Jesus is,

(Luke 7:7) "for this reason I did not even consider myself
worthy to come to You, but just say the word..."

He uses the word "*logos*," by the way in the text. "Just give Your intent."

(Luke 7:8) "For I also am a man placed under authority,
with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he

goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

(Luke 7:9) Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith."

That's where you'd expect to hear it. "But in the most unlikely place in Capernaum, among our enemies, the Roman government, I'm hearing truth; somebody that's anchored in what they really believe."

It's almost a side note at the end,

(Luke 7:10) "When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health."

It's almost like the whole health thing was a side note, but the thing was what? The faith of this individual. I just want to emphasize two things to you. Faith that is seen in this individual is telling me that the one who believes has to believe that God is the One that calls the shots. See, the problem oftentimes is that we come with requests to God, and we tell Him what He needs to do. But the

statement of this centurion is he's literally saying, "You have the authority." He uses the word "*exousia*". "I know what authority is. It's You having the freedom to do whatever You want to do. That's what "*exousia*" is. "So, You have the freedom to do whatever You do. I'm just giving my request. I need help. You do whatever You want to do because You're in authority. You're in charge. I believe that You'll do best." I mean, he wants this one to be saved, but this is not a demand. Now, at this point, the fundamental focus is, "You're in charge. I trust You." And that's what faith looks like.

We all come with our needs, we all come wanting to tell God what to do, and I think initially we come with that sense of, "I think I deserve this," but I'd ask you to step back and go, "You know who He is? He's God." And as Abraham will step back and he'll go, "Will not the God of all the earth do right?" And Job will step back, and he'll say, "Though He slay me, yet I will trust in Him." And Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego will say, "He can deliver us. But even if He does not..." That's faith.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we ask that You would heal our hearts from the doubting. You tell us that if we doubt, we're like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind, that we shouldn't expect anything from You. And we have such a skewed view of who You are. We have underestimated You and overestimated ourselves. We have taken credit for things that never were meant to be ours, and we've lost sight of this authority thing altogether. We read a passage today, in which we read, You marveled; oh, how we long to make You marvel.