

Luke 7:1-10 Jesus Comes Through ... June 23, 2019
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Luke 7:1-10

When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum.² There a centurion’s servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die.³ The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant.⁴ When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, “This man deserves to have you do this,⁵ because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue.”⁶ So Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: “Lord, don’t trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof.⁷ That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.⁸ For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”⁹ When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, “I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.”¹⁰ Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well. (NIV)

Introduction

One night a house caught fire and a young boy was forced to flee to the roof. His father stood on the ground below with outstretched arms, calling to his son, "Jump! I'll catch you." He knew the boy had to jump to save his life. As you can imagine, the boy was afraid to leave the roof. His father kept yelling: "Jump! I will catch you." But the boy protested, "Daddy, I can't see you." The father replied, "But I can see you and that's all that matters." Finally, with great fear and hesitation, the boy jumped. For several moments terror gripped the boy as he fell toward the ground. Suddenly terror gave way to wonder, as he hit something that broke his fall, but not his body. His father had come through.

In our lives there are many times we trust people and hope that they will come through for us – the doctors doing surgery on us, banks or investment brokers to whom we entrust our money, mechanics to whom we take our vehicles, schools and teachers to whom we send our children. We trust that they will come through in that they successfully will do what is needed.

In the gospel reading for today, Luke 7:1-10, we see how **Jesus Comes through ...**

1) in the mercy he showed a Roman centurion, and, 2) in the miracle he did on a sick servant

1. In the Mercy Jesus Showed a Roman Centurion

In the account we consider this morning there are some amazing things that take place. One of them is that Jewish elders of the town of Capernaum go to Jesus in behalf of a Roman Centurion who had a sick servant. Jews and Gentiles, that is, non-Jews, normally did not get along. In Jesus’ day, Jews looked with disdain on Gentiles. They viewed them as pagans. According to the customs of the Jews to have a Gentile in your house made you ceremonially unclean. Added to this, is the fact that this Gentile is also a Roman soldier and therefore, part of an occupying force. Consider how many Middle Easterners, despise America because we have a military presence there.

But this centurion was an amazing man. He had a respect and love for the Jewish nation. In addition, he had built the synagogue in Capernaum that probably cost no small amount. Furthermore, he showed himself as a man of character as was also shown in his deep feelings for his sick servant.

So, the Jewish leaders go to Jesus and ask Jesus to go to the centurion's home and heal the man's sick servant. The Jewish elders emphasized, **"This man deserves to have you do this ..."** From a human and a Jewish perspective, this was true. We see people doing good things and benefiting society, and out of appreciation for what they do, we hope that good comes to them. We think that they deserve it.

But from the perspective of a holy God, no one deserves anything good from him. God demands absolute perfection in one's attitudes, thoughts, words and actions. This means never thinking, "I am being treated unfairly by God." This means never having a bad attitude about something good and wholesome like work, or school, or spouse, or children. It means never using God's name in an empty way or thinking or doing some hurtful or hateful thing toward others. This means no lies, no lust, or no lack of love. To give God anything less is to fall short of his expectations and to be unworthy of God's glory with which he promises to reward perfection. To give God anything less than perfection makes one worthy of spiritual, physical, and eternal death. So, while deserving in the eyes of the Jews, in the eyes of Jesus the Holy Son of God, this centurion deserved nothing but death and hell.

The centurion recognized this in his humble way. He recognized that he didn't deserve to have Jesus in his house or even meet Jesus. I don't believe this was just because Jesus was a Jew and the centurion was a Gentile. I believe the centurion recognized that he was a sinner in the presence of the holy Son of God himself.

Yet, Jesus is a Savior who showed mercy to many – Matthew the tax collector, the sinful woman at Jacob's well, Zacchaeus, another tax collector. Jesus showed mercy to the centurion even though he was a Gentile and a sinner. This is because Jesus had come to show mercy to all. He had come to seek and to save the lost. He had come to be the perfect fulfillment of the law in behalf of all as he lived his perfect life. He had come to give his life as a ransom for many – so many that his death on the cross would pay for the sins of all people of all time – the centurion's, yours, and mine.

When Jesus died on the cross he accomplished what he came for. When he rose from the dead his Father said, "Job well done," and declared the centurion and all people innocent and forgiven in God's sight. Jesus had come to show mercy to all.

But without faith in Jesus we do not benefit from the mercy he has on us. So, in mercy, through the gospel, Jesus, together with the Holy Spirit, works faith so that we can enjoy forgiveness, peace and eternal life. The centurion enjoyed such a faith. He had believed in the God of Israel and through the prophecies of the Old Testament believed in the Savior to come. Through this faith he had forgiveness and eternal life. But then he heard of Jesus and believed that he was the Savior. It was faith in Jesus as his Savior that prompted this centurion to ask Jesus to come and heal the sick servant.

Before Jesus ever met the centurion, he could see into this Gentile's heart. So, Jesus had mercy on him. Jesus did not treat him as his sins deserved. Jesus came through for the centurion by showing him mercy.

Jesus has shown mercy to you. He lived, died and rose again for you. Because of him, God has forgiven your sins. Because of Jesus, God promises eternal life to you. Even though you cannot see Jesus with your physical eyes, like the little boy who blindly jumped from the roof of the burning house into the saving arms of his father, jump into the loving arms of Jesus. No matter how big or how bad or how many your sins may have been, he has come through for you with his life, with his death, and with his

resurrection. He has washed your sins away. As the centurion, by God's grace, believed in Jesus, put or keep your faith in him. He has come through for you. And he will continue to come through for you.

2. In Healing the Sick Servant

We see this in how Jesus came through for the sick servant.

By the time Jesus got near the centurion's home, the centurion had decided it best that Jesus not come in because of the centurion's unworthiness. He went to meet Jesus. He told Jesus that all he had to do was say the word and the sick servant would be healed. The centurion understood authority and he trusted that Jesus had authority over health and sickness, life and death. He trusted Jesus would come through.

Hearing the centurion's words and seeing the centurion's faith Jesus was amazed. He said, **"I tell you, I have not found such a great faith even in Israel."** To be sure, there were many believers in Israel. But in Jesus' eyes, none surpassed the centurion when it came to faith in Jesus and trusting that Jesus would come through.

Jesus did. Luke reports the Jews who had come to Jesus in behalf of the centurion went back to his house and found the sick servant well. Jesus, the omnipotent Son of God, had performed a miracle. He had come through in healing the sick servant.

Remember this as you go through the various trials of life. The Lord in his wisdom and love allows these to come into our lives. On one hand these trials are the result of living in a sinful world. On the other, they are means by which the Lord strengthens faith, teaches lessons on Christian living, puts us in places where we would not otherwise go so he can use us to touch others, and sometimes saves us from ourselves. But God's love is always behind these times and these trials.

The problem is that sometimes when we go through these times, not only do we struggle because of the pain we feel and the burdens we bear, we struggle to because we don't trust Jesus to do what is needed in the way and the time that's best.

The African impala can jump to a height of over 10 feet and cover a distance of greater than 30 feet. Yet they can be kept in an enclosure in any zoo with a 3-foot wall. The animals will not jump if they cannot see where their feet will fall.

Faith is the ability to trust what we cannot see. With faith we are freed from the flimsy enclosures of life in which fear often entraps us. The problem is that when under trial, we fail to trust Jesus to help us through and deliver us from these trials. We are like the impalas.

Trust that Jesus loves you. He has proven it on the Cross of Calvary. Trust that he is with you. He promises – **"I am with you always even to the very end of the age (Matt 28)."** Trust that when you go to him in faith and in prayer, he will hear you and he will answer you. He promises, **"Ask and it will be given you (Luke 11)."** Jump from those burning roofs of life into his strong loving arms. Jump over those walls of doubt and fear and trust that Jesus will put you on footing for time and for eternity. He will come through for you!