

A GREAT EXAMPLE OF FAITH

In today's lesson, Luke offers us an illustration of what Jesus considered a Great Example of Faith: "I say to you, not even in Israel have I have found such faith." (Lk.7:9)

The Greek word for **such** is the demonstrative form of tosos (tosauten/ asf). It can be translated so great or so much. Since all faith is great that gets the job done, I believe the emphasis is more on the example.

- Remember that the emphasis of faith is always on the working object of it. When this story is over ask yourself, was the working object the Centurion's faith or messianic healing power of Jesus Christ?

Another interesting feature of our lesson text is that Luke went from the Great Sermon on the Mount to the Great Example of Faith with the Greek compound conjunction (epeide/ Lk.7:1).

We will begin by examining our lesson text by the following SIX homiletical points.

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| • Capernaum | (Lk.7:1) | Father's Desire |
| • Centurion's servant | (Lk.7:2) | Fatal Disease |
| • Counselors to Jesus | (Lk.7:3) | Favored Delegation |
| • Contributor to Israel | (Lk.7:4-5) | Financial Donor |
| • Change of mind | (Lk.7:6-8) | Friends Declaration |
| • Cured | (Lk.7:9-10) | Faith Deliverance |

This lesson will study FIVE aspects of the Great Example of Faith.

1. Biblical historians tell us that there were no Roman forces stationed in Galilee before 44 AD (Marshal's Commentary of Luke, pg.279).

Most assume that this unnamed centurion was a liaison from Rome to Herod Antipas. He would have been an expert in military field training of soldiers.

But this is where it gets interesting when reflecting on the doctrine of heathenism. God obligates Himself to PV at God-consciousness to give gospel hearing.

2. Because of Positive Volition at God Consciousness, this Gentile Roman centurion is in the right place at the right time and under perfect conditioning for an encounter with the truth regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world (John 1:29).

Is God not awesome! "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." (2 Pet.3:9)

I was reminded of another Roman centurion with a similar story (Acts 10-11). "Then Peter began to speak: 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right.'" (Acts 10:34-35)

The centurion's faith was rooted in a soldier's orientation to chain of divine delegated authority (Lk.7:5-6). How important is orientation to divine delegated authority in a child's life? (Heb.12:9-11)

3. **The first request of this centurion was sent through political channels to Jesus to get healing for his favored servant (Lk.7:1-5). A second request was sent by personal friends with different intentions along with an explanation (Lk.7:6 -10).**

The first request was sent down the chain of command and through the normal protocol channels of political correspondence. This request was directed based on the rumors of the healing powers of Jesus Christ. Once again we see military intelligence and its ability to disassemble facts from fictions and then trust final decisions on these assessments. We have seen this recently in the study of the Book of Joshua.

God uses all this stuff in unbeliever's life like education, training, geography, and common sense in order to allow PV at GC to receive gospel hearing.

God places key building blocks in unbeliever's lives to bring them to a place of - **believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved!**

When I look back on my life I can see some definite building block to Jesus Christ (my grandparents, my sixth grade teacher, 50s climate, freshmen year of college, Birmingham to UAB, Jane to Haggi).

4. **As a Gentile, Roman, foreign occupier, unbeliever, and unclean, this centurion had a lot working against him to get saved in Israel. Isn't it like God to takes these odds and radically change a person's life!**

It says that Jesus marveled (thaumazo / a.a.ind) with the centurion's comment about "Just speak the word!" (Lk.7:7) The centurion's faith reflected the two ingredients listed in Heb.11:1.

The centurion's request presented a unique problem that Jesus had addressed earlier with the Syrophenician in Matt.15:21-28.

Jesus: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt.15:24) "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to dogs." (Matt.15:26)

Woman: "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from the master's table." (Matt.15:27)

Jesus: "O woman, your faith is great; be it done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed at once." (Matt.15:28)

5. **The acceptance of the centurion's request fell under messianic privilege regarding "no respecter of person."**

"I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcomed to Him." (Acts 10:35-36) [Cornelius, the centurion] (Lk. 4:18; 1 Tim.3:16)

We learn that we need to be respecters of opportunities and not people. As far as we know Jesus never made personal contact with this centurion or servant.

Simeon: "A light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." (Lk.2:32; 4:18-19)

Jesus: "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Lk.5:31-32)

Principle: Gentiles will sit in Abraham's promise while the Jews will be cast out because of Negative Volition at gospel hearing (Rom.9-11; Matt.8:11-12; Gal.3:26-29; Acts 9:15; 10:45; 11:18; 13:46-47; 28:28).