

Unit II: The Measure of Faith

Healed from a Distance

DEVOTIONAL READING: Zechariah 8:18-23

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Luke 7:1-10

PRINT PASSAGE: Luke 7:1-10

Key Verse

Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. (Luke 7:7, KJV)

.....

“That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.” (Luke 7:7, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Discover the factors that influenced the centurion’s faith in Christ to heal the servant.
- Confess a personal need for God in the face of feeling helpless or hopeless.
- Engage in a pattern of fervent prayer amid helpless and hopeless circumstances.

*Key Terms

Centurion (verse 6)—Greek: *hekatontarchés* (hek-at-on-tar’-khace): a captain of one hundred men.

Was amazed (verse 9)—Greek: *thaumazó* (thou-mad’-zo): wondered at; admired; “marvelled” (KJV).

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)

Life Happens

Tory was a single mother of two children whose husband had recently passed away. She taught school for a living and was finding it more challenging to make ends meet without the second salary from her husband’s job. Although things had become difficult, she always prayed and trusted God to see her through anything that she faced. Tory sat down with her children and explained that some things may look a little different with their father gone—but she loved them and God loved them, and, with God’s help, they would be okay.

Over the next several months, things became increasingly complex with finances and the kids’ behavior at school. Her son and daughter had difficulty coping with the loss of their father, and there was only so much she could say or do to comfort them. She realized that they had to grieve and that she had to give them time to do that in their own way. She also went back to what she always went back to: prayer



Overview

The author of the book of Luke and the book of Acts is believed to be Luke, a physician who traveled with Paul. While his name is not mentioned, Luke is universally credited as the only known Gentile author of any New Testament writing. He wrote primarily to a Gentile audience, specifically the Romans, to emphasize God's plan for all people. Luke's meticulous writing is based on eyewitness accounts that affirm Jesus' divinity, but the recurring theme in his book is to show Jesus' humanity as the Son of God and the Son of Man. He stresses Jesus' relationship with people, especially those considered outcasts in Jewish cultural standards—such as women, children, Gentiles, tax collectors, and sinners. Luke provides instances of these outcasts receiving Jesus' compassionate help for demonstrating faith in Him and His ministry. One such example is a Roman centurion seeking healing for a beloved servant (Luke 7:1-10). Theophilus, an early Christian who supported Luke's work, was likely the intended recipient of his writings.

and her relationship with God. She prayed and cried out to God and asked Him to comfort their family and to give them the peace that only He could give.

The following week, Tory's car broke down, and with her limited finances, she wasn't sure how she would get it fixed. She went home and broke down. It seemed as though when it rained, it poured—and with everything going on, it was just a bit much. Although filled with grief, Tory found enough strength and faith to get on her knees and ask God for direction and help. She found peace in knowing that God had never let her down before. Though things were rough, it had to get better.

The following week, she received a call from one of the members of her church women's group. The member asked if some members could come by and pray with her, as they knew she was still grieving the loss of her husband. Tory told her that she would be grateful for any prayer at that point. When the ladies from the group came by, they talked for a while, and then they prayed together. Tory was happy for their love and concern and felt blessed to have these women in her corner. Before they left, they presented a love gift to Tory. She was shocked and very grateful. Later that evening, she opened the envelope and discovered a significant love gift, enough to pay for her car to get fixed and to cover one payment on the mortgage. She looked up to God and thanked Him for being so faithful. Prayer truly works!

Questions

1. Have you ever faced multiple challenges at the same time that left you not knowing what to do?
2. What is one thing you can do to improve your prayer life?

COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Faith's Request (Luke 7:1-5)

KJV

NOW WHEN he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.


4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

NIV

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."

Luke 7 tells the story of Jesus' continuing His ministry in Galilee and encouraging people to be faithful. The chapter contains six events demonstrating how people reacted to Jesus and His teachings. After preaching in chapter 6, Jesus arrived in Capernaum, where He had made His home (**verse 1**). A Roman centurion was stationed there with a servant who was gravely ill and close to death (**verse 2**). Despite being a Roman master, the centurion showed compassion for his servant. When he heard that Jesus was in the area, he sent some Jewish elders to Him, requesting that He come and heal his servant (**verse 3**). This suggests that the centurion had faith in Jesus as a messenger of God rather than seeing Him as a last resort or a magical cure. When the elders arrived, they pleaded with Jesus to grant the centurion's request. They explained that the centurion had shown love for the Jewish people in Capernaum by building them a synagogue (**verses 4-5**). It's interesting to note that the centurion had sent for Jesus because he had heard about Jesus' compassionate healing, although Luke doesn't specify what he had heard. We also don't know whether he worshipped God as a "God-fearer" without becoming a Judaistic proselyte. However, his association with the Jews and knowledge of Jesus' ministry were enough to inspire faith in him. This story highlights the importance of our sharing our faith and demonstrating compassion toward others, just as the centurion did. We should strive to follow his example and let our faith drive our actions toward others.

 **What Do You Think?** Give a specific example of how in your position of influence, from where you stand, you can act compassionately toward persons of lesser positions of influence.

Faith's Reward (Luke 7:6-10)

KJV

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof:
7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.
8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.
9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.
10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

NIV

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.

Without hesitation, Jesus agreed to accompany the elders to the centurion’s home in response to his request. However, the centurion sent friends on their way to stop Jesus, expressing his unworthiness to have Jesus in his home (**verse 6**). This humility was uncommon for a Roman in his position, as they typically treated their Jewish subjects poorly. The centurion also believed it unnecessary for Jesus to be present physically to heal his servant, stating that Jesus only needed to say the word and his servant would be healed (**verse 7**). To justify this, the centurion gave examples of his authority (**verse 8**), demonstrating his leadership skills and ability to command respect from those around him. He believed that Jesus acted similarly as God’s representative. The centurion was convinced that Jesus had the authority to heal illnesses, as He had healed many before. Therefore, He did not need to be present to heal his servant.

Jesus was amazed by the centurion’s faith and shared this with those present (**verse 9**). He stated that he had not found such great faith among God’s people, the Jews, who had received instruction about the Messiah’s coming but refused to believe it. In contrast, an untaught Gentile had expressed “great” faith in the Messiah whom they had rejected. The centurion’s humble faith in the compassionate Son of Man shamed those among the nation who demonstrated only superficial faith in God. Although there is no record of a spoken word of healing, the servant’s healing was miraculously instantaneous (**verse 10**). Those sent to intercept Jesus returned to the centurion’s home and found his servant wholly healed.

 **What Do You Think?** Reflect on and describe either a person in your life or someone you have encountered whom you would consider to be a person of great faith.

Your Life

When you encounter difficulties in life, where do you seek help? As believers, we often turn to God, but sometimes, we only seek His assistance after trying other methods that ultimately prove ineffective. This week, challenge yourself to devote time to reading His Word and being in His presence to foster a deeper relationship with Him. Our merciful Savior’s intentions are always for our benefit. Still, it is only by getting to know Him more intimately that we can confidently entrust our troubles in faith and let Him handle them.

Your World!

This lesson focused on the faith of a centurion who believed that Jesus could heal someone from a distance. However, it is essential not to forget how he approached Jesus for help—with humility and