



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 31 "A Surprising Faith" By Pastor Jody May

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

7 After he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. **2** Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him. **3** When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. **4** And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, **5** for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue." **6** And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. **7** Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. **8** For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." **9** When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." **10** And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

What does the Work of the Kingdom look like?

1. The Heart of a God Worshipper Loves and Finds Love in Return.

7 After he had finished all his sayings in the **hearing** of the people, he entered Capernaum.

This seems to me this is Luke's way of saying, Jesus is done talking now let's see the proof of your **hearing**; do you remember from last week - **Akouein means 'to hear', and put a prefix on it: hyperkouein, and it means 'to obey'. - Sproul** Let's see which one of you may prove to be a person that is hearing what God says, that understands who I am, that is beginning to grasp the authority that I came in. Notice that the town is in Jesus' back yard of where He grew up, it's kind of rubbing salt in the wound to Nazareth. Luke is also pointing out here, that after the famous sermon in chapter 6, the first person we come across that looks like a disciple, exhibiting the traits, is a Gentile?



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² Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was **highly valued** by him. ³ When the centurion **heard** about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant.

A Centurion is a commander of a 100 in the Roman Legion, roughly equivalent to a lieutenant in our army. Unlike higher ranking officers in Legion who join the legion to pursue future political careers, he is an enlisted soldier perhaps a slave at one time that sought freedom by service in the army and receives pay for what he does. Because he is a Centurion he must be at least 30 years old and he most likely obtained his position through service that captured the attention of superior officers. He has had to maintain his physical appearance and health for he was to fight not just with the men but in the front when it came to battle. He made roughly ten times as much as a regular enlisted man, he could also read for he would have to read orders and give them. He was a leader that is scrutinized by his superiors, he's middle management in a world of violence, he would be required to instill loyalty from his troops and sought control by making his enemies fear.

This Centurion had a servant that was highly valued, that is he held dear, the inference here in the text is **this servant held more than a monetary value** to the Centurion. This servant is near death and upon hearing about Jesus entering into the town he sends the Jewish elders, leader, in the town to seek Him out. **I like this guy, He sees the problem and immediately goes after a solution.** He lives in a world where when one is in a battle for life or death decisions happen quickly and if one procrastinates people die. His servant was in trouble, his heart was burdened, he acts. He sends the elders for Him, and that's good, because in Capernaum Jesus had good street cred. That is, he had done a lot of work and healing in this town already, they had accepted Him, these guys didn't look at him like His own elders in His hometown.

⁴ And when they came to Jesus, they **pleaded** with him earnestly, saying, "He is **worthy** to have you do this for him, ⁵ for he **loves** our nation, and he is the one who **built** us our **synagogue**."

This verse speaks volumes about Jesus and the Centurion. It shows that the elders really believed that Jesus could help Him, they knew of His power, had seen it first-hand most likely. But even more surprisingly look at what they say about the Centurion.

- He is worthy - He loves us - He built our place of worship

Romans were hated by the Jews, they were considered defilers, they were considered thieves, they were an unwanted enemy in the land, they could not be accepted for their very presence



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meant to the Jew that God had not relented in His wrath yet towards them and their rebellion. This was a mutual feeling for Romans towards Jews because to them the Jews were a backwards people, they were ignorant, they were less civilized and less educated and deserved to be conquered. It is in this world that we see this astonishing relationship between the Centurion and the Jews.

"He is worthy", why? For He **loves our nation**, and not just any type of love.

By the way, the word "loves" is *agapaō*, the highest and noblest and richest word for love in the Greek language. He loved with the highest and the best kind of love, the love of the will, the noblest love, not the love of passion and not the love of emotion, but the love of will, the love of understanding and knowledge. - **MacArthur**¹

He has chosen to love the Jews and in doing so has seen the truth of God, he has turned away from polytheism, built the synagogue, their church in the town, and to be found worthy would mean that His works show him to be a true believer of God, **a God Worshipper**. He is repentant and has turned from whatever life he had before.

True God-Worshippers love God by loving their enemies and **those in their homes**, their servants, those considered lower than themselves. In turn this stirred the Jews to love Him in return. Worshipping God through the OT ways had brought enemies together, it was always supposed to work this way. They were seeking God together, they had sacrificed for each other, and they stewarded well what they had to promote God worship in their town. **(Now, where have I heard this before?) Love of a True God Worshipper ignites love in others**, this is a foreshadowing of a principle that we will see in Jesus' life.

Romans 5:8 ESV

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Jesus, through Worshipping God rightly, obeying the Father's will, lays down His life and **this action of the perfect God Worshipper ignites our souls into action**.

His life of sacrifice makes us want to intercede for others when they don't deserve it, because we know we aren't worthy either, **but Jesus is**. We can pray boldly for one another, we can ask prayers in the name of the only person that is worthy of an answer from God.

¹ <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/42-92/the-man-who-amazed-jesus-part-2>



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The love of the truest of all God worshippers saved us with His intervening love to spurn us to love each other with the **same agapaō love**... Family do you want to know if you have found the love of Christ this morning then simply ask yourself how you doin at loving others?

But now I want us to look at the type of faith that comes from the person that lives with such intense **agapaō** love.

2. The Surprising but Correct Faith of a God Worshipper.

"⁶ And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. ⁷ Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. ⁸ For I too am a man set under **authority**, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

The Centurion, instead of expecting Jesus to come to Him, instead of believing that the act of Jesus' presence is what does the work, look at what the Centurion puts his faith in, and this is HUGE for us! "But say the word - **GIVE THE COMMAND** - and let - **ALLOW** - to be healed. For I too am a man set under **AUTHORITY** - "exousia"; influence, right, power." The Centurion believed like the Jews that Jesus could do it, **BUT** was so surprising, was why He believed Jesus could do it! **He believed that Jesus' power derived from His own authority hence** why when Jesus speaks He expects you to obey. The Centurion knows this to the point that whatever command Jesus tells the Centurion to do he believed it would be enough to heal his highly favored servant.

Luke keeps giving us clues in His book so we would know that Jesus speaks as a King and it is by His will things are done, no one gives Him authority, you and I breath because He allows it.

- Luke 4:6 the devil has the audacity to offer Jesus authority *exousia* over the kingdoms of the world but the devil does not know that all authority came from Him
- Then to demonstrate that to Him Jesus showed Him that authority by casting out demons beginning in 4:32 all by the *exousia* of His Word.
- Then in 5:24 he makes this statement to the Pharisees that His power to heal comes from the same authority *exousia* to forgive sins.
- Then in 7:8 finally someone gets it, Jesus doesn't heal as any prophet in the OT, no, He heals by His own authority.



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Just so you know Jesus didn't keep this a secret it was something that He taught:

John 3:31-35 ESV

³¹ He who comes from above is **above all**. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all... ³⁵ The Father loves the Son and has **given all things into his hand**.

Correct Faith of a God Worshipper is to understand that Jesus doesn't have to answer you because you are praying for a good thing in His name, **but the right thing is to ask Him and let Him decide how to answer you and know that whatever the answer is it is the right one** for it benefits His plans which is always for your best. After all it is about His authority and rights, **our right is to condemned**, it is His right to bestow any grace solely based on Himself, your good behavior gets you nowhere with Him. **Prayer is the practice of releasing a request to God and allowing Him to bear the weight of responsibility to make things happen, it's His name on the line not yours.** - (BTW By a vote of 34-18, the Georgia Senate passed House Bill 481, the Living Infants Fairness and Equality (LIFE) Act, today. Now, the bill moves to the House of Representatives for agreement before going to the desk of Governor Brian Kemp!)

3. A Grace that is Delivered by Faith Alone.

⁹ When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." ¹⁰ And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

I wanted to show you this last point from a different perspective so we may get a clue on why the healing occurred.

Matthew 8:10-13 ESV

¹⁰ When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. ¹¹ I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹² while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹³ And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.



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Just so we see the workings behind the scenes of the Kingdom better we see the full message of this encounter from Matthew. Jesus is telling the Jews that the Gentiles will come in and many of them will be cast out. The healing was the sign to believe in the authority of Jesus to save by Grace. Then he tells the Centurion to "Go" it was the command the Centurion wanted, he heard Jesus' response.

My family is there something in your life today, that you have not wanted to pray about because possibly even praying about it means you will have to start listening to Jesus about what to do? Are we moving around in our religious circles waiting to see what Jesus does, or are we stepping up with confidence boldly asking Christ to give us the command to do a thing? Are we loving people in our family because it is the act of a True God Worshipper or do you pretend to love around here trying to fit in, or maybe secure a favor from someone?

Challenge for the day:

The Gospel is the Good News that your faith is built not on what you see but by **acting out on what you know,**

Application:

- Pray with confidence knowing Jesus has the authority to accomplish all things.
- Love as a choice of will not based on the appeal of others.
- Be content to pray to Jesus and accept a yes or a no today.

PRAYER

COMMUNION

BENEDICTION

Go in the name of the Father that has bestowed on Jesus all authority to get done what needs to be done for the Kingdom.

Go in the name of the Son that moves us to action by the power of His words and deeds.

Go in the name and power of the HS that helps us to pray to Jesus believing in His authority to do whatever He asks us to do.