

Week 2

Audacious Faith

The Faith of the Centurion

CONNECT

- Have you ever asked a favor from your boss? What did you ask for?
- Have you ever done something for someone who lived far away?

WORD

5 When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, 6 “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” 7 And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” 8 But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I too am a man 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.” 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.

Matthew 8:5–10 (ESV)

After Jesus healed a leper (Matt 8:1-4), the next miracle recorded by Matthew is the healing of the servant of the Roman centurion. It is a remarkable story in which a Gentile officer of the Roman army approached Jesus. Those around Jesus would be interested to see what He would do, because it was regarded as improper for Jesus, a Jew, to enter the house of a Gentile (racial barrier). Jesus however, accepted the centurion just as He had previously accepted the leper. From this story, we will learn three things about having audacious faith.

1. Audacious faith is shown when we ask great things from God.

5 When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, 6 “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” 7 And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” The centurion replied, “Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

Matthew 8:5-8 (ESV)

The Centurion humbled himself and acknowledges his unworthiness, knowing anything Jesus would do was an undeserved gift because he was a Gentile. He displays a sensitivity for the Jews when he considers himself unworthy to receive the Jewish teacher Jesus into his home because entering the home of a Gentile will make a Jew ceremonially unclean (see Acts 10:28; 11:3). The Roman centurion understood something crucial. He knew that Jesus didn't need to be physically present to heal his servant. He believed that Jesus has all the power and authority that he did not think Jesus needed to go to his house.

Jesus saw that the Centurion trusted Him and that His words carried enough power to heal his servant several kilometers away. Jesus has not yet healed at a distance before this time, so this is an astounding leap of faith for the centurion. The centurion realizes the extent of Jesus' miraculous power and believes Jesus can do whatever he wants by His word. If you could ask a big favor from Jesus, what would it be?

2. Jesus recognizes and commends people with audacious faith.

9 For I too am a man 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." 10 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith."

Matthew 8:9-10 (ESV)

Jesus recognizes something unique in this man's grasp of the situation. The faith of this Gentile centurion is superior to that of any Israelite, so much so that Jesus marveled, a strong word used of Jesus only here and in Mark 6:6 (where it was caused by lack of faith among his own people!). The centurion's confidence in the supernatural authority of His word has mightily impressed Jesus. "The remarkable "faith" of this centurion in Jesus' authority to heal has surpassed everyone in Israel. Jesus has not seen a faith like this. How can we show audacious faith in God's ability power to perform miracles?

3. Audacious faith positions us to receive miracles from God.

24 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 25 Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God.

26 Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

Matthew 8:24-26

The centurion, by believing that Jesus is the Son of God who has authority to speak the word of God, placed himself under Jesus' authority, tapped into that authority and became the human channel by which that authority flowed to his servant. It was by his faith that the servant was healed. The centurion trusted in the power of Jesus' words. He believed that if Jesus said his servant would be healed, then his servant would be healed. He didn't need to see it to believe it. He took Jesus at His word. This is the kind of faith we need to have. An audacious faith that takes God at His word, a faith that trusts in the power of His words.

APPLICATION

- Do you believe that Jesus is the Lord of all? How will this truth affect your life? What's one thing you will do differently, starting this week?
- How is the Word of God making an impact in your life? How can you immerse yourself more in His Word?

PRAYER

- Ask God for a greater fear of Him, and a deeper hunger for His ways.
- Praise God for the many chances He gives you to respond to Him, and go back to Him in repentance and surrender. Declare His lordship over your life, and commit to walk in His ways daily.