

[Sunday, April 30, 2017] Luke Series, Luke chapter 7, verses 1-10, The Marvel of Faith, and the Marvel of Unbelief – Craig Thurman

The closing part of the last chapter the Lord's words at least begged these two questions: Whose disciple are we? Blind followers of the blind; requiring others to do what we ourselves do not do; hypocrites? And, What kind of a disciple are we? Hearers that do, or hearers that do not?

Chapter 7

(Parallel text is Mt. 8.5-13)

Harmony of the Account of the Centurion

Luke chapter 7	Matthew 8
<p>1 ¶ Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.</p> <p>2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.</p> <p>3 And when he heard of Jesus,</p> <p><u>he sent unto him the elders of the Jews,</u></p> <p>beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.</p> <p>4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:</p> <p>5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.</p> <p>6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house,</p> <p>the centurion <u>sent friends</u> to him, saying unto him,</p> <p>Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:</p>	<p>5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, <u>there came unto him a centurion,</u></p> <p>[obviously represented by the elders]*</p> <p>beseeching him,</p> <p>6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.</p> <p>7 And Jesus saith unto him, <u>I will come and heal him.</u></p> <p>[Evidently word now had come back that Jesus is on the way.]</p> <p>8 The centurion answered and said,</p> <p>[By way of those friends now that he has sent.]</p> <p>Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof:</p>

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 (he acknowledge the superior authority of Christ) 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.

(Luke brings this in at chapter 13.28-30)

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled,

and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.

And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

* 'This variation in the two accounts has induced some to think that St. Matthew and St. Luke are describing two different miracles. ... But there seems no sufficient ground for it.—Matthew's account of the miracle is evidently shorter, and more abridged than that of Luke, and he may perhaps speak of the Centurion as doing some things himself, which a more full and complete narrative shows that he did by others.' *Expository Thought on the Gospels, Luke, J.C. Ryle, p.206*

'Matthew tells us the centurion himself came (Matt. 8:5), but we can readily understand that the elders presented his case to the Lord, as representing him. The discrepancy exists only in the minds of men who seek for some fancied evidence that Scripture is not wholly inspired by God.' *Addresses on Luke, H. A. Ironside, p.215*

The Humility and Great Faith of a Gentile in Light of the Unbelief of the Jews

εἰς τὰς ἀκοὰς

1 ¶ Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people,

ἀκοὰς, dat. sing. of noun, ἀκοή; KJV, *fame, ears, hearing, rumours, audience, report, preached*; the verb is ἀκούω, to hear.

His saying which related to the Sermon on the Mount. These things were spoken in the audience of the people, but they *were directed* to His disciples.

he entered into Capernaum.

Capernaum is where Jesus had resorts after He was cast out of his hometown of Nazareth. Here is where Peter and Andrew have a house. Very likely this is where James and John live as well. (Mk.1.29; Lk.4.38, said to be Peter's house.) It was here that most of His mighty works were done.

Ἐπει δὲ ἐπλήρωσεν πάντα τὰ ῥήματα αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς ἀκοὰς τοῦ λαοῦ
εἰσῆλθεν εἰς Καπερναοῦμ

κακῶς ἔχων

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick,

servant, δοῦλος, a slave; Mt. 8.7 has the Greek παῖς. παῖς is the same word which is used with reference to those children two years and younger that Herod had slain in his attempted to kill our Lord when He was a baby. (Mt.2.16) It is used with reference to Eutychus, a *young man* who fell asleep during a long night of preaching by the apostle Paul. (Acts 20.12) παῖς refers to our Lord Jesus being in his 30's, Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah, *Behold my servant, whom I have chosen ...* παῖς is probably best defined as those being from a very young age through the peak of maturity and strength. It is never used of the aged. These are all those who fall under the direct care and authority of others.

dear, ἔντιμος, noun, ἐν by, in, with + τιμή price (and so esteemed), honour, **precious**.

ἤμελλον τελευτᾶν
and ready to die.
about to expire

Mt. 8.6 ... *at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented*. The servant is in a very bad condition.

τελευτᾶν, pres. infin. of τελευτάω; KJV, to be *dead, deceased, die, or dying*; see also the noun τέλος, and the verb τελέω.

What do we know about the servant? Do we know why the centurion felt this way about him? Is there anything to suggest some warrant for the affections of this master for his servant? Was the servant dear to the master because he served him faithfully? Was the servant dear to the master because of his stage of life, whether a toddler to a middle-aged young man or woman? (comparing Matthew's account and the use of παῖς for servant instead of δοῦλος as Luke has). Of, had the servant become dear to him on account of the fact of his terrible illness? Can we answer any of these questions biblically? No. Such attempts to justify the master's endearment are baseless. The text simply states that the centurion's servant, that was dear to him became sick. The fact is, the servant was dear to him before he fell ill. That is all that we know. It is all that we need to know. If you're like me and many others, you'll search the Scriptures, and try to find some reason why the servant was so dear to this master. It is hard to leave this with no explanation. Do you know why it is difficult for us to leave unanswered? Because it stands against our nature. There is in us that old nature that was before Christ which says that there must be a reason why the Master loves me so. But if we will understand the great love of God and the true meaning of His grace through Jesus Christ there wasn't anything in us to warrant His love. As true as it is that there was no beauty in Him that we should desire Him (Is.53.2); it was the sovereign grace of God that opened our eyes to Christ, so it is that there was nothing in us that He should desire us; it was of His sovereign grace alone that He

looked upon us in love. Outside of this there is no other explanation for the love of the Master for this servant. He was pleased Him to do so.

Ps 135:6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

*2Ti 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but **according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began ...***

Now, this dear servant was so badly affected by this disease that death appeared imminent.

2 Ἐκατοντάρχου δέ τινος δοῦλος κακῶς ἔχων ἤμελλεν τελευτᾶν ὃς ἦν αὐτῷ ἔντιμος

περὶ πρὸς πρεσβυτέρους
3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders
about, concerning

ὅπως διασώση
of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.
in order that (like ἵνα)

heal, διασώση, 3ps. aor. subj. act. of διασώζω, διά by, through + σώζω, to save or make whole; διασώζω, KJV, to make perfectly whole, to heal, to bring safe, to escape, to escaped safe.

In Mt.8.7, Jesus states in clear terms, *I will come and heal him*. There is no question about the *intent* or *power* of our Lord. He *will* come to this house, and He *will* heal this servant.

Contrast this to Naaman, a captain of the host of the king of Syria, a great man and honorable. But he was a leper. It was because of a Jewish servant girl that he would come to Elishah the prophet for cleansing. (2Ki.5.1-5) So, when he came to Elishah he thought that at the least the prophet should have come out to meet him, call on the name of his god, strike his hand

over the place, and be cleansed. But instead Elishah sent word by his servant and told him to wash in the river Jordan seven times. Naaman was proud; the centurion was humble. Naaman must humble himself. And he did. He went down to the river Jordan and did as he was instructed through the prophet's servant, and was cleansed of his leprosy, after his pride was cast down. The centurion came to Christ humbly, very much unlike the Jews that had come to Him and presented their gentiles friend's case.

3 ἀκούσας δὲ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτὸν πρεσβυτέρους τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐρωτῶν αὐτὸν ὅπως ἐλθὼν διασώσῃ τὸν δοῦλον αὐτοῦ

4 And when they **came to Jesus, they besought him instantly,**
the elders earnestly

*instantly, σπουδαίως, adv. KJV, **instantly, more carefully, diligently;***
cf. verb σπεύδω, to haste; noun, σπουδή, *haste, diligence, business, carefulness, care, forwardness, **earnest care.***

saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

worthy, ἀξιός, KJV, *meet, worthy, due reward.*

should do, παρέξει, 3ps. fut. ind. of παρέχω, παρά beside, near + ἔχω, I have; he shall have.

4 οἱ δὲ παραγενόμενοι πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν παρεκάλουν αὐτὸν σπουδαίως λέγοντες ὅτι Ἄξιός ἐστιν ᾧ παρέξει τοῦτο

¹καὶ ²τὴν συναγωγὴν ³αὐτὸς ⁴ᾧκοδόμησεν ⁵ἡμῖν
5 For he loveth our nation, ¹and ³he ⁴hath built ⁵us ²a synagogue.
*himself

hath built, ᾧκοδόμησεν, 3ps. aor. ind. act. of οἰκοδομέω, οἰκός house + δέμω, to build, English transliteration, demo-

αὐτὸς, *himself*, most agree that this means 'All by himself and at his own expense.' *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, A. T. Robertson, vol. 2, p.99

This is natural love and friendship. He has done for us, please do for him.

How obnoxious these words had been had the centurion spoken them of himself. Note the attitude in the prayer of the Pharisee.

Lk.18. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

How much better these words are when it is the report of others.

Pr 27:2 Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

If others aren't saying it of us anyway, it's probably not true.

5 ἀγαπᾷ γὰρ τὸ ἔθνος ἡμῶν καὶ τὴν συναγωγὴν αὐτὸς ὡκοδόμησεν ἡμῖν

σὺν αὐτοῖς

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:

trouble, σκύλλου, 2ps. pres. imper. pass. of σκύλλω; only thrice in the KJV, always translated with the English word *trouble*; the noun, σκῦλον, spoil (Lk.11.22).

for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

worthy, ἰκανός, KJV, *worthy*, *large* [money], *great* [number], *many* [disciples], *much* [people], *long* [time], *enough* [swords], *security* [of Jason], *a good* [while], [wept] *sore*, *meet* [to be called], *sufficient* [to such a man], *able* [to teach].

Here is a man of genuine faith. He was unaffected by his position. He was unaffected by what others thought of him good or evil, pro or con. The centurion took His place before Christ as a servant.

6 ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἐπορεύετο σὺν αὐτοῖς ἤδη δὲ αὐτοῦ οὐ μακρὰν ἀπέχοντος ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας ἔπεμψεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος φίλους λέγων αὐτῷ, Κύριε μὴ σκύλλου οὐ γὰρ εἰμι ἰκανός ἵνα ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην μου εἰσέλθῃς

ἠξίωσα

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

7 διὸ οὐδὲ ἑμαυτὸν ἠξίωσα πρὸς σὲ ἐλθεῖν ἀλλὰ εἶπέ λόγῳ καὶ ἰαθήσεται ὁ παῖς μου

ἐξουσίαν

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.

8 καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν τασσόμενος ἔχων ὑπ' ἑμαυτὸν στρατιώτας καὶ λέγω τούτῳ Πορεύθητι καὶ πορεύεται καὶ ἄλλῳ Ἔρχου καὶ ἔρχεται καὶ τῷ δούλῳ μου Ποίησον τοῦτο καὶ ποιεῖ

9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him,

As a man, our Lord marveled at him,; that is, at his faith. Our Lord also marveled at the unbelief of some.

Mr 6:6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

‘The expression is one of those which shows the reality of our Lord’s human nature. He was made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted. As man He grew in wisdom and stature. As man He hungered, thirsted, was weary, ate, drank, slept, wept, sorrowed, rejoiced, groaned, agonized, bled, suffered and died. And so also as man He wondered. Yet, all this time He was very and eternal God,

one with the Father, and the Saviour of the world. This is a great mystery, and one which we cannot fathom. The union of two natures in one person, is a thing passing our weak comprehension. We must believe and admire, without attempting to define or explain.' *Expository Thought on the Gospels, Luke*, J. C. Ryle, p.207

What a marvel it was, that such power of God should have been manifested in a Roman centurion, a gentile. Here are so many of the Jews that should have believed in Him and should have showed this faith, and they didn't. After all that God had done with them over the past 4,000 years. So, their unbelief was a marvel too.

(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

τοσαύτην πίστιν
so great faith, no, not in Israel.

so great, τοσαύτην, acc. sing. fem. of τοσοῦτος; KJV, so great, so much, these many, so many, so long, and as large; So great, so large, so wonderful, so much ...

During His earthly ministry, our Lord Jesus never noted in *any* of the Israelites such great faith. Only with reference two gentiles did he say such a thing. First, to this Roman centurion, and then to a Syro-Phoenician woman.

Mt.15.22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan [a Syro-phoenician, Mk.7.26, a gentile] came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

In effect, do this thing that she is asking so that she will leave us alone. But what was it? She was showing great faith in Christ!

24 But he answered and said [to the disciples], I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

[Jesus' proves the faith of this gentile woman. She knew her status in comparison to the Jews. Rather than being offended, her faith demonstrated the fruit of the Spirit, *humility*.]

27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

*28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, **O woman, great is thy faith:** be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

These two souls had a correct view of themselves and of Jesus Christ. It is a rare thing indeed to see a real, living, humble faith in a Christian. Bred into our very fiber is self, pride, and worth. I think that this is why the Christian has so much trouble with conforming to the will of God. In true Christian service isn't who leads, but who will follow Christ. Here was a great man of authority and a woman of low estate, of two complete different conditions in life, having the same humility, the same faith.

'To have great gifts, and do great works for God, is not given to all believers. But all believers ought to strive to be clothed with humility.' *Expository Thought on the Gospels, Luke, J. C. Ryle, p.202*

Neither pride nor humility has to do with circumstance. Circumstances only prove what is already enthroned in our hearts. The rich and the poor may be proud, or they may be humble.

Very little is revealed about either of these two gentiles. But what we do know is most important. They had faith in Christ, and Christ acknowledged that faith.

Faith is the evidence of things unseen; faith comprehends what the natural mind cannot apprehend of the great truths and ways of God. (He.11.1, 2) Not for moment do I think that Christ was extolling the virtues of a carnal faith, a faith that was the product of the natural and unregenerate man. He acknowledged in these two a living faith, a faith that was produced by the Spirit of God, a faith that was bestowed upon them when they received the gift of eternal life, else there was no purpose for our Lord to have mentioned it.

*Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for **he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.***

These two were persuaded that Christ could help them.

*Heb 11:3 Through faith we understand that the **worlds were framed by the word of God**, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

note: *worlds*, αἰῶνας, acc. pl.; ages; meaning the world that is, and the world to come. (cf. He.1.2)

Ps.148.5 ... for he commanded, and they were created.

Faith understand that all things are preserved to this day by that same word:

*He.1.3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and **upholding all things by the word of his power**, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ...*

There is nothing marvelous about a faith that devils possess in the knowledge that God is. There is nothing wonderful about a faith that this chair might hold me up, or that I can climb this mountain. This kind of faith, this natural faith, which is no faith at all, proceeds from an examination of things rational or not, sizing it up with the natural capacity and concludes / *think* I can do this. Such a faith is built upon facts that might be true or not. But the faith of God takes God at His Word even though it goes beyond all human intellect and capacity. God created the heavens and the earth, and all things that are in them. God brought a great flood in the days of Noah and destroyed all of humankind except for eight souls and the land-dwelling creatures in a single boat called an ark. The rainbow is a sign of God's covenant to man that He would never destroy the earth with a flood again. There was a man named Abram. And God made covenant with him and called through Him a chosen seed that would be Savior of all of the elect of God. There was really a man named Moses which God used to deliver the Israelites from Egypt. God really gave the Law at Mount Sinai. God really moved a nation of over a million souls through the wilderness for 40 years until the time that He should bring them into the promised land. God really did the miracles of Gideon's fleece. He really moved the sun-dial of Ahab backward for Hezekiah. The prophets really did the things they did and spoke the infallible Word of God, again and again, and again. Prophecies have come to pass. Christ was born of a virgin. He was a real historical figure, but He was more. He was really God come in human flesh. He really did walk on the water. He calmed the storm with His Word. He turned water into wine, fed thousands with a few loaves of bread and some fishes. He cast out demons, healed the sick, and raised the dead. He was really crucified, laid in a rich man's tomb. He really was in that borrowed tomb for three days and three nights. And he really raised alive from the dead bodily according the the Scriptures. He has ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven. Stephen really saw Him there in the day of his martyrdom. And He is coming again. There really is a first resurrection when all of the saints of God shall be glorified together to rule and reign with Christ for a thousand years. Satan, a real created being, a fallen cherub, really will be bound during that time in an abyss. There really will be a final revolt against the Lord and His people and He shall but speak the Word and they shall be destroyed. There really will be a final judgment of the living and the dead called the Last Resurrection. The whole present

kosmos really shall be dissolved by the fire of God. And all of the people of God shall come to a new heaven and a new earth, and there we shall ever be. Faith believes God. Faith does what nature will never do: the will of God from the heart.

Marking the notable faith of this centurion it is said:

‘One comes to him for a son; another for a daughter; a third for himself. I see none come to Him for his servant but this one Centurion.’ *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, Luke*, J. C. Ryle, p.205

But what is a great faith but the show of a greater God.

Mr 11:22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

This was a rebuke to Israel. It was not the people to whom Christ came that showed this faith. Rather it was these two gentiles. The places where He did his greatest works were the places where he met with the most resistance from the Jews. The closer to home Christ’s works were done the less He was received.

*Mt.11.20 Then began he to upbraid the cities **wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:***

21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

*23 And thou, **Capernaum**, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.*

24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

Matthew puts into this account these words.

Mt 8:11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Sometimes the truth doesn't set very well with those to whom it is spoken. But it remains the truth nonetheless. Jesus told his large Jewish audience that many it will be many gentiles that shall be granted to sit in the kingdom with the likes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because they trusted in Him, and that they would be cast out because of their unbelief. Just as certainly as Jesus healed this gentile servant of his disease is as certain as there will be gentiles sitting in that coming kingdom. And my opinion is, that after these Jews and elders heard the words of Jesus they probably regretted ever having come in behalf of this centurion at all. They heard things that they didn't want to hear, things they would have never expected to have been uttered from the one that they expected to be their Christ.

9 ἀκούσας δὲ ταῦτα ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐθαύμασεν αὐτόν καὶ στραφεὶς τῷ ἀκολουθοῦντι αὐτῷ ὄχλῳ εἶπεν λέγω ὑμῖν οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ τοσαύτην πίστιν εὑρόν

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

Mt.8.13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

It seems that in the end that the centurion did finally come out to meet the Lord Jesus, and he received what he had hoped for from Him, and more. Not only was his servant healed, but He received by way of Christ's words a confirmation of things that he himself very likely hoped that he might enjoy one day for himself, but was all but otherwise unthinkable and impossible for him because he was a gentile. But he heard Jesus say that he and *many*

other gentiles were going to enjoy the benefits promised in the Word of God concerning the coming kingdom. That he would be of those who would sit with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom. Jesus used him as a hallmark of true faith contrasted with the greatness of the unbelief of the Jews.

10 καὶ ὑποστρέψαντες οἱ πεμφθέντες εἰς τὸν οἶκον εὗρον τὸν ἀσθενοῦντα
δοῦλον ὑγιαίνοντα