

- I. Favor and obligation: how we tend to deal with each other
 - A. We deal with equals on the basis of kindness.
 - B. We deal with non-equals on the basis of obligation/patronage.
 - C. The leaders in Capernaum feel obligation to the centurion
 - D. They ask Jesus to do them a favor
 - E. By treating Jesus as a part of that network, they lessen His status!

- II. What the centurion understands about grace
 - A. The centurion is apparently friends with his slave, and asks for kindness to help him.
 - B. The centurion understands himself to be unworthy of grace.
 - C. The centurion puts his faith in Jesus' power to save.
 - D. The centurion understands authority.
 - E. What the centurion gets that the Jewish leaders don't.
 - i. Jesus isn't bound by the patronage system. He is the God become a servant.
 - ii. God is not obliged to show kindness to anyone.
 - iii. We are all equal – in that we are all undeserving of kindness from God.
 - iv. Conversely, there is no one outside the reach of His kindness.

- III. Jesus and Elisha – similarities and differences. (see 2 Kings 5)
 - A. In each case, the Gentile military man is described as a good man.
 - B. In each case, Jewish people make intercession (a Jewish girl urges Naaman to go to Elisha; the Jewish leaders urge Jesus to go to the centurion).
 - C. In both cases, the Gentile military man does not see the prophet.
 - D. In both cases, the Gentile military man is healed without seeing the prophet.
 - E. What is striking is that Naaman goes to Elisha, and is refused admission; while Jesus goes to the centurion and is begged to come no further. (Isaiah 60:30)

- IV. God's kingdom is a kingdom of pure, undeserved grace.
 - A. God wants us to live as people have been shown grace.
 - B. We don't restrict our kindness to those with some claim on it.
 - C. We don't talk to God like He owes us.
 - D. We don't hold the debt of others over their heads.
 - E. We recognize that we are "outsiders."
 - F. We praise God for his grace.
 - G. How do we decide whether to help another person?