

I. Introduction: What does it take to amaze you?

II. The Jewish elders say that this centurion is worthy. 7:1-5

A. The setting: The valued slave of a Roman centurion is dying. v. 1-2 Mt. 8:5 4:13

B. The centurion's request. v. 3 23:47 3:14 Acts 10:1ff

- 1. Rather than going himself, he sends Jewish elders to plead with Jesus. v. 3**
- 2. Why doesn't the centurion go to Jesus?**
- 3. How can we harmonize Luke's account with that of Matthew which says that the centurion came to Jesus? Mt. 8:5 2 Tim. 3:16-17 Eph. 2:17 4:21**

C. The Jewish elders implore Jesus to help the centurion. v. 4-5

- 1. It would be most unusual for Jewish elders to willingly act on behalf of a Gentile officer of the occupying enemy force.**
- 2. The elders go beyond merely conveying the centurion's request because they regard this man as worthy of Jesus' help.**
- 3. These Jewish elders believe that Jesus is able to grant the request. 9:22 20:1**

D. Is the centurion worthy?

- 1. We can understand why many might think he is deserving.
 - a. He shows an unusual degree of care for a slave. v. 2 Phil. 2:29**
 - b. He loves the Jewish nation. Gen. 12:3**
 - c. He shows his love by paying for the construction of the synagogue. 4:31ff****
- 2. The Jewish elders believe that God blesses men based upon their worthiness.**
- 3. Many today share this same mentality in various forms (karma). 18:11-12 Jo. 9:2**
- 4. This idea is in tension with what Jesus had been teaching in the Sermon on the Plain – that our merciful God blesses the unworthy. 6:35**
- 5. The Bible teaches that none of us is worthy. Rom. 3:10ff Isa. 64:6 Eph. 2:8-9 1 Tim. 1:15f**

E. Other applications.

- 1. Death is a terrifying enemy. Heb. 9:27**
- 2. It is good to care deeply for others who are hurting. Ga. 6:2 Mt. 25:36 He. 3:3**
- 3. Do you think that you are worthy of God's blessing? Jer. 17:9**

III. The centurion recognizes that he is not worthy. v. 6-10

A. Jesus willingly starts the journey to the centurion's home. v. 6a Acts 10:25-26

B. The centurion humbly declares that he is not worthy. v. 6-7a

- 1. His self-assessment differs from the opinion of the Jews.**
- 2. This is the very humility which leads to salvation. 5:8,30-31 15:19-21 18:13
1 Pet. 5:5 Ps. 51:17**

C. The centurion expresses great faith in Jesus' authority to heal. v. 7b-8

- 1. He has a very high view of Jesus. 23:47**
- 2. He believes Jesus can heal his servant with a word without even being present.
Ps. 33:9 148:5 107:20**

D. Jesus marvels at such faith. v. 9

1. Jesus experiences human emotion. Mark 6:6 John 4:6f Mt. 4:2
2. Why is the centurion's faith so amazing?
 - a. He is a Gentile who had been far away from God's covenant promises. Ro. 3:1f
 - b. He is a wealthy and influential man. 18:24-27 6:20 1 Co. 1:26ff
 - c. He is a moral man who does good works.
 - d. Others think that he is a worthy person.
 - e. He realizes that he is an unworthy sinner.
 - f. He believes that Jesus has absolute authority to heal. Heb. 11:1
 - g. He believes that Jesus will respond to the plea of an unworthy sinner.
3. His faith is in contrast to the unbelief of the Jews. 5:21 6:2 10:13-15 Mt. 8:10-12
4. The centurion's faith surpasses that of Jesus' Jewish followers. Mt. 8:26 6:30 John 11:21
5. This foreshadows the inclusion of believing Gentiles in Jesus' kingdom. 2:30-32 3:7-9 Acts 10:1ff Rom. 11:1ff 1:16 2:28-29 Gal. 3:28-29 Eph. 2:11ff

E. Jesus heals the slave. v. 10 Mt. 8:13

F. Applications.

1. How do you see yourself? Are you a good person? Prov. 21:2
2. Salvation comes not through our worthiness, but by faith in Christ. 5:31-32 19:10
3. Jesus is willing and able to save humbled sinners who trust in Him.
4. Jesus can deliver you from besetting sins.
5. Turn to Christ in all your troubles.
6. The Lord is able to work in the lives of those for whom you intercede.
7. We too should marvel at God's work of faith in those who were spiritually dead.

IV. Concluding applications. 1 Pet. 1:8-9

Discussion questions

1. What is special about this particular miracle of Jesus?
2. Why do the Jewish elders believe that this centurion is worthy?
3. What is your evaluation of their concept of worthiness?
4. How do people today have the same mentality that God blesses the deserving?
5. What about the centurion's character is worthy of our admiration and imitation?
6. Why is the centurion unwilling to meet with Jesus?
7. What is unique about the centurion's faith?
8. Do you in any sense see yourself as a good person who deserves to be blessed?
How can you overcome such unbiblical thinking?
9. How should we express our faith in Jesus' authority to deliver?
10. For whom are you interceding that Jesus might deliver them?