

CENTURION'S SERVANT HEALED

Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Jesus, Jewish leaders, and the centurion

Key-location: Capernaum

Key-repetitions:

- Positive facts about the centurion: loved his servant (Lk 7:2); Jewish leaders admired him (Lk 7:4-5); had friends (Lk 7:6); Jesus amazed at his faith (Lk 7:9).
- Centurion's servant: loved by his boss (Lk 7:2); sick, near death (Lk 7:2); obeyed orders (Lk 7:8); healed (Lk 7:10).
- Gave orders: Centurion asked Jesus to command the healing of servant (Lk 7:7); said he was under a chain of command (Lk 7:8); he had soldiers at his command (Lk 7:8); he ordered his servant (Lk 7:8).

Key-attitudes:

- Jewish leaders' positive attitude of the centurion.
- Centurion's concern for sick servant.
- Centurion's confidence in Jesus' authority.
- Centurion's humility.
- Jesus' admiration of centurion's faith.

Initial-situation:

Jesus was beginning his second year of ministry. Jesus had already chosen twelve of his followers to become his apostles, and he preached a sermon on the mountainside.

Initial-problem:

A Roman centurion had a servant that he loved who was near death.

Final-situation:

Messengers returned to the house and found the servant healthy again.

BIBLE STORY

After the sermon on the mountainside, Jesus entered Capernaum. A Roman centurion lived in Capernaum. The centurion was a career military officer in the Roman army with command over a 100 soldiers. The centurion had a servant he loved. The servant was sick, paralyzed, and near death (Mat 8:5-6; Lk 7:1-3).

The centurion heard about Jesus. The centurion sent some Jewish leaders to ask Jesus to come and heal his servant. The Jewish leaders came to Jesus and made an emotional appeal, "This man deserves your help, because he loves our nation and has

built our synagogue with his own money." So Jesus went with the Jewish leaders (Lk 7:4-5).

Jesus was close to the house when the centurion sent friends to Jesus with the message, "Lord, don't trouble yourself. I don't deserve to have you come under my roof. I'm not worthy to come to you. Just give the order, and my servant will be healed. I, too, am a man under a chain of command. I have soldiers at my command. I tell one, 'Go,' and he goes. I tell another, 'Come,' and he comes. I order my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

Jesus was amazed at the centurion and spoke to the accompanying crowd, "I haven't found faith as great as this in Israel." The messengers returned to the house and found the servant healthy again (Lk 7:6-10).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who was the centurion?
2. What did the Jewish leaders say that was commendable about the centurion?
3. How did Jesus respond to the Jewish leaders' request?
4. What does it say about Jesus when he was willing to enter the Roman centurion's house?
5. Why didn't the centurion want Jesus to enter his home?
6. What did Jesus say about the centurion?
7. How do you react when a crisis comes to your home?
8. Who do you consider the person of the greatest faith you've ever met?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **The person who recognizes that Jesus has authority will have his faith honored.** Jesus admired the faith of the centurion and cured his servant (Mat 8:5-13, Lk 7:2-10). The elements that characterized the centurion's faith were:
 - Deep humility.
 - Trust in Christ's power over invisible forces that relate to humanity. The centurion compared Christ's ability to give orders to his own as a commander. He wanted Jesus to issue an order for the servant's illness to disappear.
 - Absolute trust in Christ's power, even from a distance. Just as the official's presence was not necessary to execute a military order, he recognized that Christ could issue an order and execute it without being present.

2. **Jesus is sovereign.** Jesus manifested that he has power over diseases when he cured the centurion's servant and others. He proved he has power even from a distance when he cured the servant without being present (Lk 7:1-10).
3. **People do not deserve to be classified with a preconceived stereotype opinion of their race or position.** Jews hated Roman soldiers for their oppression, control and ridicule. Yet, the faith of the non-Jewish centurion amazed Jesus. The non-Jewish centurion's faith put to shame the stagnant piety of many of the Jewish religious leaders (Mat 8:10).
4. **There exists "Bridges" which help a person come to Jesus, and "Barriers" which hinder a person coming to Jesus.** The centurion faced barriers in coming to Jesus. He was a non-Jew. He was a Roman soldier. As such, he was hated by the Jews and would not have been welcomed at a Jewish gathering. The bridge that helped the centurion come to Jesus was that he understood military authority and this helped him understand spiritual authority. He also did not need to be present for his orders to be carried out. He assumed that Jesus did not need to be present to heal (Lk 7:1-6).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Chant:

Words in **bold and underlined** are stressed. Stress words by stretching them out instead of increasing volume.

ALL	
"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1 NIV).	
Faith is	<u>Confidence</u> in what we hope for.
Faith is	<u>Assurance</u> about what we do not see.
ALL	
"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1 NIV).	

2. Pantomime Retelling of the Story:

The storyteller tells the story one time. Then the storyteller:

- Asks for a volunteer to pantomime the story as the storyteller tells it a second time.
- Retells the story while the volunteer pantomimes it.
- Invites another listener to retell the story.
- Asks listeners if the one who retold the story left out or added to the story.