

SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON

WEEK 5

Jesus commends the Centurion's faith

Matthew 8:5-13



DAY 1

Believe in Jesus because He cares • Matthew 8:5-7

READ

Matthew 8:5-13

EXPLAIN

The truth of Matthew 8:5-7

This is a strange centurion! **Centurions** were Roman soldiers who usually commanded about 100 men. They were tough, hard soldiers, and they usually looked down on the Jews. But this centurion was known for his kindness to the Jewish people, even paying for a synagogue in Capernaum (Luke 7:5). Yet even though the Jews liked this centurion (7:3-5), they would have still considered him an outsider. He was, after all, a **Gentile**, a non-Jew. Even though many Gentiles lived in and around Capernaum, faithful Jews considered them unclean. Jews would not associate with Gentiles or enter Gentile homes (Acts 10:28). What broke through the barrier between Jew and Gentile here? It was **compassion**. First, the centurion felt compassion for his sick slave (Matt 8:6). That was highly unusual, since slaves who were too old or sick to do their jobs were often abandoned. But in this case, the centurion allowed himself to feel the pain of another. Second, Jesus had compassion too. He set off at once, intending to enter the Gentile house Himself (Luke 7:6).

ASK

- Who came to Jesus?
A centurion, a commander of 100 soldiers in the Roman army.
- What was the centurion like?
He was compassionate and kind to the Jews and to his slave.
- What did the centurion want Jesus to do?
Heal his slave.
- Did Jesus say He would come do it?
Yes. Jesus said He would heal the centurion's slave.

DISCUSS

- Do your words and actions show concern and care for others, or are you concerned only for yourself?
- It is much more difficult to have compassion on our enemies. Read Romans 5:10 and describe how God shows compassion to repentant sinners.

DAY 2

Believe in Jesus because He is in charge • Matthew 8:8–9

READ

Matthew 8:5–13

EXPLAIN

The truth of Matthew 8:8–9

People value leadership, but they often do not realize that a good leader must first learn to be a good follower. The centurion knew this, because he understood how authority in the Roman army worked. He knew he could act with the emperor's authority only because he served under the emperor's authority. As a result, when he gave his soldiers a command, it was as if the emperor himself was giving them a command. Since the centurion understood this, he said Jesus was "Lord" but also "under" authority. Jesus was Lord because he had authority, more authority than the centurion and so much authority that He could heal just by speaking a word. But the reason Jesus had this authority was because He was under authority. Jesus spoke and acted with the full authority of God because Jesus perfectly submitted to the Father's authority. He did not come to earth to do His own thing or to use His power to get whatever He wanted. He came to do the mission the Father had given Him. Because Jesus submitted to the Father, we can trust Him to be our perfect leader.

ASK

1. Why did the centurion not want Jesus to come to his house?
The centurion knew he was not worthy. He knew Jesus had God's authority.
2. What did the centurion call Jesus?
Lord. That means "master" or "boss." Jesus is in charge.
3. To what did the centurion compare Jesus' authority?
To his own. Since he gave commands with the emperor's authority, he knew Jesus gave commands with God's authority.
4. How did Jesus react to the centurion's faith?
Jesus was amazed and said no one in Israel had such great faith.

DISCUSS

1. What does "being in charge" mean?
2. God has established many authorities: parents (Eph 6:1), employers (Eph 6:5), government (Rom 13:1), and the church (Heb 13:17). How do you respond to these authorities? Does this show that you are honoring God's authority or not?

DAY 3

Believe in Jesus to enter His kingdom • Matthew 8:10–12

READ

Matthew 8:5–12

EXPLAIN

The truth of Matthew 8:10–12

How do you think the Jews felt when they heard Jesus' words? They probably were not happy at all when Jesus said the centurion's faith was much greater than their own. But what He said next offended them even more: Jesus said that Gentiles, like this centurion, would enter God's kingdom, but many Jews would not. This was shocking news to the Jews, since they believed the kingdom belonged to them and not to Gentiles. Most

Jews did not expect Gentiles to enter the kingdom of God, even though the Scriptures predicted this (Gen 12:3; Isa 49:6). Instead, the Jews considered themselves "sons of the kingdom." They thought they were guaranteed a place in God's kingdom just because they were physical descendants of Abraham. They were wrong. Even though God has not completely rejected Israel (Jer 31:35–36), He still curses and casts out any individual Israelite who refuses to trust Him for salvation (Deut 28:15–68; Heb 3:19). If even the "sons of the kingdom" are cast out apart from faith, then what hope do you have? To enter the new world, you must believe in Jesus like the centurion did.

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. Who will be with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God?
Many people from east and west (Gentiles).
2. Who would not enter?
Many "sons of the kingdom" (Jews).
3. Why was this shocking news?
Many Jews believed they were guaranteed a place in God's kingdom just because they were physical descendants of Abraham.
4. What is needed to enter God's kingdom?
Faith.

DISCUSS 

1. Read John 10:9. What "door" must we pass through to enter God's kingdom?
2. Does going to church guarantee entrance into God's kingdom (Matt 7:21–23)? Will you get into heaven just because your parents are Christians?

DAY 4*Jesus healed the centurion's slave • Matthew 8:13***READ** 

Matthew 8:5–13

EXPLAIN **The truth of Matthew 8:13**

What right did Jesus have to say who would enter heaven and who would not? Jesus proved His authority by instantly healing the centurion's slave. In the process, Jesus also proved the centurion's faith: "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." In other words, Jesus did exactly what the centurion believed He could do. While faith was sometimes involved in Jesus' healings (9:2; 15:28), other times it was not (8:14–16; Luke 22:51). Jesus' words to the centurion are not a universal promise to all believers, since God often allows even faithful believers to suffer for their own good (2 Cor 12:7–9). But the main point still applies to you: do you believe? How would Jesus respond to your faith? Would He "marvel," like He did with the centurion? Do you believe that Jesus will have compassion on all those who come to Him? Have you submitted to Jesus' authority, surrendering every portion of your life to Him? Do you believe that the reward—being with Jesus in His kingdom—is worth it? Trust in Jesus, for He alone has both authority and compassion to save.

ASK 

1. How did Jesus prove His authority?
By instantly healing the centurion's slave.
2. What else did Jesus prove?
The centurion's faith. Jesus did exactly what the centurion believed He could do.
3. Was faith always involved in Jesus' healings?
No. Sometimes it was, while other times it was not.

DISCUSS 

1. Has there ever been anyone who could heal like Jesus? What does this miraculous healing show us about Jesus (John 14:11)?
2. Can you think of a time that was so difficult that all you could do was trust Jesus?

DAY 5

Jesus marveled at the centurion's faith • Matthew 8:10

READ

Matthew 8:5–13

EXPLAIN

The truth of Matthew 8:10

Jesus marveled at the centurion's faith (Matt 8:10a). Never had He met anyone with faith so strong (8:10b). There were others who believed, but none who understood Jesus' absolute authority as this centurion had. So Jesus encouraged His followers to learn a lesson from this Gentile: that **faith** involves complete submission to Jesus' authority. Even Jesus' own disciples, fellow Jews and members of Jesus' inner circle, had not yet fully grasped the reality of Jesus' unrivaled authority (8:27). Yet sadly there were many who completely rejected Jesus' authority. Even members of His hometown, Nazareth, refused to submit their lives to Him (Mark 6:1–3). The unbelief of these people—Jesus' friends and neighbors—was shocking. They knew Jesus better than most (6:4), and their town had witnessed many miracles and much teaching, but they still did not believe. Jesus “marveled” at these people too—because of their unbelief (Mark 6:6a). As a result, Jesus left Nazareth and began teaching in other villages in Galilee (Mark 6:6b).

ASK

1. What did Jesus say about the centurion?
That he had faith greater than anyone in Israel.
2. What was so special about the centurion's faith?
The centurion understood Jesus' absolute authority. He believed Jesus could heal his slave from a distance, simply by saying the word.
3. Why was the centurion's faith greater than even Jesus' own disciples?
The disciples had not yet fully grasped the reality of Jesus' unrivaled authority.
4. Why was the unbelief of those in Nazareth so shocking?
They knew Jesus the best and had witnessed many miracles and much teaching. Yet with all this knowledge, they still did not believe.

DISCUSS

1. Do you know anyone with faith like the centurion's? Why do you think their faith is so strong?
2. How would Jesus respond to your faith?

NEXT WEEK

Jesus forgives sin

Luke 5:17–26

