**Centurion That Impressed Jesus**

Prepared by Nathan Morrison for Sunday April 15th, 2018

Text: Luke 7:1-10

Intro

1. A Centurion was a Roman non-commissioned officer (NCO) in charge of at least 100 men.
   1. They were known for their brutality against those they occupied.
   2. They acted as local law enforcement as well as soldiers in war-time.
2. There are six Centurions mentioned in the New Testament:
   1. *Lk. 7:1-10:* The Centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant *(Mt. 8:5-13*)
   2. *Mt 27:54:* The one who professed Jesus as the Son of God *(Mk. 15:39, 44-45; Lk. 23:47)*
   3. *Acts 10-11:* Cornelius of the Italian Cohort, the first Gentile convert.
   4. *Acts 22:25-26:* The centurion who reported that Paul was a Roman.
   5. *Acts 24:*23: Felix put Paul in the custody of a centurion, who gave Paul freedom.
   6. *Acts 27:* Julius of the Augustan Cohort, who took Paul to Rome *(Acts 27:1).*
3. All of them seem to be men of noble quality!
4. Lk. 7:1-10: One of the nameless Centurions from Capernaum stands out in particular:
   1. The Centurion sent emissaries to Jesus asking on his behalf to come and heal his servant.
   2. He asks for the healing of a servant he held in high regard, whom was at death’s door.
   3. *Mt. 8:6*: We see his servant was “paralyzed and fearfully tormented.”
5. In the case of this centurion we see him through the eyes of the Jews, himself, and the Lord!
6. **What The Jews Thought of Him (Lk. 7:3-5)**
7. Note: It was Jewish elders who went on behalf of the Centurion to Jesus.
   1. They quickly tell Jesus what they thought of the Centurion.
8. Based on common knowledge of the time, the Jews would have seen:
   1. An occupier, representing a hated, foreign power (Jewish Zealots, aka “Dagger Men,” were hostile to Romans & assassinated officers; would bring about Jewish revolt, 66 AD)
   2. Roman centurions were notorious for their brutality and roughness of character.
   3. This makes their estimation more unusual!
9. They approved of him (*Lk. 7:4-5*)
   1. “He is worthy” (They went on his behalf – Lk. 7:3)
      1. The Jews cared for this centurion!
      2. The Centurion cared for a slave, one he held in high regard (Lk. 7:2), at a time where slaves were expendable.
      3. This was an unusual display of compassion—most officials would not have shown such concern for a servant or slave!
   2. “Loves our nation” (Lk. 7:5)
      1. This man is characterized by Jewish elders as loving the nation of Israel!
   3. “Has built us a synagogue” (Lk. 7:5)
      1. He loved not only in word but also in deed (I Jn. 3:18), as they said he built them a synagogue *(Similar to Cornelius, Acts 10:1-2, 22).*
      2. *Lk. 10:29-37:* The Good Samaritan, an Enemy being a neighbor. This Centurion was like the Samaritan and was a neighbor to the Jews!
10. What would our neighbors (or even enemies) say about us?
    1. Phil. 2:15: We are to be lights in the world, and treat others how we want to be treated *(Mt. 7:12)*
    2. We are to be a good neighbor *(Lk. 10:30-37: Show mercy & be a neighbor).*
11. Would those around us consider us “worthy?”
12. **What He Thought of Himself (Lk. 7:1-3, 6-8)**
13. Each of us has a view of ourselves; it either matches what others around us think or is far off.
14. A Roman Centurion in command of a hundred men in a foreign land would have every reason to be arrogant and think highly of himself, for what they command is law.
    1. But we find a different attitude in this Centurion! (He sought out Jesus – Lk. 7:1-3)
15. “I am not worthy” (Lk. 7:6) – This is an humble sincere self-estimate
16. Through another group of friends, he tells Jesus what he thinks about himself.
17. Submits to Jesus: He calls Jesus “Lord” *(Kurios, G2962, Heb. equivalent to YHWH, H3068),* Supreme Lord, thus recognizing he is inferior to Jesus!
18. *Just opposite to what the Jewish elders told Jesus – He exhibits the attitude of humility.*
19. Possibly he alone of all those concerned knew just Who was about to come under his roof
20. He understood authority (Lk. 7:7-8)–Jesus just had to say the word & his slave would be healed!
    1. He knew that to be in authority, he had to be under authority.
    2. A centurion was subject to a commander, and the commander subject to a general, and the general subject to Caesar.
    3. In our modern-day military there is a chain of command. You don’t get to be a high-ranking officer if you don’t understand the chain of command and submit to authority.
    4. You cannot be given authority if you don’t submit to authority.
    5. A commander gives an order, and it is as good as done in that commander’s mind because of the chain of command; the established rule of authority.
    6. He knew all Jesus had to do was say the word and it would be done, same as an officer giving a command!
    7. II Tim. 2:3-4: Saints are to be “good soldiers of Christ” and submit to Jesus, the Commander-in-Chief, the Head of the church *(Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23; Col. 1:18)*
21. A thorough self-examination is profitable to us all!
22. II Cor. 13:5: “Examine yourselves.”
23. I Cor. 11:28: “Let a man examine himself.”
24. I Jn. 3:19-20: “If our hearts condemn us.”
25. Are we humble and submit to the authority of Jesus Christ?
26. **What Jesus Knew About Him (Lk. 7:9)**
27. The Lord Marveled! (Lk. 7:9)
28. Here Jesus is in awe at a man’s faith (This centurion impressed Jesus!)
29. The man wasn’t even a Jew, but a Roman, a hated “occupier and oppressor.”
30. Jesus marveled at his faith and said he hadn’t found such faith in all Israel.
31. If Israel will not acknowledge her King, the despised pagans will! (Mt. 8:10-12)
32. Only one other instance where it is recorded that Jesus “marveled”:
    1. Mk. 6:5-6: Here it was at unbelief, not belief.
33. This man’s “great faith” is an indictment against the Jews and even Jesus’ own disciples!
34. Jesus said His apostles had “little faith” (*Mt. 8:26*), and James warned disciples against having a “dead faith” (*Js. 2:17, 26*).
35. The Centurion with “so great a faith” was full of humility in that he considered himself unworthy to even see Jesus or have Him at his home – Jesus did as he asked (Lk. 7:10; Mt. 8:13)
36. What about your faith?
37. Would the Lord marvel at it?
38. Or would He marvel at the lack of it?

H. The Centurion was a man with so “great a faith” that it impressed Jesus!

**Conclusion**

1. Do we have the Lord’s approval?
2. Jesus told the Roman centurion He had yet to find greater faith in all Israel.
   1. Israel was supposed to be His nation, His people, and yet He found them lacking.
3. If Jesus were to walk in on us today *(I Pet. 2:9-10: His people),* would He find us lacking or people of “so great a faith”?
4. Be the kind of child of God with “so great a faith” to cause Jesus to marvel! *(Like Job or David)*
5. If not a Christian you need to be. No other name in which we can be saved (*Acts 4:12*).
6. If a Christian with sin prevailing in your life, repent of it and be renewed!