

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"Faith That Causes Jesus to Marvel"

For individual study or group discussion

Our study in Luke 7:1-10 today ends with a remarkable statement made by Jesus: "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith" (v. 9). The centurion's simple confidence in Jesus' word, free of superstitions and reliance on externals (Matthew 16:4), elicits a response of rare amazement from Jesus. The faith of the centurion causes Jesus to marvel! (v.9)

The introduction of today's passage begins with Jesus concluding the *Sermon on the Plain*. As he enters Capernaum, he is met with an unusual request from a local Roman soldier, a centurion, concerning his sick servant. What makes this appeal so unusual was the centurion's kindness toward his slave. Under Roman law, a master had the right to put to death any slave that became injured or too ill to work.¹ Given the centurion's background and his profession, it is surprising that this soldier would go to such great lengths to have his servant restored to health.

- How would you describe the character of the centurion in this story?
- Read Matthew 27:54; 28:11-15; Acts 27:43. How are Roman centurions portrayed elsewhere in Scripture?
- In 2 Kings 5, we read of Elisha's healing of Naaman, a foreign commander of the army of the King of Syria. What parallels do you see with today's passage?

As we contrast the attitude of the centurion with that of the Jewish elders (vv. 4-5), note the elders' entitled approach to Jesus was rooted in a sense of moral goodness and performance—the belief that one can merit God's divine power.

- On what basis did the Jewish elders ask Jesus to come and heal this man's servant? Read John 8:39; Luke 3:8-9. How do these passages relate to Jesus' words in verse 9?
- On what basis does Jesus heal the servant? (cf. Matthew 8:13) Is it because the centurion was "deserving"?
- Paul Tripp tweeted, "It's entitlement that fuels complaint. When you think you deserve what you don't deserve, you focus on needs unmet rather than grace given." When difficulties in your life arise, how do you respond?

On the other hand, the centurion approaches Jesus with humility (vv. 6b-8). His humble boldness and crushed confidence exhibits a type of humility that only comes from a faith whose object is Christ. His assurance that Jesus could heal his sick servant was not based on his own merits, but on Christ's (v. 3). In his commentary on Luke 7, theologian and pastor J.C. Ryle stated that "None ought to have been so believing as the children of those who were led through the wilderness, and brought into the promised land. But the last was first — and the first, last. The faith of a Roman soldier proved stronger than that of the Jews."²

- What did the centurion think about himself (Luke 7:6)? How is this consistent with our previous studies about *Kingdom Character* in Luke 6:31? (cf. Matthew 5:7)
- A situation similar to today's account occurred in John 4:46-53? On what basis did the royal official believe?

The upside down nature of the Kingdom of God is again made evident to us in Luke 7. Rather than placing our faith in political powers, social standings, or spectacular signs as the Pharisees did, may God's Spirit grant us a faith like that of the centurion whose object was Christ—the One who rewards all those who seek him (Hebrews 11:6).

DATE: March 20, 2022

SPEAKER: Brian/Frank

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 7:1-10

Family Dinner Table

from *Entitlement: When Grace Isn't Grace* by
Karrie Hahn:

"Since a sinful sense of entitlement is rooted in a prideful heart that sees grace no longer as grace but as one's due, setting out to dethrone an entitlement mentality is a daunting task. The sin of pride often feels like trick birthday candles—just when we think we've extinguished it, it flares up again. How, then, can we grow in the grace of humility and weaken entitlement's grip on our hearts?"

The glory and sweetness of Jesus Christ are apprehended not only in His work but in His person. And it's the beauty of His person that helps reorient our disordered desires. The almighty God of the universe—self-existent, eternal, all-powerful, and deserving of endless adoration and praise—was and is entitled to the universe and everything therein. Yet this eternally entitled One, 'though he was rich, yet for [our] sake he became poor, so that [we] by his poverty might become rich' (2 Cor. 8:9). He, though 'in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men' (Phil. 2:6-7).

Our Lord and Friend embodied in His earthly life the exact opposite of a sense of entitlement. He actually did deserve all that He had, yet freely chose to set it aside. We, on the other hand, do not deserve all that we have or wish we had, yet we strive after it as though we do. But our prideful, entitled hearts become more beautifully humble as we behold the beauty of our humble Savior (2 Cor. 3:18)."³

- As a family, talk about the importance of expressing gratitude. What is the basis for your gratitude? Start a gratitude journal.
- Look for ways you can love, help, and serve others around you and in your community.

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Church of the First Born

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Norma A., supported missionary

¹ Johnson, Harold Whetstone. *The Private Life of Romans*. Scott, Foreman and Company, 156.

² Ryle, J.C. *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels Vol II*. Banner of Truth, 1986.

³ Hahn, Karrie. *Entitlement: When Grace Isn't Grace*. TableTalk Magazine. Ligonier Ministries. December 2021