

ESF, Lord's day service message  
9/16/2018

**Great Faith**  
Luke 7:1-10

*When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. <sup>2</sup> There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. <sup>3</sup> The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. <sup>4</sup> When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, <sup>5</sup> because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." <sup>6</sup> So Jesus went with them.*

*He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. <sup>7</sup> That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>8</sup> For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."*

*<sup>9</sup> When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." <sup>10</sup> Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.*

Faith is the channel to connect us to God. Faith pleases God (Hebrews 11:6). Our faith moves God's heart. When God's heart is moved, He will pour His blessings upon us. God reveals great things through great faith. So, if we want to see great things in our lives, we need great faith. How can we have great faith? Today, through a Roman soldier's faith in this text, we will learn how to obtain great faith.

**Great faith is available to all people**

Here the centurion was a Roman soldier who had a high military rank. But in terms of **the** Jewish religion, he was a Gentile who the Jews despised. He did not belong to any prominent Jewish religious group such as Pharisees or Sadducees. He was not one of the disciples of Jesus. However, **he possessed** great faith.

If such a person could have great faith, we all can have great faith. You can have great faith too. In fact, no one is born with great faith. When we see the records of people who lived by great faith, many of them were born and lived as unbelievers before they came to have great faith. The father of faith, Abraham had lived without faith in God until he was 75 years old. He had been serving man-made idols.

There was also a woman who had great faith but had a very humble origin. Her name was Rahab. She was a prostitute in the city of Jericho at the time of Joshua in the Old Testament. She was not only living in a land where nobody knew God, but also living a very lowly life. But when she heard the news of what God had done through the people of Israel, she came to believe what she heard. **All** the people in her home land refused to believe what they heard about God, she believed and had great faith. By her great faith, she and her family were saved when her city was totally destroyed by God. And her name was written in the book of Joshua (Joshua 2:1-24) and also in the record of Jesus' genealogy in the book of Matthew as the mother of **a man** of faith Boaz (Matthew 1:5).

In the NT records, Jesus calls both the rich and the poor, both the educated and the uneducated, both men and women, both masters and slaves to make them people of great faith.

With these examples, the bible proves that regardless of man's condition or background, anybody can have great faith.

Even if you are poor, even if you are old, even if you are not much educated, even if you don't have a believing family background, even if you have a very shameful past, you can have great faith.

So even if there is nothing distinctive about you, you also can be a person of great faith like the centurion here. Include **yourself as a** person of great faith.

### **Loving people**

The great faith of the centurion came from his love for others. He cared so much for his servant that when the servant got sick, he tried to do everything he could to heal the servant. And he found that there was nothing he could do. At that time, he came to earnestly seek Jesus' help. His love for people led him to great faith.

The centurion's love transcends the gap between different social status-between a master and a servant. His love transcends the gap between different races -between Romans and the Jews. His love was testified by the Jews. When some Jews came to Jesus, they testified to his inter racial love by these words: This man deserves to have you do this *because he loves our nation* and has built our synagogue (verse 5).

When you love people, and they get sick or have problems, you desire to help them by any means possible. And when there is no way you can help the person, you cannot but turn your eyes unto God who alone can bring help to the needy person. So your love for others leads you to seek God. If you want to have great faith, turn your heart to loving people. Loving people brings you great faith in God.

That is an important truth Jesus wanted to teach His disciples. When Jesus came to Peter after He was risen from the dead, Jesus asked Peter: "Do you love me?" Then Jesus said to Peter: "Take care of my sheep" "Feed my sheep" Through **those** words, Jesus emphasized that

loving His flock is the best way to love Him. Jesus inscribed in Peter's heart that taking care of people with love is the most important part of any ministry.

When God wants to give you great faith, He brings you people first. He may bring you people who are poorer than you, who are lowlier than you, who are sick, and whose language, culture, race, religious tradition may be different from yours and you may feel uncomfortable with them.

He gives you **the** opportunity to love them and to take care of them. And when you love them and take care of them, He brings you great faith too. That is why it is a blessing to be a part of a church where we meet people whom we have to constantly take care of with love.

Here in our church where many different races are gathering together, we have a good opportunity to have great faith. Loving each other among people of different races **is** not easy. But when we gather together constantly and take care of each other in Christ, we exercise God's love which is "agape" love. Agape love transcends our nature, our feeling, and our favoritism. And while we are sharing agape love with each other, God gives us the gift of great faith.

So, if you want to have great faith, try to be active in taking care of others. Try to show your genuine interest in other people regardless of their racial, social, or economic status. Try to love others before they love you. And you also can have great faith through love.

### **Humility**

The centurion's great faith came out with his humility. He humbled himself when he approached Jesus. He understood who Jesus is and he also understood who he is. He knew he had worldly power but Jesus had heavenly power. He didn't think worthy to approach Jesus and ask Jesus to heal his servant. So, he asked Jewish officials to speak to Jesus and

make the request. When Jesus came near the Centurion's home, the Centurion told Jesus that he was not worthy to have Jesus enter his home. When we humble ourselves under God's authority, God gives us great faith. 1 Peter 5:6 says, "*Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*"

Also, he humbled himself before people. At that time the Romans ruled the Jews. He was a Roman military leader. He could have looked down on the Jews whose social status was inferior to him. He could have acted as if he was better than the Jews in every way. But he humbled himself before the Jews and respected them as God's chosen people. He tried to obtain faith from observing them. He tried to get help from their faith. The centurion did not think that he could do everything by himself. Especially in seeking spiritual things, he recognized that he needed other people's help. So when he needed the help of Jesus, he asked others to help him to gain Jesus' favor. And such a **humble** attitude produced his great faith.

God honors humble people but hates the proud (Proverbs 3:34). To make you humble and give you great faith, God tests you with people around you (2 Samuel 7:14). God tests you whether you look down on anyone according to **their** human condition or you respect all people's dignity without prejudice. God tests you whether you are willing to listen to advice of others or stubbornly persist in your **own** ways. God tests you **to see** whether you are willing to ask others **to help** you or hesitate to ask others for help. God tests you **to see** whether you reconcile and compromise with others whose ideas and attitude are different from yours and work with them as a team or you constantly get frustrated and upset by them and **are difficult** to work with others.

Look **at the** people around you today. Take every one of them **as God's** instrument to humble you. Thank God for giving you **the** opportunity to become humble. Respect everyone regardless **of their** human condition.

Be willing to take **the advice** of others. When you face troubles with others try to find **problems with** your **own** attitude. Ask God to give you **a humble** spirit. Find a way to reconcile to them and to positively compromise with them. And God will make you humble and give you great faith.

### **The authority of the word of the Lord**

Finally, the centurion's great faith came out of recognizing the authority of God's word. When Jesus was coming near his house to help him as he had prayed, he sent some people and said to Jesus through them: "*Lord, don't trouble yourself ....But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it (verses 68).*"

The centurion publically recognized the authority of Jesus' word. He believed that through the word, Jesus could exercise supernatural power. Jesus called such faith of the centurion great faith.

Great faith comes not from seeing miracles but from trusting the word of the Lord. One day when the people asked Jesus to show them miracles, Jesus did not show them any miracles. Instead of showing a miracle, He encouraged them to build up their faith upon His words. Jesus performed many miracles, but Jesus did not encourage people to put their faith in the miracles. Jesus wanted them to see the miracles not as the condition of faith but as the result of faith. Jesus told Thomas who believed the resurrection only by seeing the risen Lord with his physical eyes, "*Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*" (John 20:29).

Jesus encouraged people to put their faith upon God's word spoken and taught through Him. In fact, there were many people who seemed to have faith in Jesus while He was performing miracles. But when He

clearly told them not to follow **the** miracles but to follow His word, many of them left Him. John described the situation like this: *From that time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him* (John 6:66).

Then Jesus asked the twelve remaining disciples: “*You do not want to leave too, do you* (6:67)?” One of the disciples, Peter replied in representing all other remaining disciples: *Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God* (6:68). We can see here clearly that great faith comes from nothing but trusting in the word.

The centurion grounded his faith upon the authority of Jesus’ words. The word of God is the solid ground of our faith. When God called Abraham to live by faith, God did not show miracles to him. God gave him just His word (Genesis 12:1-3). Then Abraham began his journey of faith **by** just holding on to the word of God (Genesis 12:4). Whenever his faith became weak, God assured him of the promise in His words (Genesis 13:14-17; 15:1-6; 17:15-16). By the work God did in Abraham, God set a principle of faith. It is a faith that comes from recognizing the authority of His words.

Do you want to have great faith? Recognize the authority of the words of the Lord: “Lord, your words have authority to rule over everything in the universe. With your words you can calm all storms in my life. By your words you can breakthrough all my obstacles. Just speak your word to my dark heart **and** my heart will see the light. Just speak your word to my sickness and I will be healed. Just speak your word to my troubles **and** they will be under your control. ”