Sunday School Lesson
TOPIC: “The Centurion’s Great Faith”

Luke 7:1-10


Prepare

- Jesus and the centurion soldier are two lives from two different backgrounds. Yet, Jesus isn’t afraid to approach others in need regardless of where they come from or what they do. On a board, draw two columns. On one column put Jesus’ name, and on the other write the centurion soldier.

Examine these two main characters of today’s lesson by jotting down some similarities (both were compassionate, both commanded authority, etc.) and some differences between the two (culture, upbringing, faith, etc.). Really bring your students attention in on Jesus’ love He has for everyone (John 3:16), not just those that are like Him (of course, nobody could ever be just like Him) and how He was willing to go where this man needed Him the most and offer relief from the suffering his servant was experiencing.

Another idea would be to print out to cut-outs: one of Jesus and one of the centurion soldier, and place them on the board with a column line drawn between the two. On index cards or sticky notes, write different characteristics that can be found in one or both men. Holding up the index card, ask students who does this word most likely represent, and then tape or place that card or note with the proper character. If a characteristic is shown that can fit both, place that card on the line that was drawn in between the two.

- The story of the centurion soldier affords us the opportunity to really examine faith in action. Find a good faith-based object lesson as a lead-in for today’s lesson.

Explore – Full Lesson Available on pages 6-11

The man who built the local synagogue, a Roman centurion soldier by trade, would find out for himself, that Jesus is the healing sanctuary (as expressed in the previously written article found below) he needs to get into contact with in order for his servant to be healed.

When one’s faith is centered on Jesus, healing can take place. Not just physical healing, as we see here in this lesson. But emotional, spiritual, relational…, in every area of life that needs restoration, Jesus can heal.
“Most often, when one thinks of healing, the mind automatically seems to focus on physical healing from an ailment or disease. While that is true, there are other areas of life and of the person that needs healing as well. Any area where there is a deficit or lack, any area that experiences brokenness and is need of restoration is a place that needs the healing touch of the Lord in it.

I am moved by the many times I see Jesus’ real concern for what people are going through and dealing with when He reaches into their lives with His healing touch. From the time when sin and brokenness entered into this world, God has been in the healing and fixing business.

In Ezekiel 47, we see a future prophecy of a river flowing from the sanctuary that healed the places where it flowed (vs. 6-12). While that healing will come as a result of us stepping into eternal life to live with God forever, when I see those mental images of Jesus healing people throughout the stories represented in Scripture while still here on earth, that leads me to believe that what’s flowing from the sanctuary in our future is available to us now in our present circumstances or crisis.

Christ is the source of everything we need for our future and present healing, for both physical, and all the not so physical ailments we deal with (emotional, spiritual, etc.). “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:4-5).

In Matthew 11, Jesus invites us to “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (vs. 28-30).

For every burden, Jesus has become our sanctuary from where all our healing flows. He told the woman at the well, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:10, 14).
No matter what area of our lives need healing and restoration, Jesus Christ is our sanctuary from which all the answers for our brokenness flows.”
(©WordForLifeSays/”Jesus, My Healing Sanctuary!”)

Activities

- Great faith moved the believing centurion to seek Jesus in his time of need (Luke 7:1-10). If you are in a time of need, use the Adult Journal Page as a prayer lead-in for taking your requests to the Lord in faith. For the Kid’s Journal Page, students can place themselves in the Roman centurion’s shoes, and write a “Thank You” letter to Jesus for healing his servant.

- In the Draw the Scene section, students can draw picture of the servant being healed. On the “bandages,” students can write inspirational messages.

- Younger students can color and decorate their own Jesus Heals Bookmarker. Simply print out on cardstock or glue to construction paper one of the bookmarkers, and let students decorate any way they wish. Feel free to provide stickers from the local dollar store for an added touch of flair to their designs.

- Alternate activity sheets are available for those who just want to work with printed materials such as Memory Verse, Word Search, etc.

Review

- Commit to memory the base verse from the lesson: “When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” (Luke 7:9)

- Fill out the review sheet provided (page 12)

Life

The centurion’s great faith showed that he believed in Jesus and that He had the power to heal. Life can come at people hard, but the Roman centurion showed us what we can do with that hard stuff we are dealing with when he sought Jesus’ healing alone.
While the world may offer many solutions to heal or overcome hard situations, the Bible offers us many promises. For whatever you are facing, be it physical healing, dealing with problems, relationships, or the like – using a Bible concordance or online help, find at least seven Bible verses that will encourage you in these areas. Every time you are faced with uncertainty or when one of these situations plague you, run to Jesus as the centurion did, proclaim and pray the Bible verses you’ve found, and rest in His divine care.

“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” 1 Peter 5:7

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

Note: You can also use a Blank Journal Page to record and keep track of the verses you’ve found. Use the blank space at the top of the page to write something that is significant to you, such as, “I’m praying for...” or, “I’m claiming the promises of God for...”

The feet of faith walk forward believing God is, “and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,” (Hebrews 11:6). Faith in its highest form removes all worldly shackles and just rests in the truth that if it is His will, there is nothing that can hinder God from performing a miracle in one’s life. Ethnicity, background, and prestige all fall away in the eyes of our Savior whose only view is that of an opened heart filled with belief.

THE CENTURION SEEKS HELP FROM JESUS

Luke 7:1-3 “Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion’s servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.”

Before arriving at today’s lesson, Jesus taught a powerful sermon consisting of blessings and woes. He interjected these lessons with questions and spiritual insights including once asking “Can the blind lead the blind?” (Luke 6:39). He also pointed out “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good,” (Luke 6:45). Jesus ends chapter 6 inquiring “Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46), comparing the foundations of their spiritual lives.

After this teaching session, “when he ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.”

“Capernaum,” situated on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, was known for fishing and trade. More known to us today, it was the place considered to be home-base of operations or headquarters, if you will, of Jesus’ ministry. He is noted on several occasions as going to...
Capernaum (see Matthew 4:13; Luke 4:31; John 2:12, and so on). People also knew this was a place where He could probably be found and sought for Him there (see John 6:24).

Therefore, this small village of only approximately 1,500 people or so became etched in history as a place where Jesus walked and taught; a place where miracles were performed, and faith was noted as being great for one man.

The possessor of that “great faith” enters the scene when someone near to him falls to the afflictions of sickness and no other help will do outside of the intervention of Jesus. He is known as a “centurion,” meaning in charge of hundreds. He is a man who is a leader during the Roman occupation of the land. He has authority (of which will be discussed later). He has position. And though considered not one of the people, his faith, as Jesus will note, was exhibited to a greater degree than those of His own people.

The centurion’s position was prestigious; nonetheless, he had a compassionate side and cared for those under him. This may not be the normal picture of a Roman soldier that immediately comes to mind, but it was for this man. He had a “servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die,” (vs. 2). With the usage of the word “dear”, it points out his genuine concern and affection for this particular servant. Again, this is far from the idea of these soldiers we know of.

The point is, the individual of his concern was “sick, and ready to die.” When we read of the same account in Matthew it tells us he was, “sick of the palsy, grievously tormented,” (Matthew 8:6). From this description, we know that he suffered from pain and was paralyzed. Whatever brought on this disease it seemed to progress to the point of agony, causing the centurion to believe his servant’s life was in danger. He was, as he believed, “ready to die.”

Therefore, out of his concern he sought for the only remedy he could – Jesus. We are not sure exactly when or where he became aware of Jesus. Being stationed in Capernaum, Jesus’ home base of ministry, it was only a matter of time before he became exposed to His miracles and teachings. Either by way of others, or maybe even having the chance to witness it himself, he found out that Jesus heals and sought His help.

“When he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.” Many are familiar with the animosity that was present in that day between the Jewish people and their oppressors of the Roman Empire. History

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often shows that people are generally not favorable to those who invade their lands and take over.

Yet, this centurion seems to have secured a favorable relationship with the village and the leaders therein. So much so, he had no qualms about seeking their assistance in bringing to Jesus’ attention the plight of his sick servant.

Oh, the humility of character this man in charge exhibited. He was in a position to order (as later he demonstrates he can) and take charge, yet he simply seeks assistance. The Bible encourages us, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men,” (Romans 12:18). This includes people over you, people under you, and people all around you. There are many rewards of maintaining positive relationships and one can never tell who God has placed in one’s path to provide for much-needed help.

Luke 7:4-5 “And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.”

The “elders” have no reservations in talking with the centurion commander or with communicating to Jesus his need. Therefore, “they besought him instantly.” With great urgency “they came to Jesus” and presented the centurion’s case before Him. They noted, “he was worthy for whom he should do this.” The favor this man showed to the Jewish people earned him a good reputation among the villagers.

Standing as an advocate before Jesus, they speak well of his character, pointing out “for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.” There is much speculation on exactly what is being said here in regard to the centurion himself. Did he build the synagogue as a means to just keep the peace? Was this some sort of political tactic?

I could be wrong, but I disagree with this view. The elders made a point of using the word “loveth” in describing his relationship toward the “nation.” Could it be there was a genuine spark of wanting alive in him, for He, whom the Jewish people were serving? Living in such close proximity of the people, maybe he had an opportunity to review his life and compare what he previously knew, to those who were living as God’s people. Perhaps he wanted more and participated in the only way he knew how. Who knows? We can only imagine that in some way or form God was working on his heart.

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THE CENTURION’S FAITH COMMENDED BY JESUS

Luke 7:6-8 “Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.”

After hearing the story of the centurion and his servant, Jesus went with the men who had advocated the man’s plight. One of the things I love about Jesus is it doesn’t take much to move Him. People overcomplicate faith until it can’t be recognized. Jesus simply heard them out and with the compassionate heart, He has He was ready to move into action to help, yes, even this Gentile.

Coming near the house, the centurion makes a surprise move. Sending out friends he stops the progression of Jesus from coming into his house. He knows his position in life. He knows that he is not one of “these” people. He knows that he is “not worthy.”

One of his greatest characteristics he shows here is his humility. I see too many in our day brazen enough to approach God any kind of way as if it is owed to them. I cringe at it all. Pridefulness is against everything pertaining to God and something God will fight against (see James 4:6). Rather, “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word,” (Isaiah 66:2; emphasis mine). God pays attention to the humble.

As a man in authority, he doesn’t lift himself up demanding to be seen. He humbly and respectfully recognizes who he is, and he recognizes who Jesus is, and counts his own self “not worthy.” He didn’t take it upon himself to approach Jesus, therefore sending the elders previously and now his friends as well, holding Him off from entering “under my roof.” How are we approaching Jesus? Do we have hearts lifted up, feeling we deserve the privilege to be heard and blessed, or are we surrendered respectfully to Him, recognizing His holiness compared to our human weaknesses?

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This centurion not only possessed a special measure of humility, but he also possessed a faith that was uncommon. He said, “But say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.” Wow! He didn’t need Jesus to come to his house. In his faith, he didn’t need Jesus to touch his servant in a special way. But he understood what most in that day, and even today, fail to realize: all Jesus has to do is speak a word.

The word of Christ is powerful. Operating under the same authority as His Father, He could count it done whatever He speaks (Psalm 33:9). It will come to pass! He can literally speak healing into any situation, and it will obey His command and bring about deliverance (see Psalm 107:20). This centurion recognized His authority and the capacity to do the impossible even from a distance.

Explaining how he came to the conclusion of viewing Jesus and his situation, he said, “For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.” As a commander of the Roman army he knows what it is to take orders and obey the commands of one’s superiors. At the same time, he understands his own position well. At any given time, he can issue an order and expect nothing less than complete follow through. He had the right in his ranking to do so.

Viewing Jesus, he perceived His power operated to an even higher degree than his own. He knew that all Jesus had to do was speak, and healing would obey. Whatever sickness bound his servant would have to bend to the will the Savior and obey His orders. This is the same Jesus whom the winds and waves obeyed (see Matthew 8:27). This is the same one who made demons tremble and come out of people (see Mark 1:21-34). This same Jesus was a part of Creation (Colossians 1:16). And, this same Jesus is able to save those who come near to Him (Hebrews 7:25). He has opened the eyes of the blind, healed leprosy, unstopped deaf ears and raised the dead back to life. This centurion saw in Him the power to do what needed to be done to heal his servant, and he believed!

Luke 7:9-10 “When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.”

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Jesus was amazed at his response. He had not met anyone in Israel who had so recognized His authority and power as this man; someone whom willing gives himself over to total abandon to trust Jesus to heal and believe that He will.

Astounding! This was the true epitome of “great faith!”

When one’s faith is centered on Jesus, healing can take place. Not just physical healing, as we see here in this lesson. But emotional, spiritual, relational…, in every area of life that needs restoration, Jesus is able to heal. But it only comes about by faith. The Bible reminds us, and I quoted a portion of it earlier in the introduction, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,” (Hebrews 11:6). The centurion filled this faith criterion. Beyond a shadow of a doubt he knew that Jesus was able to do all that he had known of Him, and he sought Him with an open heart of belief.

Jesus spoke highly on his behalf, saying, “I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” If we were to put our spiritual thermometer in the waters of faith, how would we measure up? Would we be found on the “greater than” side of faith or on the “less than” side?

Faith is the access key to everything God wants to do through us and for us. Jesus once taught, “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive,” (Matthew 21:22; emphasis mine). One must believe as the centurion did that Jesus can do this for you, too.

One of my favorite portions of Scripture reminds me that our God is the good Father who knows how to give good gifts to His children, (see Matthew 7:9-11). Really, He is! Therefore, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:” (Matthew 7:7).

The miracles of Jesus were not just for the benefit of the receivers. Through the retelling of them, we are able to build ourselves up in our own faith and be encouraged by what we read. Verses like John 20:31 tell us, “These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name,” which is the ultimate end to having great faith – life eternal.
TOPIC:

“The Centurion’s Great Faith”

Luke 7:1-10

Please Answer the Review Questions Below

1. **T** or **F**. The lesson background occurs in the town of Capernaum. (Luke 7:1)

2. “A certain centurion’s ________, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.” (Luke 7:2)
   
   A. Son  
   B. Helper  
   C. Servant  
   D. None

3. Why were the “Elders of the Jews” willing to speak to Jesus on the centurion’s behalf? (Luke 7:3-5)

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4. What was it about the centurion’s faith Jesus commended? (Luke 7:7-8)

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5. “Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a ________, and my servant shall be healed.” (Luke 7:7)

   A. Word  
   B. Prayer  
   C. Miracle  
   D. None

6. **T** or **F**. The centurion’s faith was like others in Israel Jesus had seen. (Luke 7:9)

7. What are some ways that we can grow our own personal faith?

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