

The Faith Of The Centurion

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[0 : 00] Alljen Beb screwing The Sick■ Thank you.

Thank you.

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Thank you.

[2 : 55] Thank you.

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Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[5 : 44] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Anyone this is Brasilianners, Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. And some people said, well, this is wrong because he's given worthiness to Kim. He's given him some weight that he doesn't deserve because if the president of the United States meets with someone, no matter who the president is, it's a very unusual thing.

How many of you have ever met a president? Any president. So that tells you that, right? It's rare. It's unusual. It's not the kind of thing that happens very often.

[6 : 53] So just the very fact of them meeting gave Kim Jong-un or something like that weight. Made him somehow worthy.

And some people didn't like that because is he worth it? Is he worthy? This centurion sends word that his servant is in need of a miracle.

Let's talk about a centurion. A centurion, just by the nature of the word, should tell you a little something. He is a Roman soldier who commands 100 other soldiers.

Centurion. Commander of 100. And he's in this town called Capernaum where Jesus had made his headquarters and made his headquarters because it was strategic.

The town of Capernaum was right on the road from Damascus to Jerusalem and Egypt. So if you wanted to go from the north to the south, you had to go through this little village. There's only about 1,500 people.

[7 : 51] 1,500 people. And there's a centurion living in that town with 100 soldiers. Now I don't know about you, but if there's 100 armed men amongst 1,500 people, I think the person who controls them is a pretty powerful man, right?

He probably was a soldier in charge of this entire region. But he's powerful. He's someone you want to cultivate a good relationship with.

And so the Jewish leaders, the ones who led the synagogue, came to Jesus and said, this man is worthy. He is worthy of having a miracle happen.

The word worthy in this particular case is weight. He has weight. He's a heavy hitter, if you will. I don't think that had anything to do with this kind of weight.

And he loves the Jewish nation. And he's helped build the synagogue. So he deserves for you to take care of him, Jesus.

[8 : 59] Before I came here, I was a pastor in a little village called Wyoming, New York. Anybody ever been to Wyoming? It makes Capernaum look big. Wyoming had about 500 or 600 people. Everybody knew everybody.

And everybody's business, by the way, too. And in our church, we were the poor church in town. There was no question about it. The poor people came to our church.

Probably about 40% of our people were on social services. And about 40% more were living below the poverty line. If you made \$20,000 a year in that congregation, you were considered in the upper class.

And we had a couple in that church, Elizabeth and Matt McDonald. And everybody in the church said, you really need to go visit them, pastor, because they're rich.

Now, all they really meant is they're like us. They didn't mean they're rich, rich. They just mean they had some money, any kind of money. They were wonderful people.

[10 : 01] They were well-respected in the community. They were what the people of that town would have called worthy people. So how do we do that?

How do we define who's worthy? In the second verse of this passage, it says that the centurion considered his servant worthy, precious, of value.

And then the elders say that the centurion is worthy. He has weight. And later on in verse 6, the centurion actually says, I'm not worthy. I'm not sufficient.

I'm not good enough. And when I heard that phrase, who is worthy? I remember this passage from Revelation. I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, who is worthy?

Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll? But no one, no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it.

[10 : 59] And I wept. And I wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. See, the difficulty with looking at miracles is that none of us are really worthy.

None of us are really deserving. Even though they said the centurion was deserving, was worthy, who deserves Jesus' healing? Which one of us has a right to make a claim on God?

Which one of us is good enough to demand grace from God? When the Bible says we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And yet we have people that say that we should expect a miracle.

We should assume a miracle. We should claim a miracle from God. We should tell God, it's 9.30 in the morning.

Get down here and do your job and make a miracle happen. Do we have a claim on God? On His healing, on His miracles, on His presence, on His power?

[12 : 14] On even His grace? So people look for a magic formula. Some way that they can figure it out so that we can be certain that God has to give us a miracle.

Did you ask? They asked. Did you have faith? This man has faith. Are you worthy? But no one is worthy.

Sometimes in life, we find out that no matter who we are, what we've done, what we've become, how much we've created of our lives, we have no control.

We have no control. The centurion could command a hundred soldiers, but he couldn't heal his servant. The elders could tell all the people in the religious community what to do, but they couldn't make this man well again.

Sometimes we face a mountain, a mountain we can't get over. Watching little Elvis.

[13 : 24] This time, Lord, you gave me a mountain, a mountain that I could never climb. Sometimes it feels like we are up against it and there's nothing we can do.

About 32 years ago, my sister-in-law, at the age of 36, died. She was in Florida.

We were in Wyoming, New York. I was a pastor of the Wyoming United Methodist Church. I made \$150 a week. Even in that day, that wasn't a lot of money.

And there was no way we could get to Florida. There was no way we could do it. We knew we had to go. But when you can't do it, you can't do it.

So we turned it over to God and we prayed. It's fascinating. These powerful people who are in a position of authority, when they could find no other way, they went and begged Jesus.

[14 : 33] To do what he does. Sometimes we don't receive because we don't ask. In verse 6, it says, Jesus went with them because they asked him to go.

And we don't ask because it's hard. We don't want to be in debt to anybody. We don't want anyone to have a claim on us, including God. I had a man from our church the other day talking to me about this.

And he said that his health has gotten bad. And he's at a place where to just get through life, he has to ask people to help him. And he doesn't want to do it because he's always been able to do it himself.

Have you ever been in a place where you can't do it and you have to ask somebody else? I've been there. I'm a self-reliant person. Generally, I can make my life go. But I've got to tell you, I've found myself at times like this time where I just couldn't do it.

And so you ask. Not because it's easy, but because it's necessary. James is the brother of Jesus. He wrote a book of the Bible that's really, it's small, but it's packed full of stuff.

[15 : 48] And he says, what causes fights and quarrels among you? That's a good question, isn't it? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire, but you don't have. So you kill, you covet, but you cannot get what you want.

So you quarrel and you fight. And you don't have because you do not ask God. And when you ask, you don't receive because you ask with the wrong motives that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

You don't receive because you don't ask. Last week, we went with the confirmation class to the Basilica in Lackawanna. Has anybody ever been to the Basilica in Lackawanna? It's worth going.

It's an amazing building, a glorious building. And I was talking to one of the people that went with me. And, you know, the question is, how did these people in Lackawanna, a poor community, possibly build this incredible facility?

And I found out how they did it. They didn't. They didn't. Father Baker, who was about this big, got an idea. And he sent a letter to all the postmasters in the United States.

[16 : 59] And he asked for the names and addresses of Irish widows. And he sent them all a letter and asked them for a buddy. And they sent it.

And they sent it. Just because he asked. Sometimes we don't receive because we don't ask. Because asking is a sign of humility.

Absolutely asking is a sign that the one that you're asking is greater than you are. And that's what God wants us to do is to turn to him and ask. In John, Jesus says, whatever you ask for in my name.

Whatever you ask for for my purpose, for what God wants, I will give to you. Do we ask? Last Thursday, I was in our Niagara Falls Thursday night church.

It's an interesting community. It's a new church. Most of the people have only come there for a short time. Most of them come from various different backgrounds.

[18 : 04] It's a poor congregation. And we had a good worship service. And we enjoyed the time together. And I noticed that there was a couple there that I hadn't seen before. After service, they came up to talk to me.

And I found out that they were from Key West. And I said, what are you doing up here? Seriously, if you're from Key West, you should be at Key West. And they said that they had something to do with installing 5G networks.

That they had something to do with the work on the towers. And they were traveling from town to town to work on these towers. And they were heading that night to Syracuse.

And then they asked me, do you have any gas around here? Because we don't have enough gas to get to Syracuse. And my first thought was, is there gas in the garage?

And then I realized, probably not. And I reached for my wallet. Do we ask?

[19 : 07] When we find ourselves in a situation where we're struggling and we know we can't get past it, do we ask? The centurion asked. The elders asked. The friends asked. The sick man never asked.

He never asked. We don't have any mention of him. But other people asked for him. And I think that's an essential piece of this story. Because the story is not about the man being healed.

We don't even know him. We never meet him. We don't hear from him. We don't have any understanding of him. It's about turning loose the miracle powers of God. The centurion wanted to help his servant.

The elders wanted to help the centurion. And the friends wanted to help their friend. Love in action. People reaching into someone else's brokenness.

Someone else's struggle. Someone else's problem. And helping them overcome the mountains in their lives. We had no idea how we were going to get to Florida.

[20 : 13] And we went to church that Sunday morning. And Elizabeth McDowell came up to us and handed us \$500 and said, This is for expenses. I know you'll need it. And we were at such a point that we couldn't even say, You know how you do?

No, no, no, no. All we could say was, Thank you. Thank you for getting us over a mountain. We had no idea how we were going to do.

Thank you. Was Elizabeth rich? No. They were just regular people that had a job and saved up a few dollars. But they were open to changing the world they lived in.

Changing our world. See, one of the difficulties is we sometimes confuse who Jesus really is. We want to say that our symbol of faith is the empty tomb and the victory of Jesus.

But the symbol of our faith is the cross. The symbol of death. That passage in Revelations chapter 5 goes on to say these words.

[21 : 30] I saw a lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. And then they sang a new song, saying, You are worthy.

You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe, language, and people, and nation.

You are worthy. Jesus is worthy. Not because Jesus is powerful, even though he is, but because Jesus was willing. Willing to become less, so that we could become more.

Willing to die, so that we could live. Jesus isn't supposed to go to the centurion's house. A Jewish person isn't supposed to go to a Gentile's house in that day.

And a rabbi would never go to a Gentile's house. And the last place they would go is to a centurion's house. You know what centurions did to become centurions?

[22 : 40] They killed people. This man is a hired killer. There is no way he could become the leader of a hundred Roman soldiers if he had not killed multiple people.

Probably some Jewish people. He was a killer. And Jesus knew that. In fact, Jesus probably even knew who this guy was. And Jesus knew what centurions were.

After all, Jesus is going to hang on the cross. And who's the one who threw a spear through his side? But a centurion. And Jesus is going to his house anyway.

Anyway. Anyway. Love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you. None of us are worthy.

None of us have a right to the miracle power of God. None of us have a claim on God. And yet God loves us anyway. No matter how broken we are. No matter what we've done.

[23 : 45] No matter where we've lived. No matter how we've gone through our lives. God loves us anyway. Just as he loved the centurion. Who isn't worthy.

Even though the people said so. Actually, he sent a message to Jesus. While Jesus was on the way. And he said. Don't come. Because I'm not.

Worthy. I have a right to have you in my house. Is that what we'd say to God? When we're in the midst of a struggle. We can't go through it.

We'd say. God. I'm not worth coming to you. God. I don't have a right to anything that you can do. God. There are no miracles that I deserve.

I'm not worthy. The centurion is powerful. He's wealthy. The elders respect him. So does his friends.

[24 : 43] But he's not worthy of Jesus. What are we worthy of? What do we deserve? The only thing we deserve. The wages of sin. Our death. And not just death in this world.

But death for eternity. We deserve hell. That's what we're worthy of. But Jesus loves us. Anyways. And then we come to this great verse 9.

It says. When Jesus heard this. He was amazed at him. And turning to the crowd following him. He said. I tell you. I haven't found such faith. Such great faith.

Even in Israel. Is Jesus amazed at your faith? Do you have amazing faith?

We sing about amazing grace. Right? What God does for us. We sing about amazing love. What God does for us. I cannot find a song about amazing grace. I mean amazing faith. I can't find one.

[25 : 41] There's no songs that say. What an amazing faith we have. God said. God said. God said. This man had an amazing faith. A faith that believed that God had the authority to do miracles.

And to step into the brokenness. And to change things. And to change things. Even. That were unchangeable. Do we have that kind of faith? Do we really trust?

Do we really believe in the miracles of God? Do we really believe that God can do what he says he will do? What God has done? I've seen the miracles. I believe in the miracles. I know the power of God.

I've seen what God can do. Do you believe in those miracles? Do you believe in the power of God? Do you believe that God can change things? Because he can. He doesn't always. But he can.

The story isn't about the man that was healed. It's about unleashing the power of God. This man wasn't just healed. Did you know what it said?

[26 : 42] He was made well. How many of you want to be well? I want to be well. And I'm not really worried about the sickness or the physical problems.

I just want to be well. I'd love for it to be well. In our world. In our church. In our community. In my life. To be well. He was made well. And why?

Because others asked. Because others had the faith. Because others stepped into his brokenness. Because other people were willing to do what was necessary to turn loose.

To unleash. The power of God. It says in verse 9. A lot of people were listening. It says in verse 1.

I mean a lot of people were following Jesus. But it says in verse 1. A few were listening. A lot of people say they're following God. But are we listening to what he says? A number of years ago.

[27 : 41] I talked about the platinum rule. You remember the golden rule. Who could say the golden rule? Come on. Do unto. Gosh.

I was thinking. You know. Come on. That's easy. Low hanging fruit. Easy one. Right? The platinum rule is different. Did you know that? This is what Jesus says is the new command.

A new command. I give you. Love one another. As I have loved you. So you must love one another. That's more powerful. Some people don't even love themselves.

So loving their neighbor isn't going to look very pretty. Right? We've met those folks. Haven't we? Some people. Their idea of loving themselves. Is really only about making themselves happy.

Jesus' idea of loving. Is to give of himself in every way. In every way. To become less. That we can become more. When we ask.

[28 : 45] When we trust. When we have faith. For others. For others. Then we turn loose. The real power.

Of God. McDonald's stepped into our brokenness. They change things for us. Thursday night.

I had a couple. Who needed some gas money. To get to Syracuse. So I took out my wallet. And I thumbed through. For a 20.

Should be enough. To get them to Syracuse. And I gave them the 20. And we set our pleasantries. And I sent them out of the way. And you know what I was feeling. You all know what I was feeling. Every one of us.

When we do that. What do we feel? Oh. Really? Did they really? Oh. Did I step into someone's brokenness. And help them? Or. Oh. Did I just get.

[29 : 42] Oh. Right? Let me tell you a little something. About the Thursday night congregation. I told you they're poor. Some of them have other churches.

So they have a little jar. That they use for their offerings. It's about this big. You can't see in it. Typically there's about. Somewhere between 7 and 15 dollars in there. So normally at the end of the night.

One of us just reaches in there. And we go find somebody else. And we count up the 7 to 15 dollars. So I went over to the jar. And I reached in Thursday night. And this is what I found.

2. 3. 20. 4. 20. 5. 26. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16.

17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. All. 20s.

[30 : 42] You don't think I didn't get a message from God? You want to give away 20s? I can give you all the 20s in the world. Why? Why? Why would you be worried about a 20?

It means nothing to me. I've got 20s to give to you that you can't even imagine. By the way, it's the same amount. Anybody notice that?

That years ago Elizabeth gave to me. Fascinating, isn't it?

When we stop trusting in the miracle powers of God, all we live in is brokenness. But when we start remembering that the one who is worthy, the one who has the power, the one who has the ability is Jesus.

And we start living in humility, asking Jesus, trusting in Jesus, and doing for others as Jesus would do for us. Then we break out the power that can break that seal they talk about in Revelations and open up the miracle power.

[31 : 51] To pour out into our lives, into our world, into our churches, and transform everything. Why believe in miracles?

I can't get away from them! Because God is worthy. And we can live in that worthiness now.

In all of our lives. So some people might be wondering, do I think this is mine? It's not mine. I'm going to turn it in to the church.

It's the church's money. I know that. I get that, okay? I understand. God didn't give it to me. But I brought it because you need to hear the story. When God does something amazing and incredible in your life, you need to hear the story.

When Pastor Sherry is struck by the Holy Spirit, we need to hear the story. Amen? When people experience these amazing things and start sharing them with one another, then we will realize God's miracle power is still alive and working in our world.

[32 : 56] And the people of this world, this community, will stop quarreling and arguing and come together in the grace and the love of God. Go out and practice the platinum rule.

Love one another as Christ loved you. It's amazing. Grace for your amazing faith. Go in His peace. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.