



5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. 7 And Jesus saith unto him, **I will come and heal him.** 8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. 9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, **Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.** 11 **And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.** 12 **But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.** 13 **And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.** And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour. (Matt 8:5-13)

This miracle of our Lord follows immediately after the cleansing of the leper as presented in the preceding verses of this same chapter in the gospel of St. Matthew. You may recall from the miracle of the Cleansing of the Leper that Jesus touched the filthy and unhealthy head of the man afflicted with leprosy and healed him – an act that no other living man would have dared to do. That event compliments, so well, the act of the healing of the Centurion's servant. *"In what away,"* you may ask? Allow me to attempt an explanation.

The complete conveyance and organization of the Holy Bible is awe-inspiring. Every Word, every verse, every paragraph, and every book is a miracle of the Author's Wisdom and Logic. No human literary work could ever approach the perfection of the Holy bible whether those competing works were of truth or of fiction. When we studied the miracle of Jesus' cleansing of the leper, we may have thought wistfully, *"If only He would physically touch me, I might be blessed and made whole."* In case that was a great concern of your soul, the Lord has immediately provided a loving answer to that sentiment here in this miracle of the healing of the Centurion's servant. Jesus did not even go to where the servant was, but sent His Word of healing the distance to where

the servant lay, and healed him. That same voice that even penetrated the stone walls of the tomb of Lazarus, entered into the Dark and Forbidding Kingdom of Death, and called Lazarus forth, can penetrate distance and time with the ease of the morning mist passing through the timbers of the forest. Though you may not have received a physical touch of Jesus, it is not the physical, but the spiritual, that heals, forgives, and restores. And this we can have at any point, by faith, for the asking. A Roman Centurion, two thousand years ago, understood this well. Do you, my friend?

“And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching Him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.” Now comes to Jesus a Gentile in the profession of arms, and one of some authority, being a Centurion. Being a Captain of War, this man was accustomed to respect and a proud countenance. But the heart of this Centurion betrays a loving and loyal heart beneath a perhaps warlike appearance. This Centurion is willing to subdue his pride and forego his standing to come begging before Christ – not for himself even – but for his servant. This suggests a noble and compassionate soul whose character seems at contrast to his profession and Calling. Jesus did not distinguish between races and social standings among men. We might profit from a more personal consideration of this Centurion.

THE CENTURION:

He was a captain of soldiers. I have personally known a great many military captains who demonstrated strength of faith under desperate circumstances that would dwarf that of most in the active ministry today. These are not soft-bellied cowards, but men of courage. If that courage is based on faith, then these Centurions symbolize the best in the national character of a country. This is not to say that all ministers are of a different mold, for a truly Godly minister today must possess at least the same measure of courage of a battlefield Centurion. But that kind of Centurion-Clergyman must never retreat from the front line of battle, nor ever fail to stand on the Gospel truth regardless the present danger or enemy threat. He will not speak easy words to the people, or compromise with the world concerning the Gospel of Christ.

He was, first of all, a Gentile who had accepted the God of Israel. This would have brought great danger upon his safety and well-being had the Roman authorities been privy to his faith.

Uncharacteristic of a Roman Centurion, this man demonstrated a rare humility in calling upon the Lord. His compassion is represented by his love and concern for his servant, and he exercised an astonishing faith in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ – astonishing for anyone, but especially for a Gentile Roman Centurion.

*“And Jesus saith unto him, **I will come and heal him.**”* There were many demands put on Jesus’ time, but He always found time to respond to a need. Without hesitation, Christ immediately responded that he would go to where the servant was and heal him, and even started on the way. The compassion always evidenced by Christ was not a wavering and hesitant compassion, but always immediate.

“The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth.” This is one of the greatest statements of faith in all of the Holy Bible! The Centurion

realizes that the authority and power of Christ is knows no geographic limitations. He does not limit the power of Christ to heal by the physical presence of the Lord. If Christ will only speak the word, the Centurion knows that will suffice.

“When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” It is a smear on the reputation of the church that many greater acts of faith occur outside its walls than INSIDE those stone walls. The Centurion, who lacked the advantage of any prior in-depth knowledge of the law and prophets, demonstrated greater faith than those who did have that advantage. The simple folk of the bush country and savannahs of Kenya practice a far greater faith than is found in the fancy and compromising churches of America today. These people must depend upon the grace of God for their next morsel of food. Where materialism reigns large, God is often forgotten.

“And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” Christ here bears out an important truth. The accident of birth is not a bar to enjoyment of the blessings of Israel. Men and women shall come from the four corners of the earth and shall enjoy the privileges of a Godly heritage. This was spoken to the comfort of the Centurion as well as for our own. We, too, are citizens of the Promise of Israel through Abraham.

“And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.” It was no small miracle to heal a man who may have been miles away by a simple utterance – but Christ did so. The servant, miles away, was instantly healed. This exemplifies the principle that we ought to pray for those we love. The Centurion was not afraid to ask Christ for so great a favor. The story reminds me of a King of Lydia who surrender to the great King Cyrus, when besieged, to save his city from certain destruction. When King Cyrus asked the deposed king what favor he would like in return for his surrender, the king responded, “Ten thousand talents of silver!” A courtier of King Cyrus rebuked the deposed king for being so presumptuous in asking such a large gift, but King Cyrus scolded his courtier and said, “If I am as great a King as this fellow’s request suggests, then he has had the boldness to express his high regard for my greatness by asking a gift commiserate to it!” Is anything too great for God?