

Luke 7:1-10. the Believing Centurion.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

The sermon highlights the character of the centurion, who demonstrated great faith, compassion, and love for the people of God, and encourages listeners to trust in Jesus' power and ability to deliver us.

Scripture: Matthew 8:10-11, Luke 7:9, Hebrews 11:6, James 2:5

Topics: "Great Faith", "Kingdom Of Heaven"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about the commendable character of the centurion approved by Jesus, despite being a soldier, a man of rank, and a Gentile. The centurion's compassion, love for God's people, humility, and remarkable faith are highlighted, showing his deep belief in Jesus' power to heal. Jesus praises the centurion's great faith, declaring that many from distant lands will enter the kingdom of heaven while some who heard His teachings but did not follow will be cast out.

Transcript

How interesting every character must be whom the Savior approved! He, who will be the Judge of each of us, has shown us beforehand what sort of people he approves. This centurion was highly commended by the heart-searching Redeemer. Yet we should not have expected to find pity in a centurion. For, in the first place, he was a soldier, and a warlike life is a great hindrance to the soul. In the second place, he was a man of rank--and rank, we know, is a temptation to be proud. He was placed over a hundred soldiers, who were themselves men of some consideration; so that this centurion was perhaps equal in importance to a general in our armies. Thirdly, he was a Gentile, and therefore a heathen by birth. He had been sent by the Romans, who had conquered the Jews, to reside in Canaan. There he must have heard the Old Testament, and become acquainted with the true God, and believed the promise of a Savior. The report of our Lord's miracles had reached him, and had convinced him that Jesus was the Son of God. Thus, though a soldier, a man of rank, and a Gentile, he was a true believer.

Now let us examine the character of him who was commended so highly by the Lord.

Observe his compassion. He was deeply interested in his poor servant's illness, for this servant was dear unto him. True religion binds the hearts of masters and servants together, and makes them brethren, beloved in the Lord. (See Epistle to Philemon, ver. 16.)

Observe also his love to the people of God. He loved the Jews, because they were the peculiar people of God; and he did not love them in word only, but in deed and in truth, for he had built them a synagogue.

Thus he had shown his love by his liberal actions.

Observe also his humility. Far from being puffed up with a conceit of his own merit, in having built a synagogue, he thought himself unworthy to come to the Savior, or to receive him beneath his roof. Matthew in his Gospel says the centurion came to Jesus; but, it is common to say people do things themselves when they cause others to do them. Luke gives a longer account of the circumstance, and mentions that some elders of the Jews were sent by the centurion. His respectful conduct was the more remarkable, because Jesus was poor and despised, but in the eyes of this honorable soldier, the lowly Nazarene was greater than the greatest of the sons of men. Being a Gentile, he thought he was less acceptable to Christ than the Jews, who were descended from the beloved Abraham, the friend of God. But in this he was mistaken, for Christ is no respecter of persons, and ever loved the children of Abraham in spirit above his children in the flesh. This Gentile resembled the Father of the Faithful, and was his son in spirit.

Lastly, let us consider his faith. It was in faith that he resembled Abraham. He had such faith, that he believed that if Jesus did but speak the word, all creatures must obey, even as his own soldiers and servants obeyed him. He thought that Christ's power was equal to that of God, who said, "Let there be light, and there was light." Nor was he mistaken; for all things were created by Jesus Christ, and are upheld by the word of his power. This faith was exceedingly pleasing to the Savior. Jesus loves faith. He plants it in the heart as the root of every other grace. Behold how he rewarded the centurion's faith! he healed his servant.

What peace we would enjoy, if in all our difficulties we felt that Jesus was able to deliver us! When our dear friends are sick, let us believe that He need only speak the word, and they would be well. Whatever anxiety presses on our hearts, let us bring it all to him, spread it before him, and trust him to do what will be best for us. If we act thus, we shall experience such mercies as will overwhelm us with gratitude.

Jesus declared that he had never met with such great faith in Israel, as he had found in this Gentile. He then took occasion to declare a very delightful and a very dreadful truth. It is recorded by Matthew, (8:11, 12,) "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing."

By the "children of the kingdom," Jesus meant the Jews. They heard the sayings of Christ, and did them not; but many in distant lands would hear them and do them.

In our days the gospel has been preached in the North and South, the East and West; and already some in every part have believed. Esquimaux, known among his nation as "the man the Savior took to himself," shall he not come from the north to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Africanus, once a ferocious chief, afterwards the missionary's faithful friend, shall he not come from the south? Abdool, the proud Mohammedan, grown as humble as a little child, shall he not come from the East? and though poor and despised like her Lord, shall not Sarah, the Indian widow--the patient, the forgiving Sarah, come from the West to join the blessed company of patriarchs and prophets? God grant that none of us may be thrust with unbelieving Jews into outer darkness.

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