

The Character of Jesus 18
Healing the Centurion's Servant
Matthew 8:5 – 13, Luke 7:1 - 10

- Characteristic: Seeking faithful spirits
 - Concerning the parallel accounts:
 - Matthew: the centurion appears to ask personally. Luke: Jewish representatives were sent by the centurion. So, Luke is more exact. Matthew attributed to the centurion the message he sent by Jewish emissaries.
 - A large crowd (after the Sermon on the Mount) was following and observed this scene.
 - (Luke 7:3 – 8) Jesus recognized true faith: humble, selfless, and demonstrating understanding.
 - Jewish people in general were taught to be arrogant, especially towards Gentiles.
 - Jewish people in general were taught that the works of the Law yielded personal benefits, rather than national benefits.
 - As demonstrated by the several ways that Jesus defeated the positions of the scribes and Pharisees with very straightforward logic, the Jewish system had become largely irrational.
 - (Luke 7:9) Jesus was seeking faith, as indicated by “found.”
 - As previously announced by Jesus, His stated goal was to reach the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 10:5 – 6, 15:24).
 - But, many of these lost sheep had no interest in God. More accurately, Jesus sought those with fledgling faith that could be developed.
 - Jesus’ purpose was not centered on delivering “the truth,” although what He said was true. Jesus was not focused on baptism, although His disciples were baptizing (John 3:22 – 23, 4:1 – 2). Rather, He emphasized consistency, rational thinking, and evidence.
 - (Luke 7:9) Jesus marveled
 - Jesus could not read thoughts all the time.
 - Jesus did not know the future.
 - Jesus was not hesitant to comment on remarkable faith.
- Applications:
 - In general, what are the characteristics of those identified by churches as having faith?
 - Are church-goers more arrogant or more humble?
 - Do church-goers identify more with “going to heaven” or with helping others?
 - Are doctrines simple or complex?
 - Whom do we seek? What types of lost people do we target most?
 - Do we appeal with consistency, logic, and evidence, or do we feed the self-centered?
 - Do we teach obedience or consistency?
 - Do we express our appreciation of remarkable faith?
 - Do we remark on surprisingly simple conclusions?
 - What makes fledgling faith remarkable?