

On the Way to the Cross – Say the Word

Luke 7:1-5 "...Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, "for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue."

Jesus had intended to go to the centurion's house, and in fact, Luke tells us that He was already not far from the house (**Luke 7:6**). **The centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof.** Now, this might seem like a minor point, but it isn't! The centurion had already expressed a clear recognition of the Saviour's superior **authority**; and we can see this just in the way he approached Him. He came; not called. He addressed Him as "Lord". He pleaded, not demanded. And he simply stated the facts, and left it to the Lord to choose what to do. That's how he confessed Jesus' superiority over himself. But there is another side of the coin. The centurion now recognises his own inferiority before Jesus!

I believe that this centurion was coming to terms with who Jesus really was, so he acknowledged the fact that he was an "unworthy" sinner who did not deserve to be in the presence of the Son of God. When I think of the centurion's words, I think of the time that Peter came to realise who Jesus truly was.

Jesus had commanded Peter to launch his fishing boat into the deep waters and let his net down for a catch. Peter did; and as a result, he brought in a great catch of fish. He came to realise that this Teacher he had been listening to was the Son of God; and that He even had authority over fish! Peter fell down at Jesus' knees and said, "*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!*" (**Luke 5:8**). I'm sure that this centurion felt unworthy of Jesus in the same way. After all, that was why he sent others to speak to Jesus on his behalf. Because, as he said, "... *I did not even think myself worthy to come to You*" (**Luke 7:7**).

Humility was an important part of the centurion's faith. But there's one more aspect of it that, I believe, caught the Lord's attention the most. In fact, the Bible tells us that Jesus "marveled" at the man's faith. We see this in the fact that the man's faith in Jesus was... A faith that trusted in the power of His spoken word! The centurion felt unworthy of having Jesus come to his house to heal the servant. But he had such a faith in the **authority** of Jesus that he didn't see that as a problem. He said to Him, "*But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go', and he goes; and to another, 'Come', and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.*"

This centurion is a Roman officer. He knows how authority works. He says that he himself is a man under authority; and he himself is an authority over others. He himself, apparently, didn't even come to Jesus, but delegated the "coming" to others; and those others did exactly what he said. As one in command, he simply spoke a word, and what he said was done (obeyed).

As a soldier, he knew that all military authority ultimately rested in the emperor; and that the centurion's own authority was derived from the emperor's authority. When he gave a command, people obeyed him; because to not do so would be the same as refusing to obey the emperor! But he also dared to recognise that Jesus is One who possessed an authority greater than even the emperor! Here was a Man who clearly had authority over diseases, and illnesses, and leprosy, and even over demons. Here was a man who was vested with supreme power and authority over all things. Jesus would later testify to the truth of this: *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth"* (**Matthew 28:18**). He said that, *"All should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent Him"* (**John 5:23**).

And so, this centurion recognised that as a subordinate authority, his own mere command got results. And how much more, then, would this be true of Jesus - who possessed ultimate and supreme authority! If all the centurion had to do was simply speak the word and it was done; how much more can Jesus simply speak a word and heal his servant! This was, in the end, an expression of the centurion's deep conviction that Jesus possessed all authority as the Son of God!

I wonder? When you or I pray and ask something of Jesus, do we really believe that all He has to do is **"say the word"** and it is done?

Remember, the Lord Himself declared... ***"I have not found such great faith - even in Israel."***