

Adult Sunday School Lesson

Nassau Bay Baptist Church

February 21, 2021

Read Luke 7:1-10

Hear we read of Jesus' encounter with a man we know only as "a certain centurion" who was stationed in or about Capernaum who loved Israel and had built a synagogue for the Jews. This centurion, an officer in the Roman army, had a servant who became ill unto death, so he asked Jewish elders to ask Jesus to come heal the servant.

So Jesus went.

Faith and Authority—Or Is It Authority and Faith

The centurion sent friends to tell Jesus the following:

1. I am not worthy that you should enter my house.
2. I am not even worthy to come to you.
3. You only must say a word, and my servant will be healed.
4. I know this because, like you, I am a man under authority.
5. And I command and things are done as I command.

Jesus' Response

"I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel."

Connect Authority and Faith

Understanding authority is the foundation of faith.

The centurion said, "For I also am a man placed under authority . . ."

Jesus did not refute him, and in so doing, acknowledged that He was a man placed under authority, too. As a man, Jesus submitted to the authority of the Father. (John 5:19)

The centurion recognized that his authority was not his own. Rather, it was the authority that made him a centurion that flowed through him because of his position.

Jesus essentially acknowledged the same. His authority over disease, demons, etc. flowed from the Father through Him because of the position in which the Father had placed Him.

Just as the centurion could order His men, Jesus could order disease and demons and even nature.

Jesus did not marvel at the centurion's intelligence. He marveled at his faith. And from a distance, the authority of the Father flowed through Jesus, who healed his servant.

Another Definition of Faith

Faith is the result of the accurate understanding of authority in the world and in my life.

What is the connection between faith in God and the fear of God?

When I have an accurate understanding of authority in the world and in my life (faith), I understand what Jesus meant, when he said, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28) And I can feel the angst the friends of Ananias and Sapphira felt. "So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things."

Why did the centurion consider himself unworthy to go to Jesus or to have Jesus under his roof?

The centurion was unworthy to enter before the king or the emperor or to have them in his home. That is the way true authority works. We honor the position and the authority that is implicit in the position, and the worth of the person is directly connected to the position the person holds. America does not honor position and authority in this way. (Note the treatment of American presidents.)

Why do people of faith regard authority and position?

Because faith is the accurate understanding of authority. People of faith do not regard the person, but rather regard the position, recognizing that all authority has been given to Jesus, both in Heaven and on Earth. (Matthew 28:18)

Read Luke 7:18-30

John the Baptist, from prison, sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus two questions:

1. Are You the Coming One?
2. Or do we look for another?

Jesus told them to tell John "that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them." These examples pointed John to Isaiah 35 and 61.

Then Jesus turned to the people and referenced Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1 in the process of telling them that "no greater prophet than John the Baptist" had been born. At that, even the tax collectors glorified God as they had received John's baptism of repentance.

But, in verse 30, we find out that the Pharisees and scribes/lawyers "rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him."

Why Ask Jesus the Two Questions?

Much ink has been used to guess why John the Baptist would ask Jesus these two questions, especially since John had called Him "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Multiple theories have emerged, many psychological.

I do not think it is that tough. In John's day, especially among groups living out in the wilderness, but also among Jewish scholars, there were interpretations of the Old Testament that pointed to two

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different Messiahs. The first one would suffer for his people, and another Messiah would reign victorious.

Both pictures are painted in the Old Testament, with the Messiah who is called the Suffering Servant, particularly in Isaiah, and the glorious military king who would right all wrongs. (See Jeremiah 23:5; Isaiah 9:6; 11:1-10; Daniel 7:13-14; and Psalm 72)

I believe that John the Baptist simply was asking Jesus, "Are there two Messiahs, or will you be both the Suffering Servant and the King of All Kings?"

Jesus responded by pointing to Isaiah 35 and 61, both of which foretell the blossoming of Israel, the joy of her people, and the glorious future in holiness and peace.

Jesus is the one and only Messiah, the one and only Anointed One, the Suffering Servant and the King of Kings both in one man, in one God. He came first as the Suffering Servant and will return as the King of Kings!