



SERIES: Walking with Jesus

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Friday, December 15, 2023

Scripture: Matthew 8:5–13, Hebrews 11:1,6

TITLE: Faith Defined

Being in the presence of a prominent person can be a bit intimidating. If you met a celebrity, you might find yourself wrestling with how to leave a good impression, hoping that this individual would remember you out of all the millions of fans that he or she has. Often, we end up settling with a compliment, asking for a picture or autograph and we hope that's enough. It's usually not enough. They will forget you. But God is greater than any celebrity and has more followers than any celebrity and He not only remembers them all but knows them personally. And one thing that really gets God's attention is our faith in Him. Look at this story in Matthew 8.

“When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, ‘Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.’ And he said to him, ‘I will come and heal him.’ But the centurion replied, ‘Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, “Go,” and he goes, and to another, “Come,” and he comes, and to my servant, “Do this,” and he does it.’ When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, ‘Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ And to the centurion Jesus said, ‘Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.’ And the servant was healed at that very moment.” Matthew 8:5–13 (ESV):

During His three years of public ministry in the land of Israel, Jesus always remembered the people who showed great faith in God. Nothing gets God's attention like faith does. The Scripture says this is the only thing that pleases God, our faith in Him.

Now we need to be clear on what faith is. There are some who ignore the biblical definition of faith. Some think faith is the equivalent of saying the right words to get what you want from God. Jesus does not commend the Centurion for saying the right magical formula of faith. No. It's faith alone that He commends.

Others misunderstand faith as being a strong, positive emotion. And if they manage this emotion well, they get what they want from God. Other think faith is trying to convince themselves, prove to themselves that they believe, that they have enough conviction and that that will get them what they want. None of these ideas equal biblical faith.

Often times, people will defend this wrong thinking about faith by quoting Hebrews 11:1 which says, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” And they think, see the Bible teaches that faith is what you use to get things from God. Well, all they have to do is to keep reading in Hebrews, especially up to verse 6, which says, “And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” Now that’s the key! Faith is not what we use to get from God, but faith is our confidence in God! It’s our trust in God!

That’s exactly what stood out about the Roman Centurion. He had so much confidence in Jesus’s ability to heal his sick servant, that he told Christ, don’t worry about coming to my house. I know you can heal him. You can do it with just a word. That got the Lord’s attention. That was great faith, because great faith is nothing but strong confidence in God. Jesus marveled that a Gentile had understood this.

So, friends, if you really want to get the attention of our Lord, don’t put your faith in your ability to have faith, but instead, put your confidence in God. Amen.