

Jesus: A Friend to Those with Faith
Series: Luke
November 5, 2017 **Pastor Bill Bump**

In Luke 7 and 8, we find a series of interactions that show Jesus as a compassionate friend to people in different situations and spiritual conditions.

Today, in Luke 7, we see a Roman centurion who became a friend of Jesus because he chose to believe in Him.

The centurion:

Luke 7:1-3 ¹ When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people, he returned to Capernaum. ² At that time the highly valued slave of a Roman officer was sick and near death. ³ When the officer heard about Jesus, he sent some respected Jewish elders to ask him to come and heal his slave.

This man was a man of power, influence, and wealth.

He was also a man of compassion and empathy, as shown by his concern for his slave.

The elders of the Jews:

*Luke 7:4-6a ⁴ So they earnestly begged Jesus to help the man. "If anyone deserves your help, he does," they said, ⁵ "for he loves the Jewish people and even built a synagogue for us."
⁶ So Jesus went with them.*

The centurion was highly respected in the Jewish community because of his kindness. This is unusual because Roman soldiers were despised by the Jews.

The centurion's friends:

Luke 7:6b-8 ⁶ But just before they arrived at the house, the officer sent some friends to say, "Lord, don't trouble yourself by coming to my home, for I am not worthy of such an honor. ⁷ I am not even worthy to come and meet you. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'Go,' and they go, or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this,' they do it."

The centurion was a very humble man.

But, the characteristic that impressed Jesus the most was that he was a believing man.

Definition of faith: faith is a willingness to bet your very life on the promises and character of Jesus.

Jesus' response:

Luke 7:9-10 ⁹When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to the crowd that was following him, he said, "I tell you, I haven't seen faith like this in all Israel!" ¹⁰And when the officer's friends returned to his house, they found the slave completely healed.

Jesus helped because the centurion had such great faith.

It is the only time in the Bible that we are told Jesus was amazed—in a positive way—by someone's faith.

Hebrews 11:6 *And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.*

James 2:23 *And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." He was even called the friend of God.*

A friend of Jesus is one who—like Abraham or this centurion—says, "I believe that Your Word is true and I will act accordingly."

Relevant lessons about faith:

1. Faith is believing what you cannot see or prove.

Hebrews 11:1 *Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.*

2. Faith requires a personal choice.

Two primary reasons people choose not to believe:

A. Intellectual pride

B. Moral rebellion

3. Faith is increased by action.

We can increase our faith by acting on the faith we have.

James 2:26 Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.

Conclusion

Faith is a willingness to bet your very life on the promises and character of Jesus.

When we have faith, what a great friend we have in Jesus.

We need to be like this centurion in Luke 7.