

## Don't Focus on What You Deserve – Focus on Whom You Believe

- **Vs. 1-2.** Spoiler alert: J heals servant; don't worry; going make it. So really, today's gospel not so much re this sick servant; it's re what it means to have faith in Jesus, kind of faith we see in cent.
- **Cents:** Roman army captains; commanded 100 soldiers under them. As Romans, respected by countrymen; but as Gentiles, hated by Jews. But here in Cap, this cent is diff: Jews love him; they: **vs. 5** – prob used own money to build syn. And, proselyte – means converted to Judaism; believer in Lord, not false gods of Rome. So: he's believer, builds synagogue, worships there, respected by locals. But most imp: believes in Jesus. **Vs. 3.** Believed J was Son God; had heard re J's miracles & healings elsewhere; and so when hears J is nearby, turns to J for help.
- Now, here's where story takes interesting turn. Listen what those Jewish elders say re cent: **vs. 4-5.** "Deserves this. J, he deserves have you heal his servant. Good man; you owe it to him. Deserves." Just think re that. Are they right? Certainly good guy, generous, religious, respected; kind of guy you'd like get know. But does he deserve this from J? Did J owe him something? **Vs. 4b.** Correct?
- Today as consider faith of this Roman cent, it's very imp for us as believers to learn: not to focus on what we deserve (think) – bec, Scriptural fact of matter: we don't deserve anything good from God. We may sometimes think we're good people; may be generous, religious, respectable, upstanding citizens, kind people you'd like to get to know. But bec of our sins & inherited sinful nature, deserve nothing good from God; in fact, deserve only punishment. Now, very counter to way world thinks. World evaluates people based on good they do – which to certain extent is logical, right? A good person deserves good things, while person who gets in trouble a lot deserves punshmt they have coming – makes sense, doesn't it? But when you evaluate humanity not way society does but way Scripture does, you realize: God's law levels us all. We're all guilty, all sinful – which isn't just trite saying; it means in God's courtroom, there are no "good people." **Rom 3:23, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."** God doesn't owe us a thing. So we can't look around at others or ourselves, say: we're good people; God owes us; we deserve good from God (how Jews felt re cent). Likewise, can't say: all those bad people out there, those sinners, they deserve God's anger (bec then we ignore sinner inside).
- So, today this Scripture teaches us: don't focus on what you deserve (think) – bec if God actually gave us what we really deserved, we'd be in world of hurt. Just look at cross; look at bleeding, suffering, dying Savior hanging on cross for you, and you'll *see* what you deserve. *That's* what you deserve! What *I* deserve – bec in darkness of our hearts we're not "good people;" we're sinners who need Savior. And so our loving, sinless Savior J, who alone deserves all glory/praise, took punshmt, death, hell we deserve (he certainly didn't deserve it!); and he endured it for us, to save us!
- So don't focus on what deserve; instead, focus on whom believe. Focus on J! Cent focused on J. Listen to message he sends to J: **vs. 6cd-7a.** Notice diff! Jews: **vs. 4b.** Cent: don't deserve have you come under my roof; don't consider myself worthy. What humble attitude! Didn't focus on what he deserved; focused on whom he believed. Focused on J.
- Even said: **vs. 7b.** J, you don't even have trouble self to come into my house, bec I know you're Son God; and I know all you have do just say the word – and your word so powerful that whatever you say is done. That's faith of this cent! **Vs. 8.** IOW, I respect authority, and I respect the verb com. This cent has 100 soldiers under him; when he gives verb com, they obey! At same time, has generals over him; when they give com, he obeys! So he respects authority, respects verb com. And undrstnds that when Jesus (to whom all authority in heaven, earth given) gives verb com, that com is obeyed!
- I wonder: do we understand that? Realize power, authority of J's word? When calmed storm, discs: even wind/waves obey. When drove out evil spirits: they forced obey. When created world, said let be light: light. When coms his angels conc us guard us in all ways: they obey. When com-ed Laz come out tomb: death released grip on Laz, he walked out alive. So when J speaks, his word obeyed!

His word has authority over everything in this universe: orbits of planets, forces of nature, history of nations, health of our bodies, even over death itself – everything submits to authority of J’s word. And cent believed that. So when his servant was ill, he focused on whom he believed. And J: vs. 9c.

- Now, if we want have great faith (I think we do; want be like this cent, have great faith), have realize: great faith doesn’t focus on self, or what thinks deserves. Great faith focuses on a great Savior. Great faith clings to, believes in, focuses on: our great Savior, Jesus. Great faith believes J’ powerful word.
  - Surely with you, end of age (Mt 28:20) – I believe!
  - Take heart, son; sins forgiven (Mt 9:2) – I believe!
  - Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you (Jn 14:27) – I believe!
  - Whatever you ask in my name, Father will give you (Jn 15:16) – I believe!
  - In Father’s house, many rooms; I’m going there prepare place for you (Jn 14:2-3) – I believe!
  - Everyone who looks to Son and believes in him shall have eternal live; I raise them up at last day (Jn 6:40) – I believe!
- Great faith focuses on great Savior, believes what he says. When your doubts arise in heart; when your guilt haunts you; when troubles come into your life; when someone close to you gets sick (like cent’s servant); no matter what happens to you in life – trust authority of J’s powerful words, and focus on whom you believe.
- I know I already spoiled ending for you: servant gets healed. Vs. 10. But for as miraculous as healing was, it’s really not focus of this lesson. In today’s gospel, J teaching us not to focus on what we deserve, bec surely we deserve nothing good from God. But rather, focus on whom you believe. Focus on J; focus on what he’s done for you on cross and in empty tomb; focus on gracious promises he speaks to you; and believe what he says. Don’t focus on what deserve; focus on whom believe – bec when you do that, that’s evidence of great faith.

### **Luke 7:1-10**

<sup>1</sup> When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. <sup>2</sup> There a centurion’s servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. <sup>3</sup> The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. <sup>4</sup> When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, “This man deserves to have you do this, <sup>5</sup> because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue.” <sup>6</sup> So Jesus went with them.

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: “Lord, don’t trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. <sup>7</sup> That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>8</sup> For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

<sup>9</sup> When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, “I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.” <sup>10</sup> Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.