

The Healing Of The
Centurion's Servant

Luke 7:1-10

MEMORY VERSE

JAMES 4:10

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A military style hat, jacket or sunglasses.

As many 8.5"x11" blank papers as the number of children in your class, pens, pencils and crayons.

Two pieces of butcher paper and a marker.

A cape or piece of fabric that can be used as a cape.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

"Sergeant Says"

This is a military form of "Simon Says." Explain to your class that you will give them commands beginning with the words "Sergeant Says." They must obey these commands to stay in the game. If you give a command without first saying "Sergeant Says" all students that follow the command need to sit down.

If you have one available to you, wear some kind of military style hat, jacket or even sunglasses. Give your commands in military fashion, for example, "Attention! Salute! March in place! At ease!" etc. Give one or two other children a chance to be the "sergeant."

LESSON TIME!

Have you ever met a soldier, perhaps someone in the army or navy? Maybe you've read about soldiers or seen them in a movie or parade. What does a soldier do?

Our scripture today is about a soldier. He lived during the time of Jesus here on earth. This soldier or Centurion as he is called, was a rather unique man. He was actually a leader over other soldiers. He was different than the people around him. He was not a Jewish man, but was a Gentile (that's anyone who is not Jewish). He did not act like many of the people around him. Let's find out more about him.

LUKE 7:1-2

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.

Jesus had been teaching the multitudes from Judea, Jerusalem, Tyre and Sidon and was now entering Capernaum. In that town lived a Roman Centurion. The word "centurion" is related to the word "century" which means 100. This man probably had at least 100 other soldiers under his command.

We learn about two people in verse two, the soldier and his servant. The Bible says that the servant was "dear to him." That was not very common. In those days, a slave was considered a piece of property; but this soldier considered his slave precious and dear to him.

The word used here for slave actually means, "slave child." The slave was probably very young. He had become very, very sick and he was on the brink of death.

What was the centurion to do? His precious slave was dying and even though he was a powerful soldier, he was powerless to help when it really counted. He could have fought all the wars of the world, marched in all the big parades, mastered all the weapons known to man, and had power to rule an entire kingdom, but he had no power over death. Only **Jesus has absolute authority**.

LUKE 7:3

So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant.

What had he heard about Jesus? What had he seen in Jesus' life that made him certain Jesus could make the difference? We will see in a few verses what it was in Jesus that gave this soldier complete confidence in Him.

First the centurion sent some Jewish leaders to beg Jesus to come and heal his servant. It was a simple message asking Jesus to "come and heal his servant." It was his prayer, simple, honest, and direct. This soldier had a great need, and he saw in Jesus an answer. Even though he had never met Jesus, he asked Jesus to come and get involved in his situation. This centurion shows us that anyone can bring their needs to Jesus.

The Invitation

Have the children make an invitation to Jesus to come and get involved with the circumstances of their lives. They can be made on an 8.5"x11" piece of paper folded twice.

The invitation should read something like this:

To: Jesus,

You are cordially invited to be Lord
of the circumstances of my life.

When: Immediately

Where: Through out my life

Please RSVP:

Allow the children to draw a picture or decorate their invitation
with markers or crayons.

Explain to the children that the Lord desires to take care of all of
the burdens of their lives. He is willing and able to handle any
problem we have because **Jesus has absolute authority.**

LUKE 7:4-5

**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."**

These Jewish religious leaders had a high opinion of this centurion.
They came and begged Jesus to help the soldier's slave because, in
their opinion, the soldier was worthy of Jesus' help. They
considered this soldier a worthy man, because he was caring, loyal,
kind and thoughtful. He was a generous man. He had built a
synagogue for these Jewish men and he loved their nation even
though it was foreign to him. He respected the Jews and they
respected him in return. They went to Jesus on his behalf.

In our study today we will see three opinions given about this centurion. We have just seen the first one, the opinion of his friends, the Jewish leaders. They had a lot of respect for him. As we continue we will see two other opinions. We will see his opinion of himself and then Jesus' opinion. Let's continue...

LUKE 7:6-7

Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, 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.

"Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed."

Jesus went with the Jewish elders who had come on behalf of the soldier. Before Jesus reached the house, the centurion's friends came with a message from him. Here we have another opinion of the soldier, what he thought of himself. He said, "I am not worthy." The Jews said he was worthy, but he himself said that he was not. He was saying that he wasn't even sufficient to entertain Jesus in his house; that he wasn't good enough to even come to Jesus himself to ask for help.

There was something very different and very important about this man. Even though the world thought highly of him, he knew that Jesus was different than the world. He saw something in Jesus that set Him apart. The centurion was humbled by who Jesus was and did not even think he was worthy of Jesus' time. What was it he saw in Jesus?

We catch a glimpse of it when the centurion said, "But say the word, and my servant will be healed." Something he saw in Jesus made him trust completely in the power of Jesus to heal. He

understood a very important thing about Jesus. It was something that he understood because he was a soldier. What was it? Let's find it in verse 8.

LUKE 7:8

"For I also am a man placed under authority, having 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."

He understood authority. What is authority? It is having the power and the right to rule, to make decisions, to have the control over how things are done.

We give up our liberty and our own way and give our obedience to someone who is in authority. They become our superiors, higher than we are. We recognize them as having the right to lead us. This centurion recognized that **Jesus has absolute authority**. As a soldier, he understood what an authority structure or ladder looked like and how it worked. He understood that everyone is under authority.

As a soldier, he was on an authority ladder. The Roman Emperor was at the top of the ladder of soldiers. The centurion was somewhere in the middle, and he had other soldiers under him. He ruled over them. He said to his soldiers, "go" or "come" and they obeyed him because they knew he had the place of authority. They gave him their obedience and gave up their own way. This soldier showed an understanding of the big authority ladder. He knew his place on the ladder as well as Jesus' place.

Jesus is at the top. **Jesus has absolute authority**. He is the One who rules, has all power, and deserves our complete obedience. He says "come" and "go" and everything in the whole universe must obey Him. He is over everything, the Superior to everything and everyone. The centurion realized this by watching Jesus. Jesus

behaved like a servant, lovingly caring and tending to the needs of others, but His miraculous power to intervene in a supernatural way proved that **Jesus has absolute authority**.

We also are under authority. Of course the greatest authority in our lives is Jesus. We need to do whatever He says to do. How do we know what He wants us to do? We need to read His word, the Bible. He has given us the Bible so that we can learn how He wants us to live.

We are also under the authority of our parents, grandparents, and teachers. We need to respect and obey them because this is right in the sight of the Lord.

The Ladder of Authority

Take a piece of butcher paper and draw a ladder. Ask the children to describe various “rungs” of authority on a ladder. Explain that you are going to write the most powerful person on the top and then those under his authority on each rung underneath. Write Jesus at the top and then those under His authority underneath, (i.e.: Jesus, Daddy, Mommy, Child, etc.).

Take the picture with Jesus at the top and turn it upside down. Rewrite all the names on the ladder so they are legible from this angle.

Explain to the class that Jesus' authority is different than the world's. His authority is proven in servanthood. Doing things according to His plan will always esteem others as better than self. The Christian life is a life of service. In the Kingdom of God to be at the top, you need to be at the bottom!

The centurion saw the authority that Jesus possessed and knew that he was unworthy of entertaining Him no matter what his friends thought. He did not come to Jesus because he thought he

had earned a miracle. He came because he saw that **Jesus has absolute authority**. This centurion believed that Jesus had the power to command things to change. He had great faith in Jesus because he knew that **Jesus has absolute authority**.

He trusted Jesus completely because he knew that only someone with absolute authority could do what Jesus did. All power and majesty belong to Jesus. He is the King of all kings. No one is higher than Jesus. The centurion relied on Jesus to help him in a hopeless situation. He knew Jesus was worthy of his faith. As a soldier, he understood the authority ladder and he knew Jesus was at the top. **Jesus has absolute authority**.

The centurion knew that Jesus wouldn't even have to come; He just had to say the word and His authority would be obeyed. This wise soldier did a simple thing; he asked Jesus to come and be involved in his situation.

Jesus wants all of us to do just that; invite Him into the situations of our lives, to do what He desires from His perfect vantage point as the supreme authority. We simply ask Him to be the absolute authority in our lives. There is no one we can trust like Jesus; no one we can rely upon like Him. When we give up our own way, give Him our obedience and invite Him into all the circumstances of our lives, He makes all the difference because **Jesus has absolute authority**. That kind of simple faith pleases Him because it recognizes Him for who He is.

LUKE 7:9

When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"

In this verse we see the third opinion; what Jesus thought of the centurion. He was blessed by the centurion's simple faith. So many around Jesus didn't believe and Jesus marveled at this man's faith.

Why does faith like that make Jesus marvel? Because He knows we are sinful and we choose our own inadequate and sinful ways when we don't give Him our obedience. We look at our lives and problems and try to fix them ourselves. We try to find all our own solutions. But faith in Jesus takes us out of the realm of our own poor, insufficient, inadequate resources and it invites Jesus in. Faith tells Jesus that we can't do anything ourselves. It admits that we need Him. It recognizes that **Jesus has absolute authority**. It trusts Him to make a difference in our lives and our situations.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to make Jesus marvel? Complete faith in Him and His absolute authority makes Him marvel. It pleases Him because it's the only right attitude to have in life.

Captain Marvel

Bring a cape or piece of fabric that can be used as a cape and explain to the children that you are going to be "Captain Marvel."

Ask the children to tell you some things they have done in the last week to please Jesus. As they describe their accomplishments, marvel at what they have done.

Explain to the class that any good thing coming out of our lives is a miracle of God. He is the author and finisher of every good thing, even the good that comes from us.

LUKE 7:10

And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick.

It was not that the centurion deserved Jesus' miracle that made the servant well. The centurion knew that. He knew he was not worthy to even have Jesus under his roof. He knew nothing in his house was worthy of Jesus. He understood the place Jesus was to be given because **Jesus has absolute authority**. But at the same time Jesus loved this man very much and He responded to the centurion's faith by healing his servant; Jesus even has authority over death.

Jesus didn't need to go into the house or say a word because **Jesus has absolute authority**. Jesus changed the soldier's situation. He did what no man-made solution could ever do. Jesus is all-powerful. He reigns over all things and all people and all circumstances. By faith in Him, we invite Him into our circumstances and say, "not my way, Jesus, but Your way!" We need to recognize that we are helpless and hopeless without Him. We need to go to Him first because **Jesus has absolute authority**.

Anyone can come to Jesus because Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "Whosoever" is referring to anyone who wants to come to Him, including you and me. We can say with the centurion that we recognize **Jesus has absolute authority**. We can simply ask Jesus to do His work and will in our lives. We can invite Him to be involved with our circumstances and rule over us. Jesus is the only one worthy of such faith.

Today and everyday we can be like the centurion. We can simply trust Jesus in everything. **Jesus has absolute authority**.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of submission to the authority of the Lord. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.