

The Centurion's Confidence in Christ's Authority

by James Jennings

This sermon focuses on the story of the centurion's faith in Christ's authority and control, highlighting the importance of having confidence in Jesus' power to heal and save. The centurion's unwavering faith in Christ's ability to command healing with just a word serves as a model for believers to trust in God's sovereignty and dominion over all things. The sermon emphasizes the need to approach Christ with humility, acknowledging His supreme authority and submitting to His rule in our lives.

Scripture: Luke 7:1, Matthew 8:5, Matthew 28:18, John 17:2, Luke 19:27, Romans 13:1, Ephesians 1:21, Philippians 2:10, Hebrews 11:1, Romans 10:17

Topics: "Faith in Authority", "Humility before Christ"

Description

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Transcript

Go ahead and turn in your Bibles to Luke 7. And I do indeed hope and pray as that psalm just said that I can, by the power of God, show you Christ. We're going to read Luke 7, verses 1-10. And there's a parallel account in Matthew 8. So when we get to verse 10, I'm going to interject three verses from that account.

But Luke 7. Luke 7. After Jesus had finished all His sayings in the hearing of the people, both Matthew and Luke, they chronologically put this account after the sermon, what is known as the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus entered Capernaum. That is the city next to where the Sermon on the Mount took place.

Verse 2, Now, a centurion had a servant. And then Luke says, this servant was sick and at the point of death. In Matthew's account, the centurion relays that the man is paralyzed at home and suffering terribly.

Then Luke says this man was highly valued by the centurion. Verse 3, When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews asking Jesus to come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they, the elders of the Jews, pleaded with Jesus earnestly, saying, the centurion is worthy to

have you do this for him because he loves our nation.

And he's the one who built us our synagogue. And Jesus went with them when he was not far from the house. The centurion sent friends saying to him, Lord, that's Master, One in Control, Lord, do not trouble Yourself because I'm not worthy to have You come under my roof.

So it seems here he asked Him to come. And now he's had a change of mind apparently. Don't come actually in the house.

I'm not worthy to have You come under my roof. Therefore, in view of my unworthiness, I didn't presume to come to You. That's why I sent the elders of the Jews.

But say the word, but say the word, and let my servant be healed. Verse 8, For, this is why he believed Christ could just say the word, for I too am a man set under authority with soldiers under me. And I say to one soldier, go, and he goes.

And to another, come, and he comes. And to my servant, do this, and he does it. When Jesus heard these things.

Don't trouble Yourself. I'm not worthy. Just say the word.

This topic of authority. When Jesus heard these things, Jesus marveled at him. He was surprised.

He wondered. He was astonished. This shows Christ's humanity.

It seems to have caught him off guard. And turning to the crowd that followed him, he said, I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. And then I'll just read Matthew 8, 11.

I tell you, many will come from the east and the west. That's the non-Jews, and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. While the sons of the Kingdom, the Jews, will be thrown into the outer darkness.

In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then Matthew's account records, and to the centurion, Jesus said, Go. Go.

Let it be done for you as you have believed. When you say go to people who are under your authority, Christ views this man under his authority right there. He says go.

And the servant was healed at that very moment. And then Luke 7, 10, and when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well. That's what we're going to look at.

I want to consider from this passage the centurion's confidence in Christ's authority. And I hope by considering this, something we already know, it will absolutely stir you up to believe God for greater things. Let's pray.

Father, Lord, I am unworthy to have this fearful honor and privilege to stand in the pulpit and to preach Your Word. Lord, I want to show the brethren Christ, but Lord, I can't do that in and of myself. Lord, whatever has been made real to me in the study, Lord, it could all be dead and flat in this hour.

And so, Lord, I pray, I pray that You would quicken me, quicken my brothers' and sisters' hearts. Lord, I pray You'd even raise the dead in this hour. That people who've never seen Christ for who He is would

see Him for who He is and would go and submit right under Him on this very day.

Lord, that they would believe on You. And so, Lord, I ask for Your help. Lord, that I would speak with the strength that You supply in order that You would get honor and praise.

Lord, to God be the glory. In Jesus' name, Amen. So in this passage, we saw the Lord Jesus Christ marvel at the great faith He found in this Roman captain.

This Roman captain who was convinced that Christ had authority and control by which with a word His servant could be healed. The centurion had great confidence in Christ's power, His full control over sickness and time and space to command a man near death to be healed without Jesus even being physically present. And the truth is, that's where we're at.

Right? In our lives. Christ is not physically here with us. Well, He wasn't with that centurion in His house.

But what matters is the Lord can say and it will be done. Just say the Word. Now part of Christ's astonishment goes hand-in-hand with the unbelief of the Jews.

I believe. Jesus' own physical people who have such a history of truth, and yet the same faith is not found in them. Rather, you find a very works-saturated mindset.

And so, as we look at this this morning, you want to be like one and not the other. And as we look at this this morning, you want to ask yourself, as Christ said, I've not found, what does Jesus presently find inside of my own soul and what I believe? Does He find faith? Does He find that I am full of a confidence in God as this centurion had right here? So I'm wanting to focus on this passage by focusing on Christ's authority. Christ's authority.

The centurion, I believe in many ways, is just an example given to us of a man who had great faith, who had great confidence in the sovereign authority of Christ. Christ was not finding others who had this same confidence. He says this, I've not found this in all of Israel.

A man like this. So the centurion believed Christ had control. And this is very applicable in our prayers.

Very, very applicable. As I mentioned, this passage in Matthew and in Luke, it goes chronologically right after the Sermon on the Mount. Even in Matthew 7-1 after He had finished all of these sayings.

And in Matthew 7, Luke does not record this, but in Matthew 7, let me just read 7.29. Right after the Sermon on the Mount, what was some of the people, their response was when Jesus had finished these sayings, that's the sayings Luke refers to, the crowds were amazed, astonished at Jesus' teaching. For He was teaching them as one who had authority and not as described. Christ taught them as one who had authority.

The scribes didn't have that. And this centurion, he saw the authority and the control of the Lord Jesus Christ. He called Him Lord.

And in knowing who Christ is, and knowing Christ's control, that's how he had great faith. It wasn't so much that there's some faith within himself as it is the object of his faith. The Lord Jesus Christ, He knew who Jesus was to some extent.

And that's what encouraged him to believe. He could ask what He asked. So first, I want to look at what is authority? Maybe get a little more imagery there so we can understand that.

And again, in Luke 7, when he gives this example in v. 8, he says, "...For I too am a man." So he's saying Christ is a man and I am a man. Christ too is a man. He recognizes Christ's humanity.

"...Set under authority with soldiers under Me." And then he gives this imagery of what happens in his own life as a centurion. A centurion was a Roman soldier, a commander, a captain, who had a hundred men under him. And he's saying these a hundred men, I would tell one, go, and they would go.

Do, and they would do. And he exercises authority here even by having the Jewish leaders come. He sent the Jewish leaders.

And then he sent his friends. And in the end, Christ says to him, go. So what is authority? As the centurion said, you get authority by being under someone.

You get over by actually being under. When you're under someone in a position at a job, all of a sudden, you might have authority. Because someone over you, you submitting to them, they now put you in a position where you have authority over a certain number of individuals.

And authority allows you to control. To tell someone who submits to your authority, go, come, and do. Exercising authority is what the centurion did.

As I mentioned there, you can only exercise authority in certain domains. I own a car. It's in the parking lot.

I've got authority over that car. I can tell someone to take that car to a certain place. I can take that car to a certain place, but I don't have authority over all the other cars in the parking lot.

I can't go out there and exercise authority and tell you all what to do with all of your cars. That's not under my authority. That's not in my domain.

That's not in my sphere of authority. The centurion had his 100 men under him. Again, what did Christ have under him? That's what the centurion recognized.

So when the centurion gave a command, it's not just that the centurion gave a command and the people needed to submit because the centurion gave the command. Who was above the centurion? And then who was the person above the centurion? And then eventually you get all the way back to where was the order ultimately coming from that the centurion told his soldiers? It was ultimately coming from Caesar. From Rome itself.

And so the centurion's command to his soldier to go wasn't just that the centurion commanded it, but it's the one he was under all the way up to the top of the chain was telling this individual you need to go. You need to do this. You need to obey this.

So the centurion believed that diseases, someone near death, were as much at Christ's control as his own servants were at his. The centurion realizes I can tell a soldier to go. And the centurion looks at Jesus Christ and realizes He has such authority.

He can tell a terminal sickness of a paralyzed man. He can just tell it to go. Without physically being there and present.

And it will go. That's incredible. He's recognizing this about the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the centurion recognized Christ was under authority. And does he state specifically here under God the Father? As a man submitting to the Father? No, the centurion does not articulate that. But he recognizes this man has come.

And he's come with authority. He's come with power. He's come with control.

He speaks like no one else speaks. And we realize Christ's authority was given to Him by the Father. In Romans 13, it even says there's no authority except from God.

Anyone who has authority, even the governing rulers, got that authority from God. Even in Acts 26.10 when Paul talks about Paul being lost, it said he locked up many saints after receiving authority from chief priests. So he received authority, and then he could go lock those people up.

Because the people above him would back him in what he was doing. And he had legitimate authority to arrest those Christians. And in Matthew 28.18, Jeff even referred to this text in the first hour.

Jesus came and He said to them, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. All authority, power, control, in heaven and on earth has been given to the Lord Jesus Christ. So Christ's authority is a legitimate authority.

He's not exercising authority over people that is not rightly His. He has the freedom and permission to decide and to act and do what He wants in the sphere in which He has authority. Which Matthew 28 says that sphere is what? In heaven and on earth.

In short, everything. Everything. And we see this all the clearer.

Colossians 1 is just one place. Colossians 1.16, for by Him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through Him and for Him. Again, Jesus is God.

Our great God and Savior. And Jesus in Hebrews 1, the Father says of the Son, You, O Lord, created. But here is a man, the Father, has given Christ all authority of everything in heaven and on earth.

Now this matters to us. This matters because Christ's authority, can it be overturned? Can it be overturned? If you've been following what's going on in California recently, one of the judges told Grace Community Church there that they could meet, and then what happened the very next day? Or the same night? It was overturned by another judge. And then that might get overturned by another judge.

And so here you're trying to submit to the government and then one judge says this, another judge says this, and another judge says this, and it just becomes very confusing. Does that happen with us? No, because you're not going to have Christ having authority and God the Father have any type of disagreement. Because the Bible says they're one.

So there isn't going to be any type of overturning or overruling in anything that the Son has done. And this means Christ's authority that He has, His promises will not fail or be overturned. Christ's Word won't be overturned because none has authority except God, and God will never give authority to anyone that would contradict His perfect purposes.

And so even in John 19.11, Jesus answered Pilate and said, you would have no authority over Me at all unless it had been given to you from above. So anyone with any authority, it ultimately points all the way back to God. Any legitimate authority.

Many people will set themselves up as authorities. They'll claim that they know, they're saying exactly as it is. So God controls everything.

You think about, I hope this isn't a cheap way to think about it, you think about the game Monopoly. You do Monopoly and you have this board and different people control different spots on the board. And you're trying to get full control.

Jesus Christ has full control. He's got every spot. There's not one spot that He does not have.

And there's not one spot that in any way is going to be taken. They're all His. He's fully in control.

Now, think about authority. We're still thinking about what is authority? This control, this power that an individual has. Sometimes those under authority misrepresent the person they are under.

Right? I mean, even here with the elders of the Jews. Did the centurion tell the elders of the Jews to go tell Jesus that I am worthy? When moments later, the centurion is communicating I am not worthy. The text says He told them in v. 3, the elders of the Jews asking Him to come and heal His servant.

So it seems like what these other people who went on His behalf said didn't exactly represent what He was going to say. So you can be misrepresented. You can tell someone at work to go and deal with the situation and they misrepresent the boss, the one in authority, by acting in a wrong way.

Is that ever going to happen with God and with Jesus Christ? Is Jesus Christ ever going to misrepresent the Father? No. It's never going to happen. It's never ever going to happen.

There's not going to be a contradiction where the Son is thinking one thing and the Father is thinking another thing and the Spirit is thinking another thing. There's never going to be a contradiction there. There's perfect unity in the Trinity.

Now, here a question is to think about here. Go ahead and flip to Matthew's account briefly. Keep your hand in Luke.

We're going to spend the majority of our time in Luke. But go to Matthew 8. I don't want to just skip over this, and this deals with the issue of authority, so that's what I'm going to look at at this point, and then we're going to move on from what is authority. If you go to Matthew 8, if you read this account, and starting in v. 5, you find v. 5, it says a centurion came forward.

Right? V. 8. But the centurion replied. So, Matthew records it in a way as if the centurion, he makes it appear, if you just read Matthew's account, it would appear like the centurion is actually the one who went. That he was actually the one having the conversation with Jesus Christ.

Now Luke, who's far more detailed in many of the accounts in the way he records it, Luke makes it very evident that he sent the elders of the Jews and then he sent his friends. Luke never gives a hint that the centurion ever actually saw Christ. That this is all a matter of communication.

So is there a contradiction here? We're just talking about how the Lord isn't going to contradict and even those who were inspired to write the Scriptures led by the Holy Spirit, is this a contradiction? In these two parallel accounts, how do we explain that? I would say obviously it's not a contradiction. But let's think even about this principle of authority. Right? Someone goes on behalf of another.

We have ambassadors for the United States. Is that not true? And the ambassadors might go to another country. And they're representing the President and our country.

And they might tell them the United States declares this to you. Was it actually the President specifically saying that to those individuals? No, it was not. It was the representative.

And so Matthew, from his perspective, this ultimately is coming from the centurion. The elders of the Jews are just the messenger. And Matthew doesn't even... Yeah, so my take is that Matthew even understands this principle of authority that one is representing another and goes on behalf of another.

And that's exactly what I believe we see happen there. Matthew views the one under the centurion to be representing him as if the centurion is there. And that's exactly what happens with ambassadors is as if the authorities are there.

And we do this all the time. We write certain things and someone else communicates it and they know that they got the message that it was from us. And they say, yeah, James said to me.

I might not even have been the one who said those words to the individual. It might have been a letter I wrote that was passed along. They don't say the person who brought the letter said to me.

They say James. James said to me such and such. So, now, that's kind of some thoughts on what is authority.

Because that's what the centurion sees that Christ is a man under authority. And it's based upon that reality by which he asks Christ or says to Christ that you can say go. You can tell this or that and it will happen.

But the second thing I want to look at is what is this great faith? What is this great faith that Jesus says of this person? In v. 9, I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. Faith. What's another word you could use for faith in this situation? What's a synonym? I mean, I use a synonym in my title because I feel like it helps capture more of the idea.

And the word I use is confidence. Confidence. You think in Hebrews 11, faith is assurance of things hoped for, conviction of things not seen.

You're very convinced. You're very confident about something. You're really trusting in something.

Don't waver in your faith. Meaning, don't lose your confidence in some reality. And so this centurion, Christ says, had faith.

Faith that he says, not even in Israel have I found such faith as this individual has. So this man had a strong conviction, a confidence, specifically in Christ's power. What are some other things that this man's faith laid hold of? The centurion saw that Jesus was a man.

The centurion saw that Jesus is under someone's authority. The centurion called Jesus, Lord. He used the very word to refer to Christ as Master and the One in control.

And he obviously didn't recognize this about Jesus Christ because of a crown on His head or a throne that He was seated upon. But what had just happened was Christ had given a sermon where He spoke like no other man and He spoke with authority. And this man had heard about Jesus, it says.

No doubt he had heard about that message and the things that Christ had said and the authority that Christ spoke with. What else did his faith lay hold of? His faith laid hold of the fact of the truths about Himself. He recognized that this One that Christ is under, Christ is such that Him coming into my house, I'm not worthy to have Him under my roof.

This man had an accurate perspective about himself. He even said, I wouldn't presume, verse 7 in Luke, therefore I did not presume to come to you. He thought he needed to send the elders of the Jews to come to Christ.

That's how a sense of unworthiness he felt about Christ. He clearly saw something in Christ that the others were not seeing in Him. I mean, you've got all the scribes and the Pharisees and they're coming and they're trying to argue with Christ.

They're trying to discredit Christ. This man doesn't even want to go near Christ because there's a sense of his own unworthiness. So, he believed.

What else did his faith lay hold of? He believed Jesus could say the Word and it would be done. Just say the Word. Just say the Word.

I mean, again, if that doesn't make you think of Genesis 1 and God said and let us... I mean, you believe Jesus can just say the Word? Not even physically being there? And His hands don't have to touch? And it will happen? He believed Jesus. Obviously, he at least specifically believed Jesus had authority over sickness. I would assume he believed far more than that, but specifically here believed this issue of His servant who was sick and paralyzed and near death, that that was not a problem for Christ with a Word to resolve that problem just like that.

He obviously believed Christ. What else did his faith lay hold of? He believed Christ was compassionate. I mean, he took the situation of someone who was sick, his servant.

This ruler brought his servant before the Lord Jesus Christ through these messengers, and that speaks of the compassion of Christ. He also believed Christ did not show partiality. Here this guy is a Gentile, a pagan.

He's not a Jew, because Christ says, I've not found a faith like that in Israel among the Jews. So whatever this guy's background in, he's not Jewish, and yet here he, even he, went to Christ. And then yes, he believed Jesus had such control that His physical presence was not necessary for the healing to take place.

I mean, that's incredible. He did not view Christ as limited based upon physical presence. And I realize you could say, well, we all know that right now because Christ is not here.

But brethren, this is back where Christ was actually walking around. And his faith goes beyond the people who are ripping up the roof and laying the man down before Christ. They felt like they had to get him, the person there, get him before Jesus Christ.

This man isn't going and ripping a roof off. He's not even coming himself. He sends servants.

And to those servants, he believes that yes, with the Word, Christ can do this. Christ can heal my servant. So he did not limit Christ's power and authority and control.

And one thing I would say, if you agree with the explanation I gave of Matthew's account, that Matthew from his perspective is saying the centurion came because ultimately that's where the messages were coming from and that's who he represented, so it's just saying the centurion came. Think of this. There's no evidence here that the centurion ever saw Jesus Christ.

If that explanation explains Matthew's account. In Luke, you don't find any evidence that the centurion even physically saw Jesus Christ. He's using messengers.

That is very interesting. It makes you think of John 20, 29. Jesus said to Thomas, who had just seen the holes on his hands, and He said, have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

The centurion's like that guy. That's like us. I've not seen Christ, and yet I believe in Christ.

And the centurion, it seems, maybe did not actually see Christ and yet believed in Christ. Maybe you think of this passage, Psalm 107. It speaks in a similar way about what the centurion believed about the power of Christ.

Psalm 107, it says, some were foolish through their sinful ways. Because of their iniquities, they suffered affliction. They loathed any kind of food.

They drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress. And listen to v. 20.

He sent out His Word and healed them. He sent out His Word and healed them. Delivered with the Word.

That's what the centurion was asking of Christ. Let them thank the Lord for His steadfast love, for His wondrous works to the children of man. Okay, a third question.

How did this pagan obtain such great confidence in Christ's authority? He sees that Christ has authority and control even over sickness. And how did he come to this? Look at 7 v. 3. It's incredible words. 7 v. 3. When the centurion heard about Jesus.

When the centurion heard about Jesus. Someone told this man about Jesus. What did they say? We don't have all the specifics there.

They said something. You and I have told people about Jesus Christ. What did you say? I mean, it depends on how long the conversation was.

Again, if Jesus just had this sermon, and in this sermon, how did Christ speak on the Sermon on the Mount? He said, you have heard, but I say unto you. That's one of the reasons people left and said this

man speaks with authority. He wasn't just referring to what another had said.

He said you heard this and I say unto you. I say this to you. That is authority.

It's not referencing the Old Testament specifically, but Christ is saying I'm telling you this specific reality. And so this man, he had heard about Jesus Christ. What happens when you hear about Christ? What's one of the things that can happen when you hear about the Lord Jesus Christ? Romans 10 and 17 says faith comes from hearing.

And hearing through the Word of Christ. It seems this man heard about Jesus Christ and he had faith. He believed what he heard.

At what point did this happen? It says when the centurion heard about Jesus. He sent to Him elders. It sounds like he heard about Him.

And right after that hearing, that communication of the truth to this man, his response was to send for Jesus. Was he saved? Well, in Matthew's account which I read at the beginning, it talks about people sitting at the table of the Lord Gentiles. It seems like Matthew makes an inference there that he indeed did have true saving faith.

This man saw Christ. He called Him Lord. In Mark 1.27, earlier in Mark, it mentions they were all amazed so that they questioned among themselves saying what is this? A new teaching with authority.

He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey Him. You see, everything is obeying the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet, the sad reality is how do the proud religious people try to get to Christ to get Him to exercise His authority on their behalf? Look at the text.

The Jewish elders, they came to Christ and in v. 4, they pleaded with Jesus earnestly saying the centurion is worthy to have you do this for him because he loves our nation and he is the one who built us our synagogues. Meaning, this guy's entitled. This guy's entitled for Jesus to heal because of all of the things that he had done.

That's how the self-righteous person is going to Christ. It says they earnestly pleaded. They've got some passion here as they're making this plea.

They're pleading to the man's worthiness. They're pleading to his love of a certain people group, the Jews. It just reeks of the sense of entitlement.

And their focus, the elders of the Jews, their focus is wrong. Because it's not about merit. It's not about what you have done.

It's all about Christ. It's all about Christ and who Christ is. That's what the centurion saw.

He saw this person, I am so unworthy, he shouldn't even come into my home. And I don't think that was just because he was a Gentile and Jesus was a Jew and those are some of the laws that had been around. No, I think it's deeper than that.

He's not just following some custom here specifically. He has an actual sense of how unworthy he is. So another thing to think about here.

How should one approach Christ who has all authority? How should one approach Christ who has all authority? Let me even do that now and pray for some help. Lord, I ask, Father, I pray that You would quicken my mind. Lord, help me.

Please, Lord, I need Your help. In Jesus' name, Amen. So how should one approach Christ who has all authority? Well, what did this man do? How did he approach Christ? Let's look.

He says in v. 6, he says, Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I'm not worthy. I mean, something happened here. In v. 3, it says, asking Him to come and heal His servant.

Then something happens by which the centurion has a sense at this point, he's saying, Lord, don't trouble Yourself. And then he gives his reason. I'm not worthy to have You come under my roof.

In view of this, that's why I didn't even come to You in the first place. Lord, all You must do is say the Word and let My servant be healed. This isn't Jesus saying to the person, well, you know, I can just say the Word and it will be done.

It's not Jesus saying that to him. That crosses the centurion's mind. The centurion is thinking, well, this can be the method here by which he can be healed.

You don't even need to come. Just say the Word and it's going to happen. The centurion is the one who represents this idea.

That crosses his mind. That's incredible. He says I'm not worthy.

It makes you think of Simon Peter and Luke 5. They caught a large number of fish and he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, depart from me, I am a sinful man, O Lord. O Lord. He recognized whose presence he was in.

He was in the presence of One who could say you're going to go get a certain amount of fish, and guess what happens? You go and get a certain amount of fish. And Jesus is the one who says for the wind and the waves to stop, and guess what happens? The winds and the waves stop. And Jesus is the one who came and He healed people in order that people might be able to see the parallel that He can forgive you of your sins.

And He has the authority to do that. Even today, to pardon all of your sins, everything done in the dark, everything that no one knows about, everything that you're afraid is going to come out into the open. Christ, if you acknowledge your sin, you don't hide your transgression, you get it in the light, you expose yourself, the Lord is absolutely able to forgive you and save you from sin's power.

He's got that type of authority. He's got all authority in heaven and on earth. That's the One whom we approach.

That's the One whose presence we're in. And we need to come to Christ knowing His power. We don't need some weird formula.

This is not about a formula. This is not some ritual. Christ's physical presence is not even required.

His Word is all we need. He can just say it, and it's going to happen. And obviously, Jesus says, I found a man with this type of faith, meaning that is something to imitate.

And again, we're kind of forced into that because we don't have Him physically here. This man had that faith when he could have had Christ come in his house. If I had a servant sick, and Jesus is there and I just heard about Him, I wouldn't be trying to keep Jesus away.

Because I wouldn't recognize rightly how unworthy I am to be before the Lord Jesus Christ. So what about Jesus here? I just mentioned some things about Jesus here, but the chief priests, they asked, who gave you this authority? People saw He had authority. People saw He spoke with authority, that He was in control, that He was over things, that everything was in His submission.

He had authority, dominion to say, let it be done and it would be done. He stopped waves, healed diseases. He has authority to lay down His life, and do what? Take it up again.

John 10, no one takes my life from me. I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down.

I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from the Father. Luke 8.25, He said to them, where is your faith? And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, who then is this that He commands? That's what you do with authority.

You command things and they are done. And for Jesus, when He commands something, it's not done 80% of the time, 90% of the time. It's done 100% of the time.

And it's done exactly as Christ commanded it to be done. It's going to happen. If Jesus Christ says the Word, He's not going to mess up in fulfilling that because He has control and authority over all things.

So there's not going to be any one factor in our lives that's going to prevent whatever Christ said to be done from actually happening and being fulfilled because everything is in His control. Jesus can heal, as it says in Matthew's account, at the very moment. Instantly.

Instantly. Ephesians 1 says, what is the immeasurable greatness of His power towards us who believe according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all and all.

And Paul says in Philippians 2 that one day at the name of Jesus Christ, and again, that name, he just called Christ Lord. Lord. Alluding to Isaiah, where it says there's one God.

He's making the point in Philippians 2 that Christ is God. And he says every knee is going to bow and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Christ is in control.

Christ is in control. He's got all authority. And that's what this man believed.

And again, you could say, well, this is pretty simple, right? I already believe this. What's our greatest danger? Is it either A, we don't believe this, which some don't. Kind of like Jeff hinted at.

There are people who really don't want to believe the sovereign control and power of God. Is it A, you don't believe it? Or is it B, is our problem is it's become too common of a truth in our Christian life? Which is the problem? For me, it's not that I don't believe it. I do believe it.

The issue is it can become too common. Just this knowledge. But you know what happens when you're a centurion and you just heard about Jesus Christ for the first time? It's Peter's first time.

He heard about Jesus. What was his instant response? He saw his authority. He saw his power.

He saw his control. And it says, then he sent the elders of the Jews to go to Jesus to get Him to come and to heal. He didn't need to talk to Him more.

He didn't need to ask more doctrinal questions. He saw who Christ is. This man's got authority.

He's got a power. And this centurion right there at this point is able to say, Lord, all You've got to do is say the Word and it's going to be done. Without Christ giving him that idea, but him seeing that reality because he saw the authority and control that Christ has.

Now where was this centurion at 20 years later? Did he have the same faith? He did? I hope he did. Where are we? I mean, the truth is, some of us at times, you get saved and you really believe God for some really big things early on. You're like C.T. Studd and the young guys going down to China praying for the gift of tongues rather than learning the Chinese language.

But what happens? It can become too common. Christ is seated and He still has authority. And He can say the Word still today.

And it will happen. Us elders are actually going to pray for someone who's asked us to pray for them after the meeting in the back who is sick. You know, Christ could send the Word and He could heal that individual right now.

He could do that. He's got that authority to do that very thing to heal those two individuals who are sick. And we say, I know that.

I know that. I mean, this man, he really believed it. It wasn't just knowledge in the head.

And this man really had a right perception of himself. Lord, I am unworthy. I'm unworthy.

Now you could say, well, wait, Christians don't walk around grappling as though they're unworthy. They approach the throne boldly, right? Yes, we do. Thank God for the blood of Christ.

But that doesn't take away a mindset of humility. We don't deserve anything from God. Even as Christians, there's no thing that now as a Christian, all my kids are for certain going to be converted.

I'm unworthy for God to save my children. I'm asking Him to do it. There's many promises by which can encourage my heart, but I don't have a guarantee.

I can't say, Lord, look at all the things that I've done, so You need to do this. And you might say, well, I never have that mindset. I never think like that.

Look, if we really examine our hearts, there might be times in a very subtle way when we're going to pray, we're in our minds as we're praying, presenting something before the Lord as a reason by which He should respond. I realize we order an argument in prayer. I'm not condemning that.

But there is a time we can wrongly appeal to certain things that make us think we're worthy for God to respond. But you know what you want to appeal to? You want to look and see Christ has full authority and

control and He can say the Word, and that's what I'm appealing to Him. Not me.

I'm appealing to Him who is over all things. That's why you pray in the name of Jesus. If you say that in Jesus' name, we're going to the Father through the Son in the name of Jesus Christ.

Now what encouragement can we get from Jesus' prophetic statement? I guess if you still have your Bibles in Matthew 8, flip there. Let's look. There's some encouraging things that are mentioned here.

Matthew 8, 11. Right before this, He started saying, Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. And then He says in verse 11, I tell you, many, many will come from the east and the west and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

Do you notice that word many? Many. We often think about Matthew 7, few there be that find it. That's absolutely a true statement.

These are not a contradiction. But here Christ, here you've got this Gentile who believes in Him. That's what we are.

The majority of us, we're non-Jews. And here Christ, He says, many are going to come from the east and the west. Many different Gentiles.

Many different pagans. Many different people who like this centurion. They didn't grow up with all sorts of truth.

They're going to come and be saved. Why can't my children be among the many who are going to come from the east and the west and recline at the table? Jesus is saying this is not a one-time thing. Jesus is not excluding the Jews here from being saved.

He's making a focus on how there's going to be a great ingathering of Gentiles. Think about John 17. Jesus had spoken these words.

He lifted up His eyes to heaven. He said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You, because You have given the Son authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.

Jesus Christ has authority to give eternal life. Lord, You said with a word. Not you said with a word.

Lord, the centurion said with a word. Lord, would You with a word save and grant eternal life? That's what we should be asking, because Lord, You said there's going to be many, many Gentiles who are going to come and sit at the table. You see, I don't think that the big deal with the centurion is not that he believed Christ could heal in the moment, but why did he believe this? What the centurion saw that Christ, though a man, the centurion saw he is under authority, and he looked at his life and he saw how I control people and they will obey, and he saw this man has control over sickness.

This man, as the Gospels keep showing us, control over the elements, control over your sin, total, absolute control over these things. That's what the centurion saw. This isn't so much about his faith as what was the object of his faith.

What did he look at and stirred his faith up? The authority and the control of Jesus Christ. You want to be stirred up to pray? As this week of prayer and fasting goes on and to ask God for certain things, you want

your soul to be stirred up? Think about the authority and the control of Jesus Christ. Because whatever situation you're praying about, guess who has the control? Christ.

It's not going to go out of His sphere. He's able to do something in that situation. We need to realize the authority of the One that we are petitioning, the One that we are appealing to.

Though we do not see Him, we believe in Him. We believe that with the Word, He can heal. He can forgive sin.

He can raise the dead. He can give life. And as we see that, it should stir us up.

The second kind of application here at the end is Jesus said, I've found such faith. It sounds like Christ was looking. He was making observations.

He was looking. Luke 18, 8, I tell you, He will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth? What does Christ find? What degree of confidence in your own soul does He find you have in His ability and power and sovereign control over all things? Or are there, well, but if? Or but this? But that? No, no, no.

There's no but this. Christ rules. He's in control.

And we need to believe. We need to have confidence in that reality. Another thing that is absolutely incredible when you think about this is believers were under Christ's authority.

Luke 19, 20, He says to the disciples, I've given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this that the spirits are subject to you. The spirits are subject? Meaning I should have confidence going into that meeting with a person who is demon-possessed through the authority of Christ to command? He says, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

You see, it's not about authority. It's not about power. It's all about Christ.

It's all about rejoicing that my name is written in heaven. Rejoicing that I have salvation. Your question is to ask yourself, what in your life right now are you not submitting to the authority of Christ? What are you refusing to let Him reign over in your life? Again, He's got control, but are you fighting and not letting Him reign? You say, well, He already reigns.

I don't have to let Him. Well, as Luke 19 says, bring those before Me who refuse to let Me reign over them. Just because the King is ruling over the entire kingdom, it doesn't mean there aren't people rebelling within the kingdom who don't like the authority.

So ask yourself, is there anything in my life that it's not, Lord, Your will be done. It's not acknowledging the Lord in all of Your ways. And He will make straight Your path.

Where am I not acknowledging God? Here, another thing to think about is what type of involvement did the sick servant have here who got healed? What did it say here he did? Maybe I missed it. I guess nothing. Wow, nothing.

Nothing at all. He didn't do anything. He was the one who benefited from the great faith of his Master.

May our children benefit from our faith. May, in prayer, we believe in God, have them not healed from a physical sickness that leads to a physical death, but healed from the spiritual sickness that leads to an eternal death in hell. We want to believe the Lord.

That Christ has authority to forgive sin. We need to believe God on behalf of others. It's amazing, you know, this man doing this, this ruler for his servant, or some versions say his slave.

And we ought to have that same type of compassion. It's not the physical healing we're seeking. Ultimately, it's their spiritual well-being.

Now think about this. If you're not a Christian, or if you profess to be a Christian, but your type of Christianity is not one according to the Bible, your type of Christianity is one where you say, Lord, Lord, but you don't do what He says. You acknowledge with the lips, but your life, as Jesus said, is one of rejecting to obey Him.

If that's your type of life, or if you're lost, let me think about this. What is not in Christ's control? I mean, the waves obey Him. Disease obeys Him.

He's got authority to forgive sin. He's got authority in heaven and on earth. The Lord is involved in the earthquakes.

The Lord is involved in everything. All of these things are doing what to Christ? Submitting. Submitting.

The winds obey. The demons obey. He tells them to go out and they obey.

And the pigs and they go run off the mountain in Mark 5. But think of this. If you're not a Christian, you're one of the few things in this world that doesn't submit to Jesus Christ. Everything else is and you're not.

You're rejecting. You're refusing His reign. And yet one day, your knee will bow.

Every knee, even the lost, they will bow. It's coming. So why refuse when you know the day is inevitable? Well, because you don't believe the day is inevitable and that it will for certain come.

If you really did, if you really had a sense of the reality, there's going to be a day where, as it says in Mark's account, there's going to be outer darkness that people will be cast in. There's going to be the worm that will never die and the fire that will not be quenched. If someone had a reality of that, they would right in a moment realize I want to submit under this One who's in total control.

And that's my plea to you. If you're not a Christian, if you're a fake Christian, you want to submit under Jesus Christ. Say, Lord, take my life, as that psalm says, and let it be a living sacrifice to Thee.

I'm not holding this back. I'm not holding this back. You're in control of everything anyways, and the only reason I have these things is because You've allowed that.

So why be the Romans one individual who they worshiped the creature rather than the Creator? And the creature is the very thing that God even allowed to be there. And they worshiped that rather than the One who made it. They bowed down to a piece of wood rather than the One who created the tree.

The wood idol was made by a man with his tools, yet the One who created all things. They refuse. They refuse.

Christ has authority to forgive your sins if you come to Him in faith, having confidence that He is no liar and has done what He has said He has done. Jesus is not a liar. God never lies.

So He will save you. There is a guarantee that if you come to Him, if you believe in Him, if you say, Lord, I want to submit to You, to Your rule and to Your reign, Christ will forgive you. He will save you.

And this passage is clearly a call to us to go and tell. How did the centurion hear about Jesus? Someone went. I mean, who was that? Who was it in Luke 7-3 when the centurion heard about Jesus? Someone went to this guy and they spoke to him.

And faith comes by hearing. You've got to use words. You've got to say something.

You've got to speak the truth to these individuals. And this should encourage us. We can go and tell and it can have such an impact on a person that all of a sudden, they're gripped with such a reality about who Christ is where they're believing that Christ can just say the Word and this is going to happen.

Because they see Christ has authority. He has control. He has dominion.

He has power. Another thing to think about here is what reasons do you give in prayer? I already kind of hit on this, but what do we say when we pray? You know what? Appeal to the authority of Jesus Christ. Lord, You're in control.

Lord, this is within Your dominion. Lord, this is something You delight. Lord, this is something You've done.

Lord, You did this to show You have authority to forgive sins because that's something You delight to use Your authority to do. You don't want people to perish. You don't want them to go to hell.

So Lord, as Paul said, my heart's desire for them is that they may be saved. That they might bow the knee to You. And so Christ's authority should stir us up in prayer.

And so that's the angle I wanted to hit on this. As a centurion, he had confidence in the authority, the dominion, and the control of Jesus Christ. He had faith that Jesus could do that with just a word.

That's incredible. That's a faith we want to imitate. And you might say, well, how do I practically do that? It's not you practically doing something.

It's you believing in someone. Let's pray. Father, we thank You so much for this plan of salvation and Christ who's come.

Lord, we look at so many situations where the structure of authority is just confusing. Lord, we don't really know who's in control. Just confusing this and that.

And then people contradict each other. And Lord, here You are. You're over all things.

And there's no contradiction. There's no confusion. There's nothing going to be overturned, Father, that Your Son has said.

Lord, I do pray, I ask that with Your authority and Your dominion and Your control of the hearts of mankind, Lord, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ that You would open the hearts of the blind today and save their souls. Lord, You did it in an instant. Lord, I'm asking for You to use that same authority and heal

and save right now.

Lord, You can open their eyes. I'm asking for You to do that, that You would get glory because You are worthy. Worthy is the Lamb to receive the glory.

That's what we want. That's what we long for. And that's what we pray for.

Pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

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