

Luke 7:9-10 Amazing faith in an amazing Savior. Pentecost 2/Confirmation June 23, 2019

By Pastor Kenneth Mellon, Trinity Lutheran Church and School, Pleasant Valley Rd., West Bend, WI

Grace and peace from God our Father to give us confidence in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen. God's Word for our faith in Christ is from Luke 7:9-10.

These are your words heavenly Father. Help us to listen, take them to heart, and be confident in you.

Dear Christian friends,

There are only two times when Jesus was amazed about believers during His ministry. Once He was traveling in a land north of Israel. A foreign woman pleaded with Jesus to heal her daughter, and she would not give up no matter how harshly Jesus spoke to her. Finally Jesus not only healed her daughter, but praised her for her great faith! (*Matthew 15:28*). In today's lesson, Luke wrote about a Roman centurion. Once again, the man's faith was tested when his servant, whom he dearly loved, was gravely ill. Jesus marveled at this man's faith, too. What about us? Will Jesus ever marvel at our faith? If He does, it won't be because of our power. The Holy Spirit must be at work to give us an

Amazing faith in an amazing Savior!

First, amazing faith is shown by humility. Does being humble mean that people are unwilling to do things? It was not the case with the centurion. He was a commander in charge of 100 Roman soldiers. He was battle-tested over many years. He said in our verses that he commanded his soldiers or servants and they obeyed. But, when it came to seeking help from Jesus, he made no demands.

This man also must have had wealth. Yet rather than let money spoil him so that he always got his way, he had been influenced by God's Word. His humble faith showed when he donated money to build a synagogue (local church) for the Jews. He was a foreigner, who usually didn't speak with Jewish leaders. But his faith in God showed in his actions so that the Jewish leaders were spoke well of him to Jesus. They said that he was a man worthy of Jesus's help. But later when the centurion heard that Jesus was coming, he told Jesus that he was not worthy to have Jesus "*come under his roof*" (v.6).

Why did this man seek help from Jesus and not from Roman gods? Jesus had already healed a court official's child in Capernaum. He had forgiven a man's sins and proved His authority by healing the man who had been paralyzed since birth. There were many other healings listed in Luke (4). So, this humble man had high expectations of Jesus. He said, "*Say the word, and my servant will be healed*" (v.7).

Do we approach Jesus with that same humble attitude? Do we pray remembering that we don't deserve any blessing from God whether we are confirmed today or 50 years ago? We should be in awe of Jesus as our Savior. Even when He was on earth living a humble life, Jesus did powerful things and spoke with authority. Think of the power of Jesus now as He rules as our ascended Savior and Lord! At His command everything good in this world continues!

Despite not deserving anything, we trust in Jesus as the Son of God and our Savior. We can have high expectations of Him because of His greatness. The centurion called Jesus "*Lord*" (v.6). The man understood authority. He was a commander, but he knew his limits. On the other hand, Jesus was Lord of all. He is the one who told His followers, "*All authority is given to me in heaven and on earth*" (*Matthew 28:18*). He cast out powerful demons. He stilled frightful storms. He raised people from death. Jesus is Lord of all. The more we realize that, the greater our trust and hope in Him will be!

But, too often we look at the human side of things. We are frightened by storms. We tremble at the thought of an accident or sickness that could end our lives or leave us helpless. Yet, Jesus is the one who saves us! That doesn't mean that we should climb up on the roof in a lightning storm with a metal pole to our hands and demand His protection. It doesn't mean that when we're sick, we never call a doctor. Jesus often works through natural means that He has provided. He also knows the best time to take us to heaven. What matters is that we can trust in Him. The centurion didn't know how Jesus would care for his servant who was near death. He only knew that Jesus had the power to do so. And, he was surprised how quickly Jesus responded!

With a humble faith, we bring our requests to Jesus and wait for His answer. It's hard to wait for Jesus. Our sinful nature still thinks that we have a better answer than God's. Can you imagine what Jesus would have said if the centurion after requesting help from Him, sent soldiers to speak with priests of a Roman god! The man would have no faith at all. He would have just been trying to cover all the bases! No matter how smart or rich or how many connections we have, we must realize that Jesus is behind all other good sources of help. So, with a humble faith we call on Jesus to help us and trust that no task is too small or too great for Him.

Second, a humble faith focuses on God's Word. The centurion sent a message to Jesus: *"Say the word, and my servant will be healed.... When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd..., 'I say to you, I have not found such great faith, even in Israel!'"* (v.7-9). Today, how often is Jesus saying: "I haven't found such great faith in all of America?" The only way that is possible is if the Holy Spirit is working through God's promises to create that faith. God states that baptism connects us *"to Christ's death"* (Romans 6:3). His death is what won our forgiveness. So, we see that baptism applies to our hearts the forgiveness Jesus won at the cross. It is like a prescription which, when taken, works what it promises: forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Jesus also offers His disciples in the Lord's Supper the forgiveness He won at the cross. Through these means the Holy Spirit works faith or strengthens faith so that we boldly take God at His Word! God promises, *"[Jesus] is able to save completely those who come to God through Him..."* (Hebrews 7:25). Jesus has opened the door to heaven, where there will be no sickness, pain, or death. There will only be perfect health to all who enter through faith in Him as their Savior. This is the confidence expressed at every confirmation at Trinity.

We can be certain that Jesus will hear as we call on Him in faith just as He did the centurion. Our verse states, *"Those who were sent, returned to the house and found the servant well"* (v.10). He was completely healed. We cannot be certain how Jesus will answer our prayers, but we can be confident that He wants what is best for us. Jesus said, *"I am with you always"* (Matthew 28:20). It states, *"He shall give His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways"* (Psalm 91:12). Jesus has our eternal life in mind. John wrote, *"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name"* (John 20:31). With His Word, we can have total confidence in God. We can say, "Lord, say the word and it is enough for us!"

What are we to learn from this lesson? We all can humbly admit that we have doubts that weaken our faith. Too often we focus on problems instead of Jesus as our solution. Jesus doesn't promise that we will overcome all problems. Yet, we have confidence in Him as our Provider, Defender, and eternal Savior. The more we hear God's Word, the greater our faith in Him will be. Then, like the centurion, we can trust Jesus and leave all things in His gracious hands. That's a great faith in an amazing God! Amen.