

Luke

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2005

Preacher: Crowter, Harold (1923-2011)

[0 : 01] Chapter 7, I want to deal with the case of this centurion and his sixth servant and the goodness and mercy of the Lord toward the centurion and his servant in that he granted a perfect healing.

Now I'll announce by way of text the sixth and seventh and eighth verses in the seventh chapter of the Gospel by Luke.

Then Jesus went with them, and when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof.

Wherefore, neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee, but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers. And I say to one, go, he goeth, and to another, come, and he cometh.

[1 : 22] And to my servant, do this, and he doeth it. We have record of this incident, this wonderful work of God in the life of and through the instrumentality of the Lord Jesus Christ relative to this centurion and his servant who was sick.

You'll read in Matthew chapter 8, Matthew's account, and here we have the account as recorded under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in Luke 7.

Some details in Matthew are not evident in Luke and vice versa, but we've got the incident, and we've got the general outline of the situation.

And there are some most precious things in unfolding in this situation, which are worthy of our attention and our emulation.

It was not by chance that the centurion servant became sick at such a time.

[2 : 58] Sickness is not something out of control. Sickness is within control.

The control of the Almighty. We may say sickness is a fruit of sin, and had not sin entered into the world, and there would be no need of hospitals and doctors and all the facilities and expenditures that are necessary in an attempt to maintain a reasonable and active life.

But my friends, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. And I don't doubt in the congregation here this evening there are some that can thank God for periods of sickness in their lives wherein the Lord sanctified and profited them spiritually as well as ultimately granting them a healing touch.

I never can read this chapter, especially in the Gospel by Mark, without my mind going back to an experience in my family when I was 11 years of age and my brother John, now in heaven, was 12 years of age.

John had septicemia after having his tonsils extracted, and there were not such things as antibiotics in those days.

[4 : 40] And it was not long in the state of septicemia before the life of my dear brother was almost despaired of, if not quite, naturally speaking.

I remember my mother saying to my father, George, we must have another opinion. He'd had two opinions from Birmingham. A specialist had come over at the call of the doctor to look at John and prescribe some benefit, but nothing seemed to be doing him any good.

And father somewhat resisted mother's suggestion because he said, I feel no human power can help us and deliver us.

I believe it's a matter for God. And mother somewhat disagreed with his judgment. She said, well, we shall have something on our consciences unless we do everything we can.

And she went off somewhat under that influence of disagreement, not in an angry spirit, but in a differing spirit, and rather a strong spirit of motherly feeling.

[6 : 05] And she went into the bedroom where John was laying. And there he was in a very sick condition. And mother went to him with a mirror in her hand to put before his mouth to see whether it misted up and he was still in the body or whether he had passed on.

And she turned from his bed and fell on her knees at the bedside. And the Lord spoke.

And it's in this history in Matthew 8. And Jesus said unto him, I will come and heal him.

And mother got up off her knees and went to John. And he opened his eyes and smiled at her. And that was the turning point.

And he said, well, God changed what appeared to be the inevitable course of an early grave to a life long of over 70 years.

[7 : 25] You see, my friends, it's all in God's hands. And we must see here that God had decreed, not the centurion, but the centurion's servant was sick.

God had gone before the servant of the centurion in that he'd done a wonderful thing in the centurion's heart. Because we've got to think of the centurion as a servant of Rome.

He was a man that was there as a military representative to hold under Roman authority the people of Israel in their own nation.

And centurions were proud soldiers, for the most part, who gloried in the authority that was given to them and virtually used that authority very often to their personal advantage.

They thought very little of the value of those that were under them. They were there to serve them and to please them. And woe betide if they didn't submit to that authority of the centurion.

[9 : 00] But here we have a centurion in the position of a centurion. I was going to say, with the liberty and authority of a centurion.

And is he worried, man? Why is he worried? If this servant passes on, he can call a number of other men to come in and take the place.

He's the boss, if you like, of the situation. But this man, God has blessed him with grace.

Grace in a Roman centurion. My friends, you'll be surprised to some of those avenues wherein the grace of God enters and operates.

But when it does, it makes a man or a woman or a child a different person from the general run of things. And it's a sad thing if you and I are making a profession that coincides with the general attitude of society.

[10 : 11] Because a Christian is a different person made different by sovereign grace to show forth the power of God to salvation and the perfect example and reflection of the Son of God.

Well, now this man, he shows, doesn't he, somewhat of a Christ-like spirit. He's a compassionate man. And he's not going to use the situation purely to his own advantage.

Every one is precious to him. His servant is not only precious for the service that he exercises for the good and advantage of his employer.

Now, he's one that's been brought into the household by the providence of God. And this man, as it were, is possessed of that spirit of universality in that you can't ill-treat people.

You can't look down on people. There is a sense in which they're made in God's image and they should be treated with due respect and regard.

[11 : 37] Love your neighbour is a principle of Jesus Christ. And here, it's a principle in the heart and life of the centurion.

He must do everything he can for the advantage of this poor man who, with palsy, is at the point of death.

Oh, my friends, if we were only more compassionate. I've rejoiced in spirit at the measure of compassion, practical compassion, that's been in evidence in our nation since the terrible disaster that took hold of those areas in Asia.

You know, there's still somewhat of a compassionate and generous and practical spirit in our nation. And that is a reason to thank God that it exists and that it is encouragingly fruitful in this day when religion seems almost without an influence.

Well, now, this man, the centurion, he acted in every way as a man under the influence of grace.

[13 : 18] Grace doesn't make big people. Grace makes little children and except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of God.

My friend, if your religion is not making you smaller in your own esteem, I question his origin. Oh, there'll be no pride in heaven.

There'll be no pride in heaven. And we've got to lose every semblance of pride in our hearts before God takes us to that holy and sin-free place.

May God enable us to see the benefit and blessing of humility. What a different world the world would be if humility, that sweet grace, prevailed.

But it's prevailing in this case of this man. Listen, just to a few suggestions with regard to the grace of God in him. He says, when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

[14 : 39] And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying that he was worthy for whom he should do this, for he loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue.

The Jews looked at it, the elders of the Jews looked at it purely on temporal considerations, didn't they? He loveth our nation and he's built us a synagogue.

You know, I can't feel judging those two things that they were marks that a gracious approach would, as it were, highlight in pleading with the Lord.

Well, good deeds, yes, they're good in their place, but they're not a foundation for worthiness and we find this man, this centurion is sufficiently taught of God not to put any value upon his own works and his own merits.

Now listen, then Jesus went with them and when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him saying, Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof.

[16 : 14] Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee. Unworthiness, unworthiness.

This centurion was deeply rooted in a sense of his unworthiness. Are you?

Am I? My friends, a deep sense of unworthiness will promote a spirit of thankfulness.

A spirit of thankfulness. praise and thanksgiving. If the Lord is blessing you, feeding you, clothing you, housing you, blessing you with the many temporal blessings of this present life and blessing you in the spirit of your heart also and you feel unworthy.

Unworthy. A sense of unworthiness is at the foundation of sincere heartfelt praise and thanksgiving. This man, the Lord had prepared his heart not only with compassion but also with conviction so that he could feel totally unworthy.

[17 : 40] Whatever may be presented in his favour it wasn't worth a mention because he felt so unworthy of the notice of the Lord.

Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee. No, he sent the servants his servants to Jesus because he considered himself to be more unworthy than they.

You know, it's a good evidence of a gracious heart when we look up to everybody. Like the apostle did when he said, unto me who am less than the least of all saints, well I can look up to them.

I can't look down on them. I can't look down on them, I look up to them. But this he says, and another sweet token of grace in lively exercise, but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

What but living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ could enable the man sincerely to testify as before a heart searching Lord.

[19 : 15] He says, but say in a word, say in a word, what value he put on the word of Christ, didn't he?

Oh, my friends, what value do we put on the word of Christ? Surely had more value than the word of a thousand beside, or ten thousand beside.

You know, that word comes to my mind, which is so precious. Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.

Now, it wouldn't be as valuable to me if all this congregation could unite in perfect harmony and say, Christ is your savior.

Because men can be deceived. Men can be, as it were, carried away with wrong judgments.

[20 : 30] But if the Lord says it, if the Lord says it, I am thy salvation. My friends, my salvation is complete.

My salvation is eternal. the Lord said it. And the Lord is faithful, unchanging. Oh, he says, say in a word, are you waiting for a word?

Are you waiting for a word? And though you may be embraced, as it were, by the church and congregation as one of their number, you want from time to time a divine token.

show me a token Lord for good, a token of thy precious love. Show me that I am born of God and that my treasure is above.

Say in a word that what authority when Christ speaks, it's the Godhead addressing the situation.

[21 : 40] Father doesn't say a different word from the Son and the Spirit doesn't counter what the Son and the Father have said.

It's one God, one word of the living God in perfect unity and harmony. What a wonderful thing it is of the unity and authority and blessing and power and love and grace of the word.

And my servant shall be healed. And my servant shall be healed. You know, there is something in the word that is more powerful than anything that can come against it.

You know, I know, unbelief is a terrible power. It's a terrible power. And there's one thing that can overcome all unbelief.

Say in a word, say in a word, if the Lord speaks with power to our souls, all our unbelieving fears, take wings and fly away.

- [23 : 07] Well, now, there's such a confidence. My servant shall be healed. And then he goes on and he says this, for I also am a man under authority, having under me soldiers, soldiers. You see, heavenly authority is what I've been really talking about. Say in a word, the Lord speaks with heavenly authority.
- It is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who is speaking. Now, this man says, I am a man set under authority.
- He is not in absolute authority, he's set under authority, he's got those superior to him. He's a centurion, but over in Rome, no doubt, there are certain seniors who would have an absolute legal right to tell him what he must do and what he must not do in his position.
- Do we know the authority of Christ? Christ? There's none to override or overrule what he says and what he does.
- [24 : 49] And he always speaks in perfect harmony with deity for he is God as well as the Father and the Holy Spirit.
- Now he says I am a man set under authority having under me soldiers. Now some of us have known what it is to serve in the forces and we've known what it is to be under the authority of seniors.
- Not a bad chapter looking back over life was the chapter we spent subject to severe authority. We weren't asked whether we please would do this and whether we would mind doing that.
- We were told to do it and we had to submit. We must do what was directed or commanded that we should do.
- and a question of authority. This man says I'm a man set under authority. I know what authority is. I've got those above me and I've got those below me soldiers.
- [26 : 13] And he says I say unto one go and he goeth and to another come and he cometh and to my servant do this and he doeth it.
- I believe the Lord saw the wonder of grace in that a man possessed of such authority was so sweetly meek and humble and in compassion toward the need of his sixth servant.
- He saw my friends that this man by his grace was ready as it were to espouse the cause and need of his humble servant.
- But he had authority. Now I often wonder what our attitude is to the authority of the Lord.
- Ye say unto me Lord, Lord, but you don't do as I say. there is a discord between what the Lord commands in his rightful authority as Lord of all and our compliance with the authority and command which he exercises relative to us in his holy word.
- [28 : 17] And real discipleship is submitting to the authority of the Lord.
- Now we're all rebels by nature and nobody is more convinced of that in this congregation this evening than I am. But I do believe this, that the grace of God brings a sinner to a recognition of the rightful, lawful, God anointed, God appointed authority of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- And my friends, we have his word, we have his commandments, what effect are they having?
- What are they effect? This centurion could say before the Lord, I say unto this man, go. He doesn't please himself whether he does or not.
- He's subject to my authority and he attends to what I say he must do. I say unto another, come.

[29 : 42] He doesn't hesitate. The authority which I'm possessed of, the lawful authority that I'm possessed of, causes him to run, as it were, in my commands.

I will run in the way of thy commandments as thou shalt enlarge my heart. and if the Lord enlarges our heart to an appreciation of his lawful authority, we shall desire to humble ourselves, submit ourselves and follow his will for us.

you know, the government is upon his shoulders.

He has an absolute right to say do this and not do that. But in the fear of God are our hearts submissive to this lawful authority which is possessed by Jesus Christ.

Sometimes he tells us to do what nature recoils against and we find there is a battle joined.

[31 : 24] Oh, I remember six years of battle fighting against the call of God in the preaching of the gospel.

My friends, I went through turmoil night and day in spirit because I could never see myself a preacher. I could never see myself a preacher.

a preacher. And you know, but I never found peace until I was brought to submission. I never found peace until I girded up the loins of my mind and said, nevertheless, not my will, but thine be down.

And you see, by resisting the Lord, we don't gain the day. the Lord chastens his offending servants, his offending people, and he brings them in love and in mercy to submit to his will.

And this man is saying, well, yes, there are soldiers, they're very submissive, and when I tell them to go, they go, and when I tell them to come, they come, and my servant is obedient, but when I tell him he must do this, he attends to it.

[32 : 50] Now, what is our life saying with respect to the revealed mind and will of the Lord?

Do you ever ask the question, is it the Lord's will that I should do this? Is it consistent with the will and way of the Lord that I should follow this line of things?

Are you conscious that there is a reigning power in the world that has a perfect right to order and direct the authority of heaven?

And my friends, if we all were subject to that authority as we ought to be, by reason of the Lord's goodness and mercy to us, oh, what a different world it would be.

A world without us and a world within us, because we've got such a nature that fights against the will of God and wants its own way so readily.

[34 : 07] now this centurion, he, Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Now what a reproof that was to the Lord's ancient people, that here is a centurion foreigner, if you like, a centurion follower, that's manifesting the fruits of grace in a degree that is not evident in their own nation.

And my friends, are there people living around us, that are manifesting the fruits of the Spirit in excess of us, is the Lord, Jesus Christ, not only our Saviour, but our Lord, God, and we are seeking to know and to do his will and pleasure in, I was going to say, in everything, and that should be really the hallmark of Christian profession, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he's the perfect pattern, he said, I do in all ways, I do always those things that please my Heavenly Father.

In other words, my mind is his mind, and our mind should be Christ's mind, shouldn't it? What a necessity there is to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, but I must come to the Amen.

When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him and turned him about and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel, and they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

[36 : 36] What a wonderful outcome to a gracious, a gracious meeting Gentile sinner, and an all sufficient saviour of Jew and Gentile also.

those things that tend to influence our minds and distort our judgment will one day be brought into captivity to the perfect mind and will of the Lord.

We have prejudices, we draw lines that shall exclude and include and we hold very tenaciously to our judgment, but our judgment is fallible, our judgment is fallible.

There was a time not many years ago when people in a certain denomination would have held a great question over my mind as to whether they could be the children of God, but I hope if I'm spared till Thursday to go down to Whitney to an old people's home with a dear friend from the black country and visit a man who seems to be as living as close to Christ as ever I've known anybody in my life.

He seems, you go into his room, a little room there in this old people's home and immediately his conversation turns to the Lord and the things of God and you can be with him a couple of hours and he seems to want nothing else to be talked about but the Lord and his goodness and mercy and the greatness and all sufficiency of his salvation and the amazing love of God in sending his only begotten son into the world and the patience of the spirit with people like you and I in the discipline of grace and the keeping power whereby we are preserved from making shipwreck.

[39 : 20] My friends, you know, let us be careful. Many might have said of this centurion that he's disqualified by the position he holds and the nation of his birth but nevertheless the Lord says I've not found so great faith.

No, not in Israel. Oh, be hesitant in forming our judgments and seek to identify grace and the fruits of it wherever it may be made manifest by the goodness and mercy of our God to fallen sinful people.

And now there's a few thoughts. I hope I've laid in your heart a foundation for meditation because I'm sure God by his spirit can lead you into deeper interpretation of his word than ever I would be able to bring to you in his name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[40 : 56] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. lest we do all things in love in 250 to 737.

The Lord weep on day for they could it in us reproof yet still we do all things in love but as we do all things in love save the nature of hope and pain the earth of the beauty it shows it is the cross of the grave the pride of the cloud in the future and the future and the storm and the hope of the hope and pain which they shall come to the world and the shadow the love the love the fire the fire the fire and the oil the sea will be peace the sea will be's hosts

Thank you.