

AMAZING FAITH (Matthew 8:5-13)

I. The centurion's faith was strong enough to cause him to have a submissive spirit.

- A. Notice verses 5 and 8.
 - 1. "I beseech you."
 - 2. "I am not worthy."
- B. Roman legions consisted of 6,000 men which were divided into 60 groups of 100 men which were overseen by a centurion.
- C. This man who had amazing faith was a man of authority, yet easily and willingly humbled himself before a Jew.
 - 1. He called Jesus "Lord" indicating someone in a superior position.
 - 2. Though accustomed to giving orders, he came with a humble request, not in a way that would intimidate or impress with greatness or rank.
 - 3. He said he was unworthy or insufficient for Jesus to come to his house.
- D. What we see is that his faith conquered self.
- E. Christians, in order to be pleasing to God, must be those who have conquered self.
- F. This is the example of Jesus (Philippians 2:5-8).
- G. We must be those who possess a lowliness of mind.
 - 1. Psalm 138:6;
 - 2. Ephesians 4:2.

II. The centurion's faith was active enough to motivate him to compassionate service.

- A. His faith caused him to take on the role of a servant on behalf of one of his servants.
- B. Those who were slaves to Romans led a life of fear.
 - 1. One of the Caesar's hosted a show for Rome that included 600 slaves in the arena for the purpose of fighting wild beasts.
 - 2. Plutarch wrote that a man named Flaminius put a slave to death for a guest who had never seen a person die.
 - 3. Seneca wrote of a man name Pollio who fed his fishes by cutting slaves into pieces.
 - 4. Emperor Trajan forced 10,000 slaves and gladiators to fight for their lives in a blood bath that lasted 123 days.
- C. We said all that to say it was out of this environment that the centurion overcame any selfish indifference toward others.
- D. His faith moved him to act on behalf of someone else.
- E. Christians must be actively engaged in service for the Lord and others (Matthew 25:31-46).
- F. Eighteen times the phrase "by faith" is used in Hebrews 11.
 - 1. The Hebrews writer was calling us to imitate the faith of Old Testament followers of God.

2. The faith of those great men and women was active in service to God and others.
- G. This caused someone to pose the question "What on earth are you doing for heaven's sake?"
 1. Are we launching out in faith?
 2. Or, are we wading around in the shallows looking for excuses why we can't go deeper.
- H. Galatians 5:6.
- I. Faith must be active for it to be a living faith (James 2:17).

III. The centurion's faith was full enough to accept the absolute power of Jesus.

- A. This man believed, by faith, in the power of Jesus.
- B. Jesus had shown His power over death, disease, demons and material things during His time on earth.
 1. The centurion believed in the power of Jesus over illness or disease (Matthew 8:8-9).
 - a. He believed that whatever was causing his servant's palsy would submit to the word of Jesus.
 - b. He believed this as much as he believed his soldiers would obey his commands.
 2. He also believed in the Lord's power over distance.
 - a. He believed that Jesus did not have to be present for the miracle to take place.
 - b. Distance could not stop this man's faith or the power of Jesus.
- C. Christians must believe in the absolute power of God that acts today through His providence.
 1. Someone once said, "Faith is not believing God can but believing that God will."
 2. We are to walk by faith and not sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).
 3. And, we are to do so with a spirit of love, power and discipline and not fear (2 Timothy 1:7).
- D. We must carry before us the cry of "With God all things are possible!"
 1. Paul told us that the weakness of God is stronger than man..
 2. This is the Christian's assurance.
- E. We must believe that God will do what He has said He will do.

IV. The centurion's faith was sufficient to warrant divine praise.

- A. Notice Matthew 8:10, 13.
 1. Jesus said He had not seen such a great faith in all Israel.
 2. Jesus approved of the man's faith by granting the man's request in a way that kept with the man's degree of faith.
- B. We must strive for a faith that God could commend to others.
- C. God often gave descriptions of people based on their life style:
 1. Nabal was "churlish and evil" (1 Samuel 25:3).
 2. The priests of Isaiah's day were "greedy dogs" (56:11).
 3. Judas Iscariot was a traitor (Luke 6:16).

4. The Shunamite was a great woman (2 Kings 4:8).
 5. David was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22).
 6. Abraham is the "father of all them that believe (Romans 4:11).
 7. Barnabas was the "son of exhortation" (Acts 4:36).
- D. How would God describe you based on faith possessed and shown?
 - E. Would it be "O ye of little, vain, shipwrecked faith?"
 - F. Or, would it be, "I know of thy great, string, unfeigned faith?"

From a sermon by Dan Winkler