

“Understanding Authority”

05-29-16

When we look at what has just happened before our Gospel this morning, Jesus has just completed His teaching of “The Sermon on the Mount”. He leaves Galilee and enters Capernaum. Open to Luke 7. There was a Roman centurion there of great power and honor. He was the person responsible to maintain law and order. He also worked well with the Jews. The Bible says he had a servant who was ill, who was about to die.

Verses 2-5, *“Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him. When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, “He is worthy to have you do this for him, for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue.”*

The centurion, knowing the healings that Jesus had performed, felt his best option to help his servant was to **Go to Jesus**. But he realized that he was a Roman and a Gentile, so he knew that going to this Jew could set off a firestorm with the Leaders and could also put Jesus and himself in very difficult situations.

But because of all the things he’d heard about Jesus though, he **Recognized His Authority**, Authority was something this centurion knew a lot about. He was a person of authority. People did exactly as the centurion said. This centurion was a very busy man, and had many other servants, but he took his time out to care for this servant.

The centurion asks Jesus, a Jew, for help. Remember at this time the Romans are ruling the Jews. Centurions never asked for help, it was below their dignity. This centurion crossed all social, racial, and ethnic barriers to appeal for help. In other words the centurion was not self-centered. He cared about his servant and he’s taking a risk of doing a service for him. As he looked at Jesus, he **Trusted His Power**.

The centurion understood what it meant to be an authority and have others under him. He recognized this principle in action in Jesus. He had heard of the power by which Jesus acted; and the authority by which He spoke.

This centurion sent two delegations to Jesus, not to impress Jesus with the idea that He was somebody important and was therefore owed a favor. He simply recognized who Jesus truly was, and thought then of himself as being unworthy to even stand in Jesus’ presence.

This man’s faith in Jesus is rooted in his understanding of authority. This centurion has provided us with a picture of what it means to know Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives. To have Jesus as Lord, means to be under his authority and to line up with His life.

This centurion gives us a wonderful example of four ways of how we’re to live our lives in Jesus Christ. We need to live a life of **Faith**. Our faith must be like the centurion’s faith, it must cross all barriers. When we are in Christ we are a new creation. Then there is no separation for language, religion, culture, or status. We’re all one and God wants us to see everyone equal like the centurion.

In faith, when you pray the Lord’s Prayer, you recognize the authority that Jesus has over your life. *“Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”* Each and every day you ought to ask yourself, *“When God tells me to come, do I come? When He tells me to go, do I? Can I say I’m*

under God's authority by looking at my present list of priorities? Can I say I'm under God's authority with the way I spend the money I have? Can I say way I'm under God's authority with the way I live?"

We need to live a life of **Obedience**. If you have faith, you'll participate in God's work. You'll find how to invest your time and talents for the extension of God's work. I thank God often for your work! God will honor your obedience as you are His example to your family, friends, and community.

We need to live a life of **Belief**. The world is trying to keep us away from Jesus Christ! It tells us that whatever we believe about Him is wrong! But just like the faith of the centurion, we need to focus our hearts and minds on what Jesus has done, and what we receive because of reading His Word and belief in Him. John 20:31, *"But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."*

We need to live a life of **Submission**. When we come to God we must come to him with humility. We must put aside our education, status, and financial power, and surrender to the divine and spiritual authority in our life, God. We must understand that we are unworthy to stand in front of Him but by His blood shed for us for the forgiveness of our sins!

Verses 6-7, *"And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed."*

Did you notice that Jesus never did enter the centurion's home. He simply spoke the word. When Jesus spoke to the wind and sea to stop raging, they did. When Jesus spoke to demons and commanded them to leave a person, they obeyed. **The only Part of Creation that Disobeys Jesus is People!** It's our own sinful nature that's been in existence since the beginning!

One day though, all of humanity is going to bow its knee and declare that Jesus is Lord. For some, it will be a moment of deep remorse and regret as they face the penalty for not recognizing His authority while in this life. For others it will be a bold declaration and affirmation of joy, because it had already been on their lips here on this earth, and in their lives and actions.

Today, we're all under authority. Who's telling you to come? Who's telling you where to go, and what to do? Who is it that you are obeying? God, or man? Is it your word, or the Word of God?

The call of the Gospel, is one of repentance. **The Lord Desires that All People Turn and be Healed.** He desires all to turn to Him and be restored in the wounds of Jesus Christ, once for all!

May your Father in heaven preserve you in His grace and peace, won for you in the shed blood of His Son, crucified for your salvation. He's Jesus Christ, your Savior, your Authority!