



**Part 47: Commended Faith**

Matthew 8:5-13

The faith Jesus commends is confidence in Him – his authority, power, and goodness to save us in every way.

**I. The Importance of Faith**

On just about every page of the Bible, there is the mention or implication of faith.

*The righteous shall live by faith. Galatians 3:11*

The writer of Hebrews spends chapter 11 commending key people for living out their faith repeating their motivation -" By faith ...."

*Now faith is being sure of what hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. Hebrews 11:1-2*

Interestingly, this is the only place in the Bible where we are given a definition of faith. Yet, the Bible is full of pictures of faith or the lack of faith in people.

*I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.  
Matthew 8:10*

## **II. The Faith Jesus Commends**

### **A. It can show up in surprising people.**

A centurion was the principal officer in the Roman army commanding 100 soldiers. Luke offers us some insight that this man was respectful and even generous to the Jewish people. He had built them their synagogue (Luke 7:1-10).

Like Jesus cleansing the leper (Matt. 8:1-4), we are given another picture of Jesus' willingness to cross well-established barriers (ethnic – Jews thought you were made ceremonially “unclean” by entering a Gentile home, i.e. Peter's reluctance to enter Cornelius' home in Caesarea (Acts 10:28).

### **B. Faith is rooted in humility.**

The centurion was a powerful man in this culture, yet he humbles himself publicly to appeal to Jesus. He is a picture of humility, acknowledging his own weakness and proper place before Jesus.

*'Faith is not the boast of the strong. It is the cry of the weak in need of a Savior.'* John Piper

You sometimes hear of people as described with “strong faith.” While I realize that's a compliment, it sounds to me like we are commending the person for having produced something in themselves. All true faith is formed in the crucible of the fire that burns away self-sufficiency and pride. True faith is always rooted and nourished in the soil of humility. Faith is looking away from ourselves to Jesus.

The Centurion is a picture of faith because he acknowledges his own weakness and limitations before Jesus, and he does it publicly. He doesn't try to use his power to impress Jesus or leverage Jesus.

C. The object of true faith is the person of Jesus.

*When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. 'Lord', he said, 'my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering.'*

*Matthew 8:5-6*

To state the obvious, the centurion comes to Jesus. He comes to Jesus, because he believes Jesus has the authority and power to heal his servant. He knows how authority works; he recognizes authority and power in Jesus, and he puts his confidence in Jesus (Matt. 8:8-10).

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In our cultural moment, we think and speak of faith as if its object doesn't matter ... faith in faith, faith in the universe, or it's formulaic etc. Some Christians really put their faith in God's transaction with Jesus on the cross...

Chart contrasting Depersonalized faith with Personalized faith> Source: James Sire, The Universe Next Door.

	<b>Depersonalized Faith</b>	<b>Personal Faith</b>
Sin	Breaking a rule	Betraying a relationship.
Repentance	Admitting guilt	Sorrow over betrayal.
Forgiveness	Cancelling a penalty	Renewing relationship.
Faith	Believing a set of Propositions	Committing oneself to a person.
Christian life	Obedying rules	Pleasing the Lord.

*And without faith it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

*Hebrews 11:6*

### **III. Jesus' Warning to the Presumptuous & Self-Righteous (Matt. 8:10-12)**

“Subjects of the Kingdom” = literally “Sons of the Kingdom” is a Semitic way of saying national Israel, whose leaders took exclusive claim to God’s Kingdom (Matt. 3:8-10).

The irony is that the people who should have recognized Jesus’ authority and power and submitted to him were missing him while the Gentile was submitting to his authority and power! They were blinded by their presumption and self-righteousness.

Jesus is referring to the Old Testament promise of the great Day of God’s justice when He renews all things and celebrates in a great feast with his redeemed people (Isaiah 25:6-9).

Jesus warns those who presume to be included, but do not really submit to his authority as King. Biblical faith is also allegiance to King Jesus as King and Lord.

In v. 12 Jesus is referring to what came to be called “hell.” For more on hell, see recommended resources below.

### **IV. Keeping Our Eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-3)**

**The faith Jesus commends is confidence in Him – his authority, power, and goodness to save us in every way.**

*“Faith is the gaze of the soul on a saving God. A.W. Tozer*

**Recommended resources:**

1. On hell, see sermon – “Jesus and Hell” [greenwoodcc.com/resources/sermons/beautifulkingdom/September 24, 2023](http://greenwoodcc.com/resources/sermons/beautifulkingdom/September24,2023), and [resources/articles/reflections](http://resources/articles/reflections) on the biblical doctrine of hell.
2. Humility by Andrew Murray.
3. I Give You Authority by Charles Kraft.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What do you notice about this story? Does anything surprise you, confuse you, or encourage you?
2. The Centurion specifically recognize Jesus’ authority and power to heal his servant. Without getting mired in questions of healing for now, what does that teach us about the faith Jesus commends?
3. What has been your experience in the way you have thought of “faith” in Jesus? How does this story challenge or help you?
4. Look at the chart by James Sire on faith. How much are you tempted to think of faith in a depersonalized way instead of a personalized way? How does this temptation get expressed in your life?
5. Is there any change or encouragement you sense the Lord calling you to embrace in view of His Word in this story?