

Good News for all people.

The Gospel of Luke

Week 6 LEADER Discussion Questions

Week of 10/2/22

Text: Luke 7:1-10

Icebreaker: Great authority and humility can be tough to find in a single person. Who do you know who has both?

These can be in opposition, but the Roman centurion in Luke 7 displays both authority and humility.

1. In chapter 6:27-36, Jesus taught his followers to, “Love your enemies...[and] Be merciful as your Father is merciful.” How might this exchange between Jesus and the Roman centurion help illustrate that teaching?

This particular Roman soldier is presented as a friend more than an enemy; however, by position, he was not a friend of Israel. Rome was the occupying force in the land of Israel during this time, so any Roman soldier qualified as a foe more than a friend. Jesus and the centurion, though, do not reflect this social, economic, and political opposition in their interaction. Jesus extends his mercy to someone who, by category of who the centurion is, could have been considered an “enemy.”

Application: What kind of things make some people easy for you to love and others more difficult? Do you have a relationship where you feel the challenge of loving your enemy?

This is admittedly very personal so it could be helpful to apply it to our lives.

2. What kind of character traits can you detect from the words and actions of the Roman centurion? Given his position, how else could the centurion have handled the situation?

We can see that he is humble. The Jewish elders pleaded with Jesus, saying “He is worthy,” but the man himself says, “I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.” We can see that he is compassionate. He values his servant enough to go to the trouble of seeking out Jesus. He is influential. He has people who report to him. Given his position, he presumably could have been brash, insisting that Jesus come to where the servant was and ordering soldiers to make sure Jesus complied.

Application: What has been your experience of seeing people who have high levels of influence, authority, and/or affluence in how they relate to other people? Do you think this these have impacted how you relate to others?

I think we all know that humility and other good qualities can diminish when someone advances in rank, status, or resources. It doesn't always happen this way, though (as we see in this passage), so feel free to share positive examples as well.

3. The centurion's humility and faith result in a miracle performed from a distance. What does this miracle where Jesus isn't physically present say about his power and authority?

The argument could be made that Jesus's ability to perform miracles in other locations is an even more amazing display of power than when he is present. He, for example, has such omniscience that he is able to know the exact person to heal, even though that person isn't even in the same location and has presumably never met Jesus before.

Building Christ-centered communities of people fully devoted to loving God and loving others.

Application: How could this encourage us today when we think about Jesus's power to do mighty things in our lives...even though he's not physically present?

Sometimes we put limits on Jesus's ability to heal, thinking that "if only Jesus were here then he could..." This passage reminds us that this isn't a limitation for Jesus.

4. In verse 9, Jesus "marvels" at the centurion when he says, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." We're not told what happened, but how do you think the crowd might have reacted when Jesus said this to them?

This is an invitation to use your imagination a bit. The Jewish elders had tried to convince Jesus to help the centurion because of all he had done for them. The unfolding of this account, though, suggests that it was the man's faith that made him worthy of Jesus's attention and provision. It could have easily been offensive to those within earshot of Jesus to hear him elevating a Gentile above all of them. A Roman centurion is the exemplar of faith in the land of Israel?! Really?

Application: How does this comment from Jesus align with our series theme, "Good news for all people"?

We see yet another reminder here that the gospel is not constrained by geopolitical, socioeconomic, or any other kind of barrier. Faith in Jesus Christ is the passport into God's Kingdom.

5. How's the series going for you so far? What has been most significant for you?

This is a chance to take a step back and collect feedback. Feel free to pass along what you hear to the Community Life team at your campus: Jay (Erie), Justin (Thornton), or Perry (Boulder).

Week 6 Final Thought:

"...I am not worthy...But say the word...For I too am a man set under authority."

These are the words and the attitude of a man who knew his place in relation to Jesus. The Jewish elders thought the centurion was worthy of Jesus's help because of the good he had done for their nation. But Jesus knew something even greater: the centurion was worthy *because of his faith*. We too are made worthy by that same kind of faith!