

Notes for the word section week beginning Sunday 29th November

Encounter Jesus: the Centurion

Read: Luke 7:1-10

Summary:

This encounter between Jesus and the Centurion appears packed with so many lessons that can be applied to us today: it is good to be connected to a godly family, money and power can be used for good, work hard and your boss will look after you and a good reputation can be helpful in times of trouble. What is remarkable is the fact that the healing is almost incidental to this story...it is less a miracle story and more a character study.

Grace

The centurion has heard about Jesus and the amazing truth He teaches, the power He has to heal and the authority He demonstrates over unclean spirits. He recognises that Jesus is one who has been entrusted with great authority. Despite the centurion being rich and having used his money to gain influence in the past he does not try and 'buy' his miracle from Jesus; instead he declares he is unworthy to receive from Jesus.

Humility

Throughout the New Testament centurions are considered good guys; respectable and trust worthy. Generally they were brave and obedient....yet this one is also caring about his servant that society would have stated was just a tool that could be discarded when no longer able to usefully work. The centurion declares that he does not deserve to have Jesus come to his house, that he was not even worthy to personally speak to Jesus

Faith

The centurion is not looking for Jesus to lay His hands on the servant or even to pray over him.... Just say the word! There are only 2 recorded places in the gospels where Jesus is amazed: the lack of faith in his home town and the faith of this centurion. Luke underlines throughout his book the vital place of faith and we know from Hebrews 'without faith it is impossible to please God' The Bible is packed with stories of stirring faith: Noah, Abraham and Pete walking on water!

Application:

Please select from the following questions and do not attempt to try them all. Draw in all members of the group and make sure there is time to pray for one another.

1. What did God say to you on Sunday and what are you going to do as a result?
2. What is the difference between 'false' and 'true' humility? How do you know?
3. What have you done to improve your reputation in the last week and what else could you have done?
4. Do you think that Jesus would be amazed at your 'lack of' or be 'impressed' by your great faith? In what ways do you want to change?
5. Are you more interested in life with what you get from God or what He is doing in your character? Explain
6. How have you honoured your boss this week at work?
7. In what ways do you express your commitment to the church? Is there anything else that you would like to be involved in?