

The Healing Of The  
Centurion's Servant

Luke 7:1-10

## **MEMORY VERSE**

JAMES 4:10

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

A military style hat, jacket or sunglasses.

As many 8.5"x11" blank papers as the number of children in your class, pens, pencils and crayons.

Two pieces of butcher paper and a marker.

A cape or piece of fabric that can be used as a cape.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **"Sergeant Says"**

This is a military form of "Simon Says." Explain to your class that you will give them commands beginning with the words "Sergeant Says." They must obey these commands to stay in the game. If you give a command without first saying "Sergeant Says," all students that follow the command need to sit down.

If you have one available to you, wear some kind of military style hat, jacket, or even sunglasses. Give your commands in military fashion, for example, "Attention! Salute! March in place! At ease!" etc. If time permits, give one or two other children a chance to be the "sergeant."

## LESSON TIME!

Have you ever met a soldier, perhaps someone in the army or navy? Maybe you have read about soldiers or seen them in a movie or parade. What does a soldier do?

Our scripture today is about a soldier. He was alive during the same time Jesus was on earth. This soldier was a centurion, meaning he was in charge of other soldiers, like a general. He was not a Jewish man; He was a Gentile (Gentiles are anyone who is not Jewish). He did not act like many of the people around him. Let's find out more about him.

### LUKE 7:1-2

Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum.

And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die.

Jesus had been teaching the multitudes from Judea, Jerusalem, Tyre, and Sidon, and was now entering Capernaum. In that town lived a Roman Centurion. The word "centurion" is related to the word "century" which means 100. This man probably had at least 100 other soldiers under his command.

We learn about two people in verse two, the soldier and his servant. The Bible says that the servant was "dear to him." That was not very common. In those days, a slave was considered a piece of property; but this soldier considered his slave precious and dear to him.

The word used here for slave actually means, "slave child." The slave was probably very young. He had become very, very sick and was on the brink of death.

What was the centurion to do? His precious slave was dying, and even though he was a powerful soldier, he was powerless to help when it really counted. He could have fought all the wars of the world, marched in all the big parades, mastered all the weapons known to man, and ruled an entire kingdom, but he could not stop the death of his precious servant. Only **Jesus has absolute authority**.

### LUKE 7:3

So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant.

What had he heard about Jesus? What had he seen in Jesus' life that made him certain Jesus could make the difference? We will see in a few verses what it was in Jesus that gave this soldier complete confidence in Him.

First, the centurion sent some Jewish leaders to beg Jesus to come and heal his servant. Their message was like a prayer, simple, honest, and sent directly to Jesus. This soldier had a great need, and he saw in Jesus the answer. Even though he had never met Jesus, he still asked Him to come and heal. Just like the centurion did, anyone can bring their needs, their prayers, to Jesus. He is never too busy to listen.

## The Invitation

Have the children make an invitation to Jesus to come and get involved with the circumstances of their lives. They can be made on an 8.5"x11" piece of paper folded twice.

The invitation should read something like this:

To: Jesus,

You are cordially invited to be Lord  
of the circumstances of my life.

When: Immediately

Where: Through out my life

Please RSVP:

Allow the children to draw a picture or decorate their invitation  
with markers or crayons.

Explain to the children that the Lord desires to take care of all the  
burdens in their lives. He is willing and able to handle any problem  
we have because **Jesus has absolute authority.**

**LUKE 7:4-5**

**And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him  
earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do  
this was deserving,**

**"for he loves our nation, and has built us a  
synagogue."**

The religious leaders had a high opinion of this centurion. They  
came and begged Jesus to help the soldier's servant because they  
thought the soldier was worthy of Jesus' help. They considered  
this soldier a worthy man because of his love for the Jews and his  
generosity. He had built a synagogue for these Jewish men. He  
respected the Jews, and they respected him in return. They went  
to Jesus on his behalf.

In our study today, we will look at three different opinions of the  
centurion. We have just seen the first one, the opinion of his  
friends, the Jewish leaders. They had a lot of respect for him. As

we continue we will see two other opinions. We will see his opinion of himself and Jesus' opinion. Let's continue...

### LUKE 7:6-7

Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof.

"Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed."

Jesus went with the Jewish elders who had come on behalf of the soldier. Before Jesus reached the house, the centurion's friends came with a message from him. Here we have another opinion of the soldier, what he thought of himself. He said, "I am not worthy." The Jews said he was worthy, but he himself said that he was not. He realized that he was not even worthy to have Jesus come into his house or to ask help from him.

There was something different and very important about this man. Even though the world thought highly of him, he knew that Jesus was different from the world. He saw something in Jesus that set Him apart. The centurion was humbled by who Jesus was and did not even think he was worthy of Jesus' time. What was it he saw in Jesus?

We catch a glimpse of it when the centurion said, "But say the word, and my servant will be healed." Something he saw in Jesus made him trust completely in the power of Jesus to heal. He understood something very important about Jesus. It was something that he understood because he was a soldier. What was it? Let's find it in verse 8.

## LUKE 7:8

"For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

He understood authority. What is authority? Authority is having not only the power but the right to rule and make decisions, to have control over how things are done.

When we submit to authority, we give up our liberty and our own way, letting that person in authority direct us. They become our superiors, someone higher than we are. We recognize them as having the right to lead us. This centurion recognized that **Jesus has absolute authority**. As a soldier, he understood what an authority structure or ladder looked like and how it worked. He understood that everyone is under authority.

As a soldier, he was on an authority ladder. The Roman Emperor was at the top of the ladder of soldiers. The centurion was somewhere in the middle, and he had other soldiers under him. He ruled over them. He said to his soldiers, "go" or "come," and they obeyed him because they knew he had the place of authority. They gave him their obedience and gave up their own way. This soldier showed an understanding of the big authority ladder. He knew his place on the ladder, and he knew Jesus' place too.

Jesus is at the top. **Jesus has absolute authority**. He is the One who rules, has all power, and deserves our complete obedience. He says "come" and "go," and everything in the whole universe must obey Him. He is over everything, superior to all. The centurion recognized this authority in Jesus. Jesus behaved like a servant, lovingly caring and tending to the needs of others, but His miraculous power to intervene in a supernatural way proved that **Jesus has absolute authority**.

We also are under authority. Of course the greatest authority in our lives is Jesus. We should do whatever He asks us to. How do we know what He wants us to do? We read His Word, the Bible. He has given us the Bible so we can learn how He wants us to live.

We are also under the authority of our parents, grandparents, and teachers. We need to respect and obey them because this is right in the sight of the Lord (Eph. 6:1).

## The Ladder of Authority

Take a piece of butcher paper, and draw a ladder. Ask the children to describe various “rungs” of authority on a ladder. Explain that you are going to write the most powerful person on the top and those under His authority on each rung underneath. Write Jesus at the top; then fill in those who are under His authority afterward (i.e.: Jesus, Daddy, Mommy, Child, etc.).

Take the picture with Jesus at the top, and turn it upside down. Rewrite all the names on the ladder so they are legible from this angle.

Explain to the class that Jesus' authority is different than the world's. His authority is proven in servant-hood. Doing things according to His plan will always put others higher than yourself. The Christian life is a life of service. To be at the top in the Kingdom of God, you need to be at the bottom! (Mark 9:35).

The centurion saw the authority that Jesus possessed and knew that he was unworthy of entertaining Him no matter what his friends thought. He did not come to Jesus because he thought he had earned a miracle. Rather, this centurion believed that Jesus had the power to command things to change. He had great faith in Jesus because he knew that **Jesus has absolute authority**.

He trusted Jesus completely because he knew that only someone with absolute authority could do what Jesus did. All power and majesty belong to Jesus. He is the King of all kings. No one is higher than Jesus. The centurion relied on Jesus to help him in a hopeless situation. He knew Jesus was worthy of his faith. As a soldier, he understood the authority ladder, and he knew Jesus was at the top. **Jesus has absolute authority.**

The centurion knew that Jesus would not even have to come; He just had to say the word and His authority would be obeyed. This wise soldier did a simple thing; he asked Jesus to come and be involved in his situation.

Jesus wants all of us to do just that; He wants us to invite Him into the situations of our lives, to perform His perfect will in our lives, because He knows what is best for us. We simply ask Him to be the absolute authority in our lives. There is no one we can trust like Jesus; no one we can rely upon like Him. When we give up our own way, give Him our obedience, and invite Him into all the circumstances of our lives, He makes all the difference because **Jesus has absolute authority.** That kind of simple faith pleases Him because it recognizes Him for who He is.

### LUKE 7:9

When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"

In this verse we see the third opinion, what Jesus thought of the centurion. He was blessed by the centurion's simple faith. Many people around Jesus did not believe in Him; Jesus marveled at this man's faith.

Why does faith like that make Jesus marvel? Because He knows we are sinful, and we choose our own inadequate and sinful ways when we do not give Him our obedience. We look at our lives and problems and try to fix them ourselves. We try to find all our own solutions. But faith in Jesus takes us out of the realm of our own poor, insufficient, and inadequate resources and invites Jesus in. Faith tells Jesus that we cannot do anything ourselves. It admits that we need Him. It recognizes that **Jesus has absolute authority**. It trusts Him to make a difference in our lives and our situations.

Can you imagine how wonderful it would be to make Jesus marvel? Complete faith in Him and His absolute authority makes Him marvel. It pleases Him because it is the only right attitude to have in life.

## Captain Marvel

Bring a cape, or piece of fabric that can be used as a cape, and explain to the children that you are going to be "Captain Marvel."

Ask the children to tell you some things they have done in the last week to please Jesus. As they describe their accomplishments, marvel at what they have done.

Explain to the class that any good thing coming out of our lives is a miracle of God. He is the author and finisher of every good thing, even the good that comes from us.

## LUKE 7:10

And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick.

The centurion did not deserve Jesus' miracle that made the servant well. The centurion knew that. He knew he was not worthy to even have Jesus under his roof. But at the same time, Jesus loved this man very much, and He responded to the centurion's faith by healing his servant. **Jesus has absolute authority**, even over death.

It is through faith in Jesus that we invite Him into our circumstances and say, "not my way, Jesus, but Your way!" We need to recognize that we are helpless and hopeless without Him. We need to go to Him first because **Jesus has absolute authority**.

Anyone can come to Jesus. Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "Whosoever" is referring to anyone who wants to come to Him, including you and me. We, like the centurion, know we are unworthy to receive Jesus. But all we have to do is ask Jesus to do His work and will in our lives. We can invite Him to be involved with our circumstances and rule over us. Jesus is the only one worthy of such faith.

Today and everyday we can be like the centurion. We can simply trust Jesus in everything. **Jesus has absolute authority**.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of submission to the authority of the Lord. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.