**Surprising Truths:**

**Jesus Marvels, Pt 2**

*Luke 7:1-10*

**Context**

To help us, the placement of the story in the larger Luke narrative is important and specific. Jesus finished a sermon in chapter six and heads to Capernaum at the start of chapter seven. Next, a Gentile centurion has a sick slave who was highly regarding by his owner. The owner is well regarding by the Jewish people and seems to be a worshipper of Yahweh. To appeal to Jesus, he implores his Jewish friends to request of Jesus that He heal his slave. As the story unfolds, we see Jesus marveling at this Gentile’s faith—in contrast to the unbelief of the Jews who are making the request.

We know that many people marveled at Jesus—rightly so. They were constantly amazed at what He said and did. The Greek word here (*Thaumazō*) means—to wonder at; to marvel at; to be astonished at; to be amazed at.

But Jesus only marveled at one man in a positive way because of his faith.

**Luke 7:9**—*Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, “I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.”*

**Mark 6:4-6**—*Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household.”****5****And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.****6****And He wondered at their unbelief.*

The fact that Jesus could be astonished is a reflection of His true humanity. Luke strategically places this story following Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount not only because it happened immediately followed the message, but it also connects the sermon to a living illustration of how a true believer lives. It functionally gives flesh and blood to the points Jesus made.

**3 important settings in the narrative**

1. **The chronological setting**

**Luke 7:1**—*When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum.*

1. **The Geographical setting**

**Luke 7:1**—*When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum.*

* + 1. The sermon was delivered on the hillside
    2. Jesus then walks to a very nearly city Capernaum
       1. This became headquarters during Jesus’ Galilean ministry
       2. They would have heard a lot of Jesus’ teaching
    3. Centurion

**2***And a centurion’s slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die.*

* + - 1. He is a captain in the Roman army; that title was earned—loyalty, courage, bravery, fortitude and strength
      2. “Centurion”—usually 100 +/- men under him
      3. That would be equivalent to a captain in today’s military
      4. He reported to Harod Antipas. He had been given rule of this area and was a pagan ruler
      5. Everything about Roman (gentile) governance in Israel over them was repulsive to the Jews
      6. Romans soldiers were primarily there to keep the peace (Pax Romana) and collect taxes
      7. Seemingly everything that the Jews could have hated about this man was present
      8. However, the narrative is quite the opposite—the Jews considered him a worthy man

**Luke 7:4-5**—*When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, “He is worthy for You to grant this to him;****5****for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue.”*

* + - 1. He bridged the gap of the animosity towards the gentiles as a whole and has won their favor and affection
    1. Although Jesus came to His own, it was an “outsider” (non-Jew) who demonstrates true faith

**John 1:11**—*He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.*

**Luke 7:9b**—“*I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.”*

* + 1. When Jesus wanted an illustration of a true disciple, He had to use a Gentile

1. **The Theological setting**

**Luke 7:2-10**—*And a centurion’s slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die.****3****When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave.****4****When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, “He is worthy for You to grant this to him;****5****for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue.”****6****Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, “Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof;****7****for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.****8****For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.”****9****Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, “I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.”****10****When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.*

* + 1. The theology of discipleship in chapter 6
       1. A True disciple
          1. Repentant over their sin, **vv20-21**
          2. Loves his enemies with an extraordinary love, **vv27-29**
          3. Generous, **vv30, 38**
          4. Merciful, **vv31, 36**
          5. Compassionate, **v32**
          6. Do good, **v33**
          7. Righteous, **v37**
          8. Devoted to the Lord, **v40**
          9. Obedient, **vv46-49**
       2. Genuine believers build their house on the rock and avoids the judgment
       3. Jesus’ sermon is in stark contrast to the Jewish legalism (apostasy)
          1. They thought they were righteous (self-righteous)
          2. They did not see their sin
          3. They loved those they chose to love—those who looked and acted and believed what they believed
          4. They were judgmental and condemning
          5. They were not righteous, but unrighteous

**Matthew 23:13-15**—*But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.****14****[Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation.]* ***15****“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.*

* + - * 1. The contrast between the Jewish system and the gentile centurion could not be more pronounced
    1. The practical example of discipleship in chapter 7—consider the man
       1. He had great love for his slave, **v2**
          1. *Slave* (*doulos)—*general term used for a slave or servant
          2. We don’t know what kind of a slaved he was
          3. There would have been a serviced provided to his master
          4. *Pais*—boy or young man (Cf. **Matthew 8:6**)

**v7**—… *just say the word, and my servant [*pais*] will be healed*

* + - * 1. Boys were assigned to military men (intern) to learn manhood, service, military prowess, etc.; training would have occurred
        2. In many situations, these slaves were abused; Slaves had no rights nor recourse. Slaves were tools to be used and discarded at the will of their master
        3. None of that is the case here; quite the opposite

**v2a**—*And a centurion’s slave, who was highly regarded by him…*

* + - * 1. highly regarded *(entimos)—p*recious

**Luke 14:8**—“*When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him,*

* + - 1. His love for this boy sends him to Jesus, **v3**
         1. The centurion’s love and care for this boy was unusual and extraordinary
         2. Someone told him about Jesus—and it was a more complete understanding
         3. With so many miracles performed, he would have had a general understanding of what He was capable of

**Luke 4:14**—*And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district.*

**Luke 4:37**—*And the report about Him was spreading into every place in the surrounding district.*

* + - * 1. He calls Jesus “Lord”, **v6**
      1. He makes a request of Jesus, but does not do it directly, but through others
         1. He sent some Jewish elders (*presbuteros*)to be his representative/intercessor
         2. For this man to get Jewish elders to do his bidding before a roman soldier is pretty remarkable

**Matthew 8:5**—*And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him*

* + - * 1. Why did he not go himself?

**vv6-7**—… *for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof;****7****for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You*

* + - * 1. There must have been more to his understanding of who Jesus was that just a healer
        2. As limited as that might be, he definitely knew his own unworthiness
      1. The Jews respond by earnestly entreating Jesus

**v4**—*When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, “He is worthy for You to grant this to him*

* + - * 1. They didn’t go under compulsion
        2. They didn’t go because they were threatened (physical pain or extortion)
        3. Rather, they beg Jesus because the man is “worthy”
        4. Any animosity they might otherwise have had is not present here
        5. **Sidebar:** the Jewish religious system was (and is) all about personal worth. One’s worthiness was earned; and therefore, they had divine favor because of their “worthiness” (self-righteousness and ceremonial observances)

***Luke 18:11****—The Pharisee stood and was praying these things to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.****12****I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’****13****But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his chest, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’****14****I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other, for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

* + - * 1. The centurion was likely a proselyte(a Jewish convert)
      1. The elders: *He loves our nation*, **v5**
         1. He understood that the people of God were the Jews
         2. He understood that they were people of the covenant
         3. Loves (*agapaō*)—the highest form of love; love of the will; noble love
      2. The elders: *he built our synagogue,* **v5**
         1. He was given sole credit for building it
         2. The synagogue would have been a place of worship and instruction
         3. He was a wealthy and generous man
         4. He seemingly had an interest in understanding the OT and the law of Moses and to worship the true God
         5. An understanding of the true God did not come from the majority of Jews surrounding this man

**Romans 2:24**—*For “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,”…*

* + - 1. Jesus:  *And Jesus \*said to him, “I will come and heal him.” (****Matthew 8:7****)*
      2. But the man sends word to not have Jesus come into his home (again he sends representatives)

***6****Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, “Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof;****7****for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.*

* + - * 1. The Jews are saying: Jesus, You have to do this
        2. The Centurion is saying: I’m not worthy
        3. Don’t miss the contrast
      1. Centurion: *do not trouble Yourself*
         1. *Trouble (skullō)—*extremely annoyed, agitated
         2. Don’t come near me as I am an unworthy sinner
         3. He might not fully understand grace and mercy, but he does understand personal sin
      2. Centurion: *just say the word,* **v7**

**Matthew 8:8**—*But the centurion said, “Lord, I am not good enough for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.* (LSB)

* + - * 1. That is great faith
        2. That is what causes Jesus to marvel
      1. He was a man under authority and understands how it works
         1. An argument from the lesser to the greater
         2. I have authority; You have greater authority
         3. He understood that Jesus has authority over life and death
         4. You can say the word and heal my dying servant
      2. Jesus: marveled at one and rebuked the others

***9****Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, “I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.”*

* + - * 1. There was no example that He could use in all of Israel

**Matthew 8:10**—*Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.*

* + - * 1. They were so entrenched in their system and apostasy that they could not see the reality right in front of them
    1. Jesus: *Many will come from the east and west, but the sons of the kingdom will be shut out*

**Matthew 8:11-13**—*And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;****12****but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”****13****And Jesus said to the centurion, “Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed that very moment.*

* + - 1. *“From the east and west”* is a reference to Gentile nations
      2. Heaven will be filled with Gentiles
      3. But not with Sons of the Kingdom (Jews)
    1. Jesus: *Go your way. Let it be done to you as you have believed*
    2. The slave is *healed that very moment*

**Conclusion**

Do we, like this Centurion who amazed Jesus, so live our lives in a way (love, generosity, mercy, devotion, love of God and the people of God) so move the Savior that He would say that same of us? To do anything less than what He has called us to would misrepresent Him.