

Don't Focus on What You Deserve – Focus on Whom You Believe

- **Vs. 1-2.** Spoiler alert: J heals servant; don't worry; he'll be fine; going make it. So really, today's Gos not so much re sick servant; it's re what means have faith/J – kind/faith we see in this cent. Cents: Rom army captns; commndd 100 soldiers undr them. As Roms, respctd by cntrymn; but as Gentls, hated by Jews. But here in Caprnm, this cent is diff: Jews love this guy; they: **vs. 5.** Prob means used own \$ to build syng; and prob means: proselyte, convert to Judiasm, belvr/Lord, not false gods/Rome. So: he's belvr, builds syn, worships there, respctd by locals, and most imply: bels in J. **Vs. 3.** He'd heard re mrcls & healings J'd performed & belvd J was God's Son. So when hears J is nearby, turns to J for help.
- But here's where story takes intrstng turn. Listen what Jewish eldrs say re cent: **vs. 4-5.** "Desrvs this. J, he desrvs have you heal servant. Good man; you owe it him. Desrvs." Just think re that. Are they right? Certly: religious, generous, respctbl kind/guy you'd like be around. But does he desrv this from J? Did J owe him smthng? **Vs. 4b.** Correct?
- Today, as considr faith this Rom cent, very imp for us as bels learn not focus on what we desrv (think), bec Scrptrl fact/matter: we don't desrv anthing good fr God. We may smtms think we're good ppl; may be religious, generous, respctbl kind/ppl you'd like be arnd. But bec of our sins & inheritd sinful nature, we desrv nthng good fr God; in fact, what desrv: God's punshmnt! But that's counterintutv to way wrld thinks. Wrld evaluates ppl on basis of good they do. It's logical: good prsn desrvs good thngs, while prsn who breaks law & gets in trbl desrvs punshmt; have it coming; makes sense. But when you evaluate humanity way Scrptr does (not way society), you realize: God's law levels us; puts us all on same plane. We're all guilty/sinful. Today in Gal 3, Paul: **"We were held in custody under the law" (23).** And in Rom 3: **"All have sinned & fall short glory/God" (23).** In God's courtrm, no "good ppl." And God doesn't owe us thing! So we cannot look around at others or ourslvs, say: we're good ppl; we desrv good fr God (that's how Jews felt re cent). Nor can we look at all "bad ppl" out there, sinners, say: they desrv God's punshmnt (bec then we ignore sinner inside us).
- Today this Scrptr tchs us: don't focus on what desrv (think) – bec if God actly gave us what we really desrvd, we'd be in wrld/hurt. Just look at cross; look at bleeding/suffrng/dying Sav hanging on cross for you, and you'll see what you desrv. That's what you desrv; what I desrv – bec in darknss of our hrts we not "good ppl;" we're sinners who need Sav. And so our loving/sinless Sav J, who alone desrvs all glory & praise, took punshmt/dth/hell we desrv (he certly didn't desrv it!); and endurd it all for us, to save us!
- So don't focus on what desrv; instd, focus on whom bel. Focus on J! Cent focused on J. Listen to msg he sends to J: **vs. 6cd-7a.** Notice diff! Jews: **vs. 4b.** Cent: **vs. 6d.** What humble attitude! Didn't focus on what he desrvd; focused on whom he belvd. Focused on J.
- Even said: **vs. 7b.** "J, you don't even have trbl self come into my house, bec I know you're Son/God. And I know: all you have do just say word, bec your word so pwrfl that whtvr you say is done." That's faith of this cent! **Vs. 8.** IOW, "I respct: authrty; vrbl cmmnd." Remem: he's an army captn w/100 soldiers under him; when he gives vrbl cmmnd, they obey! At same time, has genrls over him; when they give cmmnd, he obeys! So he respcts: authrty, vrbl cmmnd. And undrstnds that when J, to whom all authrty hvn/earth given (Mt 28:18), gives vrbl cmmnd, that cmmnd is obeyed!
- I wonder: we undrstnd that? Realize pwr & authrty of J's word? When J calmd storm, discs: even wind/waves obey (Mk 4:41). When drove out evil spirits: they forced obey (Mt 8:32). When created wrld, said let be light: light (Gen 1:3). When coms his angels conc us guard us in all ways: they obey (Ps 91:11). When commndd Laz come out tomb: dth releasd grip on Laz, & he walkd out alive (Jn 11:43-44). So when J speaks, word obeyd! His word has authrty over evthng in this unvr: orbits/planets, forces/nature, history/nations, health/bodies, even dth itself – evthng submits to the authrty of J's word. And cent belvd that! So when his servant got sick, he focused on whom he belvd. And J: **vs. 9c.**

- If we want have great faith (I think we do; want be like this cent, have great faith), then have realize: great faith does not focus on self, or on what thinks desrvs. Great faith focuses on a great Sav. Great faith clings to, bels in, focuses on our great Sav JC and bels J's pwrfl word. So when J says, [we say]:
 - Surely w/you always, end/age (Mt 28:20) – I bel!
 - Take heart, son; sins forgiven (Mt 9:2) – I bel!
 - Peace I leave w/you; my peace I give you (Jn 14:27) – I bel!
 - Whtvr you ask in my name, Father will give you (Jn 15:16) – I bel!
 - In my Father's house, many rooms; I'm going there prep place for you (Jn 14:2-3) – I bel!
 - Evone who looks to Son & bels in him: etrnal life; I'll raise them up at last day (Jn 6:40) – I bel!
 Great faith focuses on great Sav; it bels what he says. When doubts trbl your hrt; when guilt trbls your consenc; when catastrophs come into your life; when smone close to you gets sick (like cent's servant); no matter what haps to you in life – trust authrty of J's pwrfl word, and focus on whom you bel.
- I know I already spoiled ending for you: servant gets healed. **Vs. 10.** But for as miraculous a healing that was, it's really not focus of this lesson. In today's Gos, J is tchng us: not focus on what we desrv (think), bec surely we desrv nothing good fr God. But rather, focus on whom you bel. Focus on J; focus on what he's done for you, on cross & w/empty tomb. Focus on the gracious proms he speaks you; and bel what says. Don't focus on what desrv; focus on whom bel – bec when you do that, that's evidnc of great faith.

Luke 7:1-10

¹When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. ²There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. ³The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. ⁴When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, ⁵because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." ⁶So Jesus went with them.

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. ⁷That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

⁹When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." ¹⁰Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

