

September 24 – The story of the Roman Centurion is told in **Matthew 8:5-13** and **Luke 7:1-10**. In both instances this story follows the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus has just finished his longest recorded teaching. The Luke passage immediately follows up Jesus' teaching about building on the rock. For a Roman Centurion to ask a Jew for anything is the first thing that gets our attention. In Matthew he makes the request himself. Luke records he asks Jewish elders to do it. Either way, it is an unusual request. Let's presume the servant was actually Jewish. This was typical for Roman Soldiers to have servants from the territory they occupied. When a servant can no longer fulfill their duties standard practice was to kill them. This Roman officer wanted to keep his servant and didn't want him to die. If this servant was just another hired hand, this officer wouldn't have bothered to even ask Jesus. This man showed compassion to one he was not expected to show compassion to. Here are a couple of questions to think about: When you have I showed compassion when it was totally unexpected? How can I be more compassionate to those I don't know but who need compassion?

September 25 – **Read Matthew 8:5-6**. According to Matthew, this Roman Officer approached Jesus personally. He didn't let his position deter him from asking Jesus for help. He didn't let his pride get in the way. He didn't let his status get in the way. He didn't let his self-sufficiency get in the way. Nor his race, language, money, distance or time kept him away from seeking Christ. We, on the other hand, find any reason we can not to come to Jesus – busyness, work, hobbies, kids activities, laziness, football games. If this soldier didn't let anything come between himself and Jesus, what is stopping us?

September 26 - **“When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him. “This man deserves to have you do this, because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue.”** (Luke 7:4-5). When the elders petitioned Jesus on the Centurion's behalf, they painted a glowing picture of the 'supposed enemy occupier.' This man isn't acting like one who is simply keeping the “Pax Romana” (The Peace of Rome). Could it be there was a genuine spark of wanting whom the Jewish people were serving was alive in him? Living in such close proximity of the people maybe he had an opportunity to review his life and compare what he previously knew to that of those living for God. Perhaps he wanted more and participated in the only way he knew how. Who knows? We can only imagine that in some way or form God was working on his heart. We live and work among many people who need the ‘The Peace of God’ in their lives – are they seeing something in the way you speak, the way you handle difficulty, in the way you live to desire what you have?

September 27 – Read Luke 7:6-8. The centurion shows his faith not only by acknowledging his own unworthiness, but also recognizing that the power of Jesus is so great that this request is so small. The Jewish people at the time did not believe that long distance miracles were possible, but the centurion reasons otherwise, based on his own experiences. The centurion can issue commands and receive obedience at a distance because he is under authority of the Roman Empire, which rules the land. Therefore, Jesus, as a ruler under the authority of the God of Israel, merely has to issue a command from His own mouth to banish powers that are subject to Him, such as sickness. He knew the word of Christ and His authority were enough. He believed Christ's words before He saw the works. Do we?

September 28 – Read Luke 7:6-10. Both Luke ([Luke 7:9](#)) and Matthew ([Matthew 8:10](#)) use the Greek word *thaumazo* (thou-mad'-zo) which we translate "marveled" or "amazed" to describe Jesus' response to the centurion's faith. The only time this word is used to describe Jesus' response to others' faith is in [Mark 6:6](#), when he marvels at the lack of faith in the people of Nazareth, where he grew up. The centurion was one the most unlikely persons to amaze Jesus. He was a Gentile. Doubtless he had a pagan upbringing. He was a Roman, stationed in Palestine to subject the Jews to the Emperor's rule. He was a man of war. He achieved the rank of centurion by distinguishing himself above others in the brutal Roman martial arts. Not exactly the résumé you'd expect for becoming one of the Bible's great heroes of faith. This centurion is a reminder to us that "man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" ([1 Samuel 16:7](#)). We will be surprised someday when Jesus doles out rewards. Most of the great ones among us will probably have lived in obscurity. Jesus is not as impressed with titles, degrees, and achievements as we are. He is impressed with those who really do humbly believe him. John Piper once quoted Billy Graham, saying, "God will not reward fruitfulness, he will reward faithfulness."