

THE WORD BECAME FLESH



CREATION AND THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN HISTORY

#15 - The Centurion and the Widow Luke 7:1-17

PICTURES (Note: Inserted in brackets at the appropriate place in the lesson is the number of the picture to show the students.)

- 15-1 The Centurion and Jesus
- 15-2 Jesus raising the widow's son

REVIEW (Before teaching lesson)

- **Journal Review:** Ask students to share an important truth that they learned from their journal readings at home that week. Share some of your own insights.
- **Previous Lesson Review:** (Use the visual from the last lesson to aid in review)
Why are we not to judge others? Why are we to forgive and give to others? Who will a student be like? What does that mean? What are we to do before we try to take a speck of sawdust out of someone else's eye? What does that mean? What is a tree recognized by? What does that mean in terms of people? What does the wise person do with Jesus' teaching? What does the foolish person do with Jesus' teaching?
- **Big Question Review: What makes a person wise?**
Let the students give their answers to the question.
- **Bible Verse Review: Matthew 7:24-25**
We are to treat others the way we want to be treated.

(²⁴Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.) ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

LESSON CONTENT

Note: The Bible verses included in the lesson are from the NIV 1984 edition. The wording of the questions is derived from that version. If another version of the Bible is used, questions may need to be adapted.

Who ruled in Judah where Jesus lived? Judah, the land where Jesus lived, was occupied and controlled by the Roman Empire. The Romans in Judah were soldiers and government officials who told the Jews what to do. Some Jews cooperated with the Romans but most of the Jews hated the Romans and wouldn't have anything to do with them if they could help it.

Who did the Old Testament prophets say would come to the Jews? God would send a Messiah (Savior) to the Jews.

What did the Jews think the Messiah (Savior) would deliver them from? At the time of Jesus, many of the Jews thought the Messiah (Savior) would come to deliver them from the oppression and tyranny of Rome. They didn't recognize that their biggest problem was their own sin and separation from God.

(picture 15-1) In this lesson, a Roman soldier, a centurion who was the leader of 100 men, looked to Jesus to heal his sick servant. He was considered a good man by the Jews who knew him. The fact that he was a Roman didn't stop Jesus from wanting to help him. In fact, Jesus was very impressed by the centurion's faith.

Luke 7:1-6a

¹When Jesus had finished saying all this in the hearing of the people, 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.

What caused the Centurion to send for Jesus? His valued servant was sick and he had heard of Jesus. He believed that Jesus had both the power and authority to heal.

Why did the elders of the Jews encourage Jesus to go to him and heal his servant? He was a good man who had done good things for them.

Why do you think the Centurion didn't go to Jesus himself? He probably sent the elders because he thought Jesus would respond to them because they were Jews, but not to him because he was a Roman.

Luke 7:6b-10

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.

Why did the centurion say he didn't go to Jesus himself? He didn't consider himself worthy to have Jesus come into his house. He was humble and understood who Jesus was. He didn't think too highly of himself, even though he was an important leader. He must have recognized the special relationship of the Jewish people to God.

What did the centurion believe about Jesus? All Jesus had to do was speak the word and his servant would be healed.

Why did he believe that? He understood what having power and authority enables one to do. He recognized that Jesus was God and had the power and authority to speak and overcome disease.

Why was Jesus amazed at the centurion's faith? Most people thought Jesus had to touch them to be healed. This man believed that Jesus only had to speak and healing would occur. His faith in what Jesus would be able to do surpassed that of the Jews who had a history of God working miracles in their midst.

What do you think was the impact of this healing? It probably opened the eyes of many Romans to see Jesus and made them aware that the Jewish God loved them also and would heal them if they believed. It also showed that Jesus had all power, that the words he spoke caused things to happen. It may have caused the Jews to consider their lack of faith. It shows that actions are evidence of faith.

There are three important things to learn from the Centurion about his character and faith. What do you think they are?

1. The Centurion was humble. He recognized he was unworthy of Jesus showing him favor.
2. He had faith in Jesus and his power to heal which means he saw Jesus for who he really is.
3. He knew he could ask Jesus to show him favor. He knew the heart of God.

The Gospel of Luke continues with another healing.

Luke 7:11-17 (picture 15-2)

¹¹Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. ¹²As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. ¹³When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry."

¹⁴Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" ¹⁵The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

¹⁶They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people." ¹⁷This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

What happened when Jesus saw the widow? His heart went out to her. He felt her pain. What does that tell you about Jesus? He grieves over our suffering and the condition of our lives.

How did Jesus bring the young man back to life? He touched the coffin and spoke. Again, he didn't touch the man. What does that show about Jesus? Life resides in Jesus. He is God. No one but God can restore life. He has the power and authority to do so.

How is healing a person different from bringing a person back to life? There is a large difference in degree. Life is still in a person who is healed. Also, the body most often heals itself of disease. That is part of the design of creation. Once life is gone, however, it is gone. The body cannot bring itself back to life again. God is the source of life. Once God brought forth life, the design is that life has to come from life; it doesn't come out of something that has just died even though everything needed for life is still physically there.

How did the people respond to what Jesus did? First they were filled with awe and praised God. Then they considered Jesus to be a great prophet who God had sent to help them. They still didn't understand the fullness of who Jesus is. He didn't match their idea of what the Messiah would be like.

In the lesson when Jesus healed the paralytic we talked about how healings and miracles showed that Jesus is God and has the power and authority to forgive sin. It is easy to believe or have faith at the moment of the miraculous. When is it hard to hold on to faith? In the midst of struggles when it seems one is alone and God isn't working on one's behalf.

How does one maintain faith when there are no miracles or tangible evidence that God is at work? We have to stand on God's promises and remember who he is and what he has already done. We can't focus on circumstances; we have to hold on to the hope of the eternal and understand the nature of God.

Hebrews 11:6 *speaks about faith: And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

How does faith please God? Faith shows that you believe what God has revealed about himself through his word and his creation. You trust him to be who he says he is.

What is the result of faith? You please God. His favor is with you. If you earnestly seek him, he rewards you.

What kind of reward does faith bring? Besides eternal life, It brings God's pleasure, a right relationship and closeness to God and the benefit of doing things his way here on earth.

LESSON WRAP-UP

- **Overview Questions:** Who was the centurion? Why did he send for Jesus? What did he tell Jesus before Jesus got to his house? Why was Jesus amazed at the centurion? What did Jesus do for the widow? Why did he do that?
- **Thought Questions:** What is evidence of your faith? How has evidence of someone else's faith impacted you?
- **Prayer:** Thank Jesus he is your Savior and that he has revealed the fullness of God to people. Pray that you would truly believe all that he is and has said and that your faith would increase. Pray that the way you respond to difficulties would be evidence of your faith.
- **The Big Question: What is faith?**
Let the students give their answers to the question. Share the memory verse. Ask how it answers the question.
- **Memory Verse: Hebrews 11:6**
Faith is believing God.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

ACTIVITIES (Completed after the lesson)

Any age appropriate activity can be included which fits into the class time. The activities with a star are included on the class notes.

- ★ **Lesson Notes:** Ask the students to summarize in one sentence what the lesson was about. Then have them give three main points covered in the lesson. An example is below.

Theme: Jesus was amazed at the centurion's faith, because he believed that Jesus could speak the word and his servant would be healed.

1. The centurion sent for Jesus because his servant was sick and he believed Jesus could heal him if Jesus were willing.
2. When Jesus was on the way to the centurion's house the centurion sent his friends to tell him just to speak the words to heal his servant because he was unworthy to have Jesus come into his home.
3. Jesus recognized and commended the man's faith and the servant was healed.

Why do I need to know this? Actions are evidence of faith. The centurion is a model of how we should come to Jesus. We need to recognize that we are unworthy. We need to believe that Jesus is able and willing to act on our behalf. We need to ask him to act on our behalf.

★ **Memory Verse:** Read the memory verse on the cover of the booklet and then have the students fill in the blanks in the verse in the inside.

★ **Activity Page:** Faith Acrostic Poem

Instructions: Write an acrostic poem for the meaning of faith using the letters from the word faith. An example is below

F – Fix eyes on Jesus

A – Acknowledge who Jesus is

I – Implore (ask) Jesus for help

T – Thank Jesus for his love and kindness

H – Honor Jesus in your life

★ **Further Understanding:** Bible Study Skills

Instructions:

1. Read the whole passage below to the students as they read along in their Bibles or on the discussion notes.
2. Read the passage verse by verse and have the students explain each verse.
3. Have the students extract one important truth from the passage. This can be done as an entire class or you can break into pairs or small groups.
4. Have the students answer the additional two questions: How can you apply this truth in your life? What will be the result of applying that truth?

James 2:20-26 - Through our deeds we demonstrate our faith.

²⁰You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?²¹ Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.²⁴ You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

²⁵In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Questions: Why do faith and deeds have to go together? What does that mean for us?

The daily journal inside the booklet has six readings that relate to a theme. It would be beneficial for the teacher to work through the journal readings also.

Journal Focus: What can be done through faith?

Reading 1: John 14:8-14 Through faith we can do what Jesus does.

Who was doing his work through Jesus? What does Jesus say he will do for us? What does it mean to ask in Jesus' name? For what purpose will Jesus do the things we ask? What does that mean for us?

Reading 2: Hebrews 11:1-6 Faith pleases God.

What is evidence? How is faith evidence? Why does believing in creation take faith? Why can't we please God without faith?

Reading 3: Hebrews 11:7-16 Through faith we become heirs of righteousness.

What was the result of Noah's faith? What was the result of Abraham's faith? What do we have to focus on to act in faith? What does that mean for us?

Reading 4: Hebrews 11:17-28 Through faith we can choose what is of greater value.

What did Moses do through faith? Why was he able to do that? What does that mean?

Reading 5: Hebrews 11:29-40 Through faith we receive better things.

What are some of the things people in the Old Testament did through faith? What are things that happened to them because of their faith? What can you learn from this?

Reading 6: James 5:13-18 Through faith we offer effective prayers.

What can prayers of faith do? What do we have to be to have powerful and effective prayers? How do we become righteous? Why do we continually have to uncover and confess our sin?