

Healing Series: Sermon 1. Luke 7 Healing of the Centurion's Servant Linda E Hunter

Today we begin a three-part sermon series exploring the theme of healing, and how we can receive for ourselves the wholeness that God offers. Over the next three weeks, we will explore what it means to experience true healing in every aspect of our lives—body, mind, and spirit and how we can invite that healing into our lives.

On the 2nd March, we will all have the opportunity to receive the laying on of hands and anointing with oil. In preparation for that Sunday, I encourage you to take home the leaflet you were given today and use the prayer on the back as you prepare to receive this ministry.

Today, we focus on the powerful lesson about healing that we find in the faith of the Centurion. This story from the gospel of Luke marks the beginning of our exploration into the faith that leads to healing.

Healing is not just about physical restoration—it's about wholeness—being made complete in body, mind, and spirit. It's about the deep peace and restoration that come from God's touch. This story gives us not only a glimpse into the power of Jesus to heal, but also into the faith that invites healing into our lives.

The passage begins by introducing us to a Roman centurion, a man of high military rank, stationed in Capernaum, who had a servant who was very sick and close to death. Despite his position of authority, this centurion is a man of humility and compassion.

(We need to note is that this centurion was not a Jew, but a Gentile. He was a Roman officer, a member of an occupying force in Israel, yet he showed a profound respect for the Jewish people. We are told that he had built a synagogue for the people of Capernaum. This was no small gesture—this was a symbol of generosity and a deep respect for the Jewish faith and its traditions.)

So, when the centurion hears about Jesus and his miraculous works, he sends Jewish elders to ask Jesus to heal his servant. Now, the centurion's request is remarkable. As a Roman soldier, he had no obligation to reach out to a Jewish teacher. He doesn't seek Jesus for himself, but out of compassion for a servant—someone who, in that culture, would have been considered of little consequence. His love for his servant moved him to act, and his actions demonstrate a compassion that goes beyond what we might expect from someone in his position.

The centurion's faith **isn't motivated by personal** gain but by his love and compassion for his servant. His faith is a faith that sees beyond status, beyond what is expected, and beyond boundaries. His actions teach us that healing begins when we see and care for others as God sees and cares for them. God's healing power transcends wealth, status, or social standing. True healing comes not from external factors, but from our hearts. By embracing compassion, kindness, and empathy, we align ourselves with God's love, creating opportunities for healing in ourselves and others.

When Jesus is approached with the centurion's request, he agrees to go with them, but before he arrives, the centurion sends word again. He says that he is not worthy for Jesus to enter his home.

He **doesn't even** think himself worthy enough to approach Jesus in person. Instead, he believes that if Jesus simply speaks the word, his servant will be healed.

This response reveals a lot about the centurion's faith. Despite his high rank, he recognizes that Jesus **has an authority far beyond his own**. He doesn't need Jesus to physically be present in his home to heal; he trusts that Jesus' word is enough. This **humility is striking**, especially coming from a man in such a powerful position.

We are reminded that **healing begins with humility**. So often, we can think we need to be "worthy" of God's help or healing, or we may feel that we must prove ourselves to God, before we can receive his blessings. But the centurion's example shows that healing comes not because we are worthy, but **because of God's grace and power**. We come to God, **as we are** with all our differences, our hopes, our fears, our joys, our sorrows our thanks, our inadequacies and our insecurities We come with faith.....to receive that grace.... to receive healing and wholeness. We come just as we are.

When Jesus hears the centurion's words, he is amazed. He tells the crowd around him that he has not found such great faith even in Israel. Jesus commends the centurion for his trust in the power of his word, **seeing in him a faith, a belief** that he, can heal from a distance.

The centurion understood that Jesus' power was not limited by the ordinary constraints of space and time. He trusted that Jesus had the authority to heal his servant, **and that trust was enough**.

In this, Jesus teaches us a profound lesson. True faith is not always about seeing the miracle or experiencing it in a physical sense—it's about **trusting in God's power** to act **even when** we cannot see or fully understand how he will do it.

The centurion's faith was based on the belief that God could work beyond the limits of human understanding.

This is the kind of faith we, too, are called to have—the kind of faith that fully trusts in God's ability to heal, restore, and make whole. It's a faith that goes beyond our limited understanding and circumstances. Unlike the world's standards, it does not rely on what we can see, touch, or control, but instead, it rests in the unwavering authority of Jesus. This faith believes that with God, **all things are possible**, and that his power is not bound by our limitations.

So, what does this story teach us about faith and healing? First, healing and wholeness are deeply connected to the faith we have in Jesus Christ. Faith is not just about believing that God can heal; it's about believing that God **will heal** and trusting his authority over **every situation**.

Just like the centurion, we must come to God in humility, acknowledging that he is the one with the power to heal, and that **our faith in him** is the key to receiving healing.

Faith also involves action. The centurion didn't just believe Jesus could heal; he took the step of sending representatives to ask for healing on behalf of his servant.

It is not enough to simply hope for healing from a distance; we must approach Jesus, bringing our need before him in faith, and trusting that he will answer.

Wholeness, in its fullest sense, is about restoration— in body, mind, and spirit. It is about healing that touches every part of our lives. This is the kind of healing we are invited to experience. When

we come to Jesus in faith, we open ourselves to his transformative work, which will ultimately bring us to wholeness and peace.

As we reflect on this passage, it's important to ask ourselves: Where do we need healing in our lives? Are we ready to receive that healing by trusting in God's power, his authority, and his grace?

As we prepare for the opportunity to receive the laying on of hands and anointing with oil on 2nd March, I encourage you to approach that time with faith—faith that God accepts each of us as we are. The centurion's faith shows us that healing is not just about physical restoration; it is about wholeness—being made whole in every part of our lives. It's about bringing our needs to God in humility and trusting in his ability to heal in ways we cannot fully comprehend.

Take a moment to reflect:

Are there areas of your life where you need God's healing touch?

Are you willing to come to him in humility, in faith that he will bring wholeness to your life?

As we reflect on the enormity of God's grace, of his healing transformational love, of that opportunity freely given **to us** to receive wholeness, I sometimes find myself moved to tears. I wonder—how it makes you feel?"

Let us follow the example of the centurion, whose faith moved Jesus to act and brought healing to his servant.

May our faith, like his, invite the wholeness and healing of our lives that only Jesus can give us.