

THE CENTURION'S SERVANT



Passages to Study: Luke 7:1-10, Matthew 8:5-13.

Read with the class: Luke 7:1-10.

Texts for memorization:

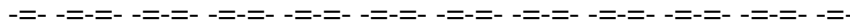
Younger: Romans 10:17.

Older Romans 10:16 and 17.



OBJECTIVES: To teach that:

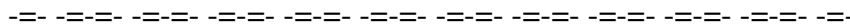
1. Everyone, without exception, may draw near to the Lord Jesus.
2. The grace of God is directed towards all, even though no one is deserving of it.
3. Faith that pleases God must be preceded by an attitude of humility.
4. The miracle produced in the servant proved the Lord's greatness to several individuals.



SCENE No. 1. VISUAL AIDS: At a city gate, figures of several disciples and Christ surrounded by sick persons seeking healing.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Jesus, returning from a time of extensive preaching and performing of miracles, named twelve disciples to be with Him, with the intention of sending them out to preach. (Luke 6:12-17).
 - After naming the disciples, the Lord performed a number of miracles.
 - As Jesus' fame spread, multitudes came seeking Him to be healed.
 - Many tried to touch Him (Luke 6:19) and others were carried to Him by friends who wanted to see them healed.
 - Jesus did many miracles, all of them meant to be signs so the people would believe on Him as the Messiah, the Son of God.
- Cmt.** It would be well to explain that a miracle is a happening that occurs contrary to or independent of the known laws of nature. It is a supernatural intervention by God. The miracles performed by the Lord Jesus were the result of His divine power. They were meant to confirm His words.
- Cns.** When the Lord Jesus gave teaching of some divine truth, and then performed a miracle, the miracle was proof that what He had said was true. His evident power meant He was trustworthy.
- Ejm.** To Martha about the resurrection (John 11), followed by Lazarus being raised from the dead. To the palsied man about his sins being forgiven, followed by his being told to stand and walk. (Mark 2)



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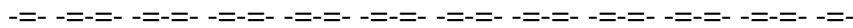
SCENE No. 2. VISUAL AIDS: At the centurion's house in Capernaum, figures of the sick servant in bed and the centurion speaking to some men.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Sug.** Explain that a centurion was a military man who had charge of one hundred Roman soldiers. Groups such as these were posted in different parts of the country to care for and defend the affairs of Rome in its far-flung empire.
- The centurion asked Jewish elders to go to Jesus and make a request on behalf of his sick servant.
- Since he was a Gentile and likely a Roman, the centurion felt he had no right to ask for Christ's help. It isn't clear if he highly esteemed Him because he thought Him to be the Messiah.
- It would seem that the centurion thought the Jews could obtain the favour he wanted for the healing of his sick servant, about to die.
- The love shown by the centurion for his servant, whom he has in his own house, reveals him to be a very caring person.
- The centurion's humility is seen in the concept that he has of himself.
- The Capernaum Jews had great appreciation for this official, for he had been very good to them.
- They recognized his love for their nation, different from the treatment the Jews sometimes received from their foreign masters. He had also arranged for a synagogue to be built for them.
- The Jewish elders did not have a personal faith in Christ, but because of the centurion's request, and on account of their friendship with him, they agreed to go to Jesus.
- Faith in Jesus Christ motivated the centurion to act on behalf of his servant.

Lsn. As events developed, especially later on with the expression of humility and confidence by the centurion, the Jews would be given reason to think about the Lord and whether He might be the Messiah.

Cmt. God uses means in which some are "innocently" involved in order to teach others important lessons.



SCENE No. 3. VISUAL AIDS: In Capernaum, figures of the persons who were sent, talking to Jesus.

DEVELOPMENT:

- The Jews told Jesus about the centurion's merits. They said the man "was worthy."
- They believed that the favour requested of Jesus was dependent on the good works the centurion had performed.

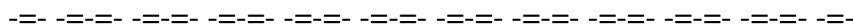
Cns. No human being is worthy of any benefit from God.

Sug. Take advantage of this part of the lesson to make a distinction between God's grace and works of merit.

Ctr. Later, the man himself confessed, "I am not worthy."

- The Lord Jesus did not have to be begged. He needed no inducements to accompany the messengers. **"Then Jesus went with them."** (Luke 7:6.)

Lsn. The Lord always responds to those who come to Him with their needs.



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SCENE No. 4. VISUAL AIDS: In a street near the centurion's house, figures of the Lord, accompanied by the first group who had been sent, talking with the second group of friends that had just arrived.

DEVELOPMENT:

- While Jesus was on His way to the centurion's house, the Roman officer was thinking about how insignificant he was, compared to the Lord's greatness.

Cns. If the centurion did not consider himself worthy, what is there to say about his sick servant?

Cmt. The principle point of this story is to reveal the true greatness of the Lord Jesus, a lesson that the Jews had yet to learn. Their "teacher" would be the very centurion they so much appreciated.

- The high regard in which the populace held the centurion is seen when another group of friends went on his behalf to talk to Jesus.

- The Jews heard the newly arrived group expressing the humility and faith felt by the centurion.

Cmt. The Jews do not deny what the centurion said about his authority. They were aware of the reality of military protocol. (Go, Come, Do)

- Despite his high rank, the centurion did not consider himself worthy to receive Jesus into his house. His confession was: "I am not worthy".

- By his confession, the centurion contradicted the reason offered by the Jews, which was "He is worthy".

- The centurion believed in the power of Jesus' word. He was convinced that Jesus could perform the miracle from afar by His word alone. He did not need to be physically present.

- This pleased the Lord Jesus, for among God's chosen people, He had not found evidence of such faith.

- Christ responded to the faith of the centurion and the servant was healed.

Cmt. The centurion had clearly understood that the Lord is omnipotent and omnipresent. The appreciation of the centurion for the Lord Jesus was superior to that of others.

Cns. This is an example of sincere faith.

Apl. It is not by merits but by grace that Jesus blesses and saves.

Sug. Question the children to find out their concept of the Lord Jesus.

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