

RECOGNIZING CHRIST'S LORDSHIP AUTHORITY

WHO is Jesus to you? How you answer is the all-important issue!

Matthew 8:5–6 (NKJV)

5 Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him,

6 saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.”

Capernaum was the adopted hometown of Jesus and the base of His ministry operations (cf. Mt. 4:13).

A centurion was a military leader who was in charge of 100 soldiers. This man was a Roman. Somehow, he knew about Jesus and sent to Jesus saying, “**Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.**”

Again, we note that he addressed Jesus as “**Lord**”. Lord, when used of Jesus, normally has the idea of authoritative-Master in the sense of God-Master. We saw this in Matthew 7:21-23, where “Lord” carries with it the idea of having the authority to determine who enters the kingdom and who does not. When used of the risen Lord the word “Lord” always carries with it the idea of God-Master!

The word “servant” (Gk. pais) is a word that can be understood as a young boy or a beloved servant, which is the case here (cf. Mt. 12:18; Isa. 42:1; Lk. 7:2).

Although Matthew makes it sound like the centurion came in person, Luke is clear that the centurion was addressing Christ through Jewish representatives who spoke for him just as though he was there in person (cf. Lk. 7:1-10).

Jesus is for everyone. The leper represented a societal “outcast”. Yes, he was Jewish but an outcast, nonetheless. This Roman centurion was a non-Jew but high society and very respected. So, we see Jesus ministering to the societal down-and-outer as well as to the societal elite. Jesus is for everyone no matter their societal status – whether Jew or Gentile.

Matthew 8:7 (NKJV)

7 And Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.”

Here again, Jesus is breaking all the cultural norms. Jewish law forbade Jews from having this kind of contact with Gentiles (cf. Jn. 18:28; Acts 10:28). However, Jesus, without hesitation, was willing to come. God's grace is extended to all – including Gentiles.

Note, too, there is no uncertainty with the Lord. He did not say, "***I will come and see what I can do.***" No, rather, He said with strong affirmation, "***I will come and heal him.***" There was no doubt about it. This is LORDSHIP authority being affirmed!

And don't you love this about Jesus? He was willing to touch a leper – an absolute "no, no". He was willing to come and openly associate with a Gentile – another absolute "no, no". I love how Jesus was so unconventional and often turned the cultural norms on their head. "***The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.***" (Jn 1:17).

Matthew 8:8 (NKJV)

8 The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.

Again, we have the word "***Lord***" (Gk. *kurios*), which, as mentioned, normally means "***master***" in addressing Christ. And here the centurion specifically connects it with the idea of LORDSHIP authority.

The centurion, in recognizing the LORDSHIP of Christ, recognizes his own unworthiness. That is humility. He says to Christ, "***Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof.***" So in humility, he recognized his unworthiness in view of Christ's surpassing greatness.

At the same time, he recognized Christ's authoritative power when he said, "***But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.***" And then gave this explanation of his reasoning.

Matthew 8:9 (NKJV)

9 For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

The whole issue in the mind of the centurion is the issue of AUTHORITY. He, as a man of some authority, understood this concept very well.

As a representative of Rome, he spoke with the emperor's authority. If he ordered a soldier under him to go or to come, it was to be obeyed, or the wrath of Rome would come down upon that soldier. If the soldier defied the order, he would not just merely be disobeying the centurion but the very authority of Rome.

“Precisely because Jesus was under God’s authority, He was vested with God’s authority, so that when Jesus spoke, God spoke. To defy Jesus was to defy God; and Jesus’ word must therefore be vested with God’s authority that is able to heal sickness.” – ***D.A. Carson***

This centurion understood the issue of authority, and He understood clearly that Jesus had LORDSHIP authority. And note this recognition of Lordship authority is clearly depicted as a matter of FAITH!

Again, we note this whole surrounding context is developing the idea of Christ as Lord and His authority – His Lordship authority. To recognize Christ as Lord is to properly recognize His authority!

Christ’s authority was God’s authority. His Word was powerful and effective because it was God’s Word! The centurion got this. He understood Christ’s Lordship authority, and it was a matter of FAITH. This is the reasoning of FAITH. It recognizes Christ for Who He is as Lord!