

SUCH GREAT FAITH

When the Roman Centurion expressed faith in Jesus Lordship authority to heal his servant by simply saying the Word, Jesus responded in this way.

Matthew 8:10 (NKJV)

10 When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!

The word “marveled” (ethaumasen) is used in reference to the people’s response to Christ’s teaching or miracles (cf. Lk. 9:42-43). But here it refers to Christ’s response. It means to be greatly amazed or astonished.

There are only two times we find Christ marveling. When Jesus went back to His hometown, and they did not accept Him, Mark 6:6 says, “***And He marveled because of their unbelief.***”

In contrast, here we have Christ marveling at the ***great faith*** of this Roman centurion. Christ’s statement serves as a rebuke of His own people, the Jews, while commending this Gentile centurion.

Now, some have struggled with this. ***Marvel*** expresses a human emotion in reaction to something unexpected. But if Jesus is God, how could this apply to Him? Nothing takes God by surprise.

“With a desire to protect Jesus’ deity, some scholars assume Jesus could not marvel at anything because of being omniscient. However, ignoring the reality of Jesus’ full humanity, including the emotive response of amazement, is just as grievous an error as weakening His deity.” – ***Ed Glasscock***

The answer to this is found in what is called the kenosis, as seen in Phil. 2:7.

Philippians 2:7 (NKJV)

7 but **made Himself** [lit “emptied Himself”] of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

The Greek word translated here as “***made***” is “***kenoo***,” which literally means “***emptied***.” In assuming the humble role of a servant, Christ set aside the independent use of His Divine attributes and the outward glory He knew as God before coming to earth.

Christ did NOT empty Himself of His deity, but only the outward manifestation of it. In His state of humility, Christ never did His own independent thing. Rather, He constantly subjected Himself to the will of the Father each step of the way.

“Non-use of divine attributes does not imply non-possession. Jesus chose not to exercise those attributes so as to be dependent upon the Father and to more realistically relate to the human experience.”

– **Ed Glasscock**

Faith takes God at His Word! That is what faith is – it is personally taking God at His Word. Romans 10:17 says, “***faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.***” Faith believes that what God says is true and rests upon it.

This is what the centurion did. He believed what Jesus said would happen. All Jesus had to do was to say it. He said to Jesus, “***only speak the word, and my servant shall be healed.***” Only God has this kind of authority! Faith recognizes Christ’s word as authoritative because He is Lord and can make it happen.

Now when a supposed faith healer jumps up and down and claims to make it happen by naming it and claiming it – that is just a man jumping up and down and making some kind of claim. But when Jesus says something that is different.

Do you know what the difference is between the supposed “faith healer” saying it and Jesus saying it? The difference is found in that word LORD! Jesus is Lord, and He alone has LORDSHIP authority. When He says the word, it happens precisely because He is Lord. Oh, and He alone is LORD! No one else can do this! All who make such claims are just playing God, and that is blasphemous!

Of course, the “faith healer” wants to claim he is standing on some promise taken out of context without consideration for the whole counsel of God. And of course, if you don’t get healed, it’s supposedly because you didn’t have enough faith. How convenient is that? They have figured out a scheme to deceive the masses in a way that avoids all personal culpability.

1 John 5:14–15 (NKJV)

14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that **if we ask anything according to His will**, He hears us.

15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

Faith says, like the leper, “*Lord, if you are willing, You can...*”. It doesn’t presume, but rather relies on God’s will in the matter. Faith says like the centurion, “*speak a word, and my servant will be healed.*” Again, faith recognizes dependence upon God’s will – God’s word in the matter. Jesus must “will” it, Jesus must speak the word!

For whatever reason, God is not always willing – He doesn’t always “speak the word” (so to speak). In Hebrews 11 (the great Hall of Faith chapter), we see that through faith many had great triumphant victories, but in the same breath the writer says, “Others were tortured...had trials of mockings and scourgings...being destitute, afflicted, tormented, to death.” (cf. Heb. 11:33-38). These, too, were people of faith!

Through it all, faith recognizes the sovereign authority of God over everything – come what may, but it doesn’t try to dictate or manipulate it. Faith recognizes that God can do anything, but He acts according to His sovereign purposes and will. Yes, sometimes the problem can be a lack of faith (cf. Mk. 6:5-6), but not always.

The point in context here in Matthew 8 is that **FAITH recognizes Christ’s Lordship authority.** This is the essence of faith! You cannot divorce true faith from the proper recognition of Christ’s authority! This is what it means to truly know Jesus as “Lord” – it means to recognize His authority as MASTER – as sovereign MASTER – as GOD-MASTER!

And saving faith personalizes it! As Thomas said, “My Lord and my God!” and as Jesus then said, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed.” (Jn. 20:28-29) This is what it means to truly BELIEVE in Jesus!