

The Faith That Amazed Jesus

Luke 7:1–10

Introduction

We are easily amazed, aren't we?

We're amazed when a quarterback throws a last-second touchdown to win the game. We're amazed at the sunset that paints the whole sky orange and purple. We're amazed at a toddler wobbling out their very first steps. We're amazed when we hear a beautiful symphonic piece or when an artist paints something so lifelike you think that it's moving.

That's us. We are easily amazed.

But have you ever stopped to ask: **What amazes Jesus?**

That's a different question, isn't it? Because if we're amazed by just about anything, what does it take to amaze the Son of God?

The Bible only records **two times** that Jesus was amazed. The first is in His hometown of Nazareth, where Mark tells us Jesus "marveled" at their unbelief (Mark 6:6). These were the people who had known Him His whole life, and yet when He taught, they scoffed: "Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's boy?" And Scripture says Jesus was amazed—not at their faith, but at their lack of it. That's not the kind of amazement you want to be known for.

The second time is here, in Luke 7 (and also in Matthew 8), when Jesus marvels at the faith of a man who was the last person you'd expect—a Roman centurion.

Not Peter. Not James. Not John. Not one of His disciples. Not a rabbi. Not someone who grew up reading Scriptures. A Roman soldier.

And what caught Jesus' attention wasn't this man's résumé, his accomplishments, or his rank. It was his **faith**.

So, here's the big idea we're going to unpack today: **What amazes Jesus is not power, status, or background—it's humble faith in His authority. (read text)**

I. The Unlikely Candidate (vv. 1–5)

Let's set the scene. Jesus has just finished preaching the Sermon on the Mount—the most famous sermon in history. He comes down into Capernaum, His adopted hometown. And right away He's approached by a group of Jewish elders with a surprising request.

They come on behalf of a Roman centurion. Now, a centurion was a commander of about a hundred soldiers. These were tough men. Battle-hardened. Used to violence. They rose through the ranks by distinguishing themselves in combat. To the Jewish people, a centurion wasn't a hero—he was a symbol of Roman oppression.

It's strange—almost shocking—that Jewish elders would come pleading with Jesus on behalf of a Roman soldier. And yet that's what happens. They beg Jesus to help him because his servant is sick and close to death.

And then they say something remarkable: *“He is worthy to have you do this for him, for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue”* (Luke 7:4–5).

Roman soldiers weren't in the habit of being fond of Jews. Here's one who didn't use his wealth or influence for himself—he built a synagogue for the people he ruled over. He loved Israel. He loved his servant.

This is the **least likely candidate for faith**. By all appearances, he's an outsider. He's not Jewish. He's not a disciple. He doesn't know the Scriptures. Yet somehow, his faith stands out.

It is football season again. Each fall, there's a Cinderella story. An underdog, with barely any resources, and they beat a powerhouse team, and the crowd goes wild. Nobody saw it coming. The centurion is the ultimate underdog of faith.

Or maybe you've been surprised by someone you didn't expect to show kindness. Someone you thought would be rough or uninterested, and yet they were the most generous, compassionate person in the room. That's the centurion.

Some of you may feel like the centurion. You think, “I don’t belong in church. My background disqualifies me. I don’t know enough. I haven’t been around long enough.” And yet, this passage reminds us: Jesus isn’t impressed by résumés. Faith can be found in the unlikeliest people.

But as surprising as his compassion is, what comes next is even more astonishing—the humility in his request.

II. The Humble Request (vv. 6–7)

As Jesus sets off toward his house, another group of friends intercept Him with a message from the centurion himself:

“Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word and let my servant be healed.”

This is breathtaking humility. He doesn’t say, “I built your synagogue, now you owe me.” He doesn’t say, “I’m a man of power, you should respect me.” He says, *“I am not worthy.”* This is a man with rank, influence, wealth, and respect. And yet, compared to Jesus, he realizes just how small he is.

Think about the difference between a **job application** and a **hospital bed**. In a job interview, you list all your accomplishments: your education, your experience, the reasons they should pick you. But in a hospital bed, none of that matters. You can’t rely on your résumé. All you can do is cry out, “Help me.” That’s the centurion’s posture.

Or think about kids. They’re refreshingly honest about their limits. A little child doesn’t say, “I’ll get a ladder.” They say, “I can’t reach. I need help.” That’s the centurion: “I can’t do this. Jesus, I need You.”

True faith begins here. You cannot come to Jesus holding up a spiritual résumé. You can only come saying, “I am not worthy, but I need You.”

Jim and Rene and Hunter’s birth. We felt utterly inadequate, unable to fix the situation, and all you could do was call out to God. Humility opens the door, but it doesn’t stop there. This centurion’s humility leads him to an even greater confession—faith in Jesus’ authority.

III. The Stunning Faith (vv. 8–9)

Listen carefully to his words:

“But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under my command. 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.”

Do you hear the logic? He’s saying, “I know how authority works. I give orders, and my men obey without question. I don’t have to be everywhere at once—I just have to say the word. And Jesus, I believe You have that same kind of authority. Not over soldiers, but over sickness. You don’t need to step foot in my house. You don’t need to cross the threshold. You don’t need to touch my servant. Just say the word, and it will happen.”

That’s stunning faith.

Think about **military authority**. When a commanding officer gives an order, it gets carried out—no hesitation, no debate. That’s how the centurion saw Jesus’ authority over illness.

Or think about a **doctor’s prescription**. You don’t demand to see all the lab reports proving the medicine works. You take it because you trust the doctor’s knowledge. The centurion believed Jesus’ word was enough.

Do we trust Jesus like that? Or do we say, “Lord, I’ll believe when You show me. When You work the way I want, in the timing I expect, then I’ll trust You”? Faith says, “Lord, if You said it, that settles it.”

And it’s this kind of faith—simple, humble, confident—that causes something extraordinary: Jesus Himself marvels.

IV. The Marvel of Jesus (vv. 10–13)

Verse 9: *Jesus heard this and was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, “I tell you; I have not found so great a faith even in Israel.”*

That word “marveled” is the Greek *thaumazō*. The Gospels only use it twice in describing Jesus reacting: once at Nazareth’s unbelief, and here, at this soldier’s faith.

Think about that. Jesus, who created heaven and earth, who spoke galaxies into existence, was amazed *at a man’s faith*.

And then in Matthew’s account, Jesus adds: “*Many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.*” This Roman centurion is a preview of the global church—outsiders brought in, people from every nation gathered at the table of the King.

Contrast Nazareth. There, the people who grew up with Him scoffed: “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” And here’s a pagan soldier saying, “Just say the word.” Which amazes Him more—insiders who refuse to believe, or outsiders who trust Him instantly?

Picture the stunned crowd. The Jewish elders who vouched for the centurion, the disciples trailing Jesus—they must have stood in silence when Jesus praised the “enemy soldier.” It would’ve felt like applauding the rival team in your home stadium.

And sometimes the greatest heroes of faith aren’t famous names but quiet saints—an older woman who prays faithfully for her family every day, a man who quietly serves without recognition. Heaven notices. Jesus marvels at that kind of faith.

When Jesus looks at your life, what amazes Him—your unbelief, or your faith?

Conclusion

So what do we take away from this story?

Jesus is not impressed by résumés, titles, or accomplishments. What amazes Him is humble, trusting faith. The centurion shows us what that looks like:

Humility: “I am not worthy.” **Confidence:** “Just say the word.”

Faithfulness: trust that amazes Jesus Himself.

Another thing that stands out. This interaction takes place entirely from a distance. The centurion is never physically in the geographic presence of Jesus. He trusts Jesus without having to lay eyes on him. He trusts what he does not need to see in person. And his family is blessed by his blind faith.

Is your family blessed by your blind faith? Or do you need some sort of hard proof – you need Jesus to jump through some hoop for you and do a miracle in your presence to prove he is trustworthy? That isn't a blessing for your family. That is typical, common, everyday stuff there.

Billy Graham once said, *“God will not reward fruitfulness, He will reward faithfulness.”* Think about this: every day you already live by faith. You sit in a chair without testing it. You drive across a bridge without inspecting every beam. You get on a plane without checking the engine. Some of you eat Scrapple! If you can trust man-made things like that, why not trust Jesus—the Lord of heaven and earth—with even more confidence?

Final Call: I want to have the kind of faith that amazes Jesus. Don't you? When He looks at your life, will He marvel at your unbelief, or will He marvel at your faith?

Invitation

Today, Jesus isn't asking for your résumé – your great accomplishments fade away like a vapor. Your strength will fail. Jesus doesn't need you to show him the money. He is asking for your faith.

Come to Him humbly. Trust His authority completely. And experience the power of the One whose word still heals, still saves, and still amazes.