

International Bible Lessons Commentary
Luke 7:1-10

English Standard Version

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, April 3, 2016

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, April 3, 2016**, is from **Luke 7:1-10**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses *Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further* to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. If you are a Bible student or teacher, you can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Luke 7:1-10

(Luke 7:1) After he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum.

After Jesus' hometown of Nazareth rejected Him and tried to murder Him, Jesus made His home in Capernaum (see Luke 4:28-31). After Jesus preached His "Sermon on the Plain" (similar to His "Sermon on the Mount" – Matthew 5-7), Jesus returned to Capernaum. In His "Sermon on the Plain," Jesus taught, "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit" (Luke 6:43) and "A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of" (Luke 6:45). Jesus demonstrated these facts by His life and teaching, and did so when He healed the centurion's servant.

(Luke 7:2) Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him.

A centurion, a professional soldier in the Roman army, had heard of Jesus' healing abilities, and he had a valued servant who was sick and about to die. Luke did not say how much the centurion knew about Jesus, but he knew enough to confirm what Jesus taught: "Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars" (Luke 6:44). He recognized Jesus was a good man who used and would use His power to help others. He knew what kind of a person Jesus was by His reputation. He knew Jesus was a good, kind, and powerful person who would be able to help him and his sick servant if he asked Jesus for help.

(Luke 7:3) When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant.

The centurion sent some elders of the Jews to Jesus to ask Jesus to heal his servant. He sent the elders rather than go himself because of his humility. His high position in the Roman army had not made him arrogant or give him a feeling of superiority over others. He did not demand help. His giving to help others had not motivated him to think that he was deserving of Jesus' help. Unlike the religious leaders who wanted to kill Jesus because of the good and miraculous things Jesus did that threatened their authority, these leaders respected Jesus as a healer and teacher. They also respected the Roman centurion as a God-fearing Gentile, so they went to Jesus for help. They serve as a good example – they interceded for an army officer of a hated, occupying enemy – it appears they had learned to love their enemies (at least some of them) as Jesus taught.

(Luke 7:4) And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, “He is worthy to have you do this for him,

When these leaders went to Jesus, they showed their faith in Jesus – that Jesus could do exactly what was needed. Otherwise, they would not have interceded “earnestly” for the centurion; rather, they would have taken an unbelieving halfhearted skeptical approach to Jesus. They

also gave Jesus some good reasons why He should heal the servant of this Roman officer. They appreciated this Roman officer and they believed the man deserved to be helped because he had borne good fruit – he was a good man and they told Jesus why he was good. They affirmed that the centurion was as Jesus described in His Sermon: “A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart.”

(Luke 7:5) for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue.”

Though these elders would not have thought of their pleading as prayers to the Son of God, they provide an example of how someone can intercede with God in behalf of a good person who bears good fruit. Even though the oppressive Roman army was unwanted in Judea, these religious leaders recognized that some individuals in the occupying army loved their nation and their people and wanted to help them in practical ways. The centurion probably also loved and believed in the God of the Old Testament Scriptures up to the level of his understanding, because he built their synagogue where he and others could worship God and be taught the Scriptures.

(Luke 7:6) And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, “Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.

Jesus went with these elders to answer their pleadings (or prayers) to heal the servant. Jesus went on the servant's behalf and not just because the servant was valuable financially or otherwise to the centurion. Jesus traveled far enough to show He would heal the servant; perhaps by touching him as He often did when He healed someone. To Jesus, a person some would have considered "just a lowly unimportant servant" was of value as a person created in the image of God regardless of his social standing. Then, Jesus heard from the centurion's friends that he felt too unworthy for Jesus to come into his house and he did not want Jesus to trouble himself any more than He already had. Rather than give Jesus an order to serve him and help his servant, the centurion called Jesus "Lord." He said he was not worthy to come to Jesus for help because Jesus was his "Lord." In this situation, calling Jesus "Lord" would have meant more than simply calling Jesus "Sir" as a title of respect. He spoke and acted as though Jesus was His Lord and Lord over creation too. He believed that Jesus could heal his servant right from where He was on the road and he told Jesus why: it had to do with Jesus' authority.

(Luke 7:7) Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed.

Because of his feelings of unworthiness, there is no indication that the centurion eagerly sent the elders to Jesus for help. The elders may have argued and convinced him that if they went to Jesus for help that Jesus would

help his servant even though he himself felt unworthy. The elders may have brought the idea to the centurion of their going to Jesus after they had heard of his servant's illness, because they felt he was worthy of Jesus' help. The effort that these elders and these friends put forth to help the centurion and his servant reveals how good the centurion was to others. The centurion had such faith in Jesus that he knew Jesus could "say the word" from anywhere and his servant would be healed. He interceded for his servant by asking Jesus to take a moment and help him and then go on to His more important work. With his feelings of unworthiness, he may have had "second thoughts" about sending for Jesus; therefore, he sent his friends believing Jesus could do whatever His servant needed without any more trouble.

(Luke 7:8) For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

The centurion knew enough about Jesus to know Jesus had tremendous authority and power in the spiritual or supernatural realm. The centurion did what his commanding officers told him, and the soldiers under him obeyed him. He told his friends to tell Jesus that he believed in Jesus as the one who could do anything in the world with a word – that is the way God created the world, with a word, and the centurion probably knew and believed the teachings that God's creation of the world was

with words (from his study of the teachings in the Book of Genesis). He knew Jesus had the power of creation, even if he did not say that to Jesus in so many words. He certainly attributed the power of God to Jesus, or at least Jesus' spiritual power with God to work miracles.

(Luke 7:9) When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."

Jesus expressed amazement at the centurion's public expression and statement of faith in Jesus, and Jesus' amazement impressed His disciples and those nearby. Jesus acknowledged the fact that He did not need to see or touch the sick servant to heal him. All He needed to do was speak the word. He spoke the word in silence so people would know that the power of healing was His to give rather than in the use of special words. Jesus' word healed; not special or magical words or chants that others could memorize and use to heal people or work miracles. Whereas many religious leaders hated Jesus for His good works and miraculous healings, this centurion saw the true source of Jesus' good works as Lord over all – as a person powerful enough to heal from a distance with a word and good enough to do so. Everyone should have seen from Jesus' works that He was good, but amazingly, many hated Him for His goodness.

(Luke 7:10) And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

The men returned to the centurion and when they found the servant healed they knew Jesus had the authority and power that the centurion had attributed to Jesus by his expression of faith in Jesus. This miracle could motivate them all to more carefully consider the teachings of Jesus, lead them to learn the true source and the nature of His power as Son of God, and lead them to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What are some things we learn about these Jewish elders from this incident?
2. What are some things we learn about the Roman centurion from this incident?
3. What are some things we learn about Jesus from this incident?
4. What are some things we learn about interceding and praying for others from this incident?
5. Can you think of someone who does good that needs your prayers? How can this lesson help you pray for them? Take time today to pray for them.

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.
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