

What is “Great Faith?”

Baptist pastor Joseph Newton said:

“Belief is truth held in the mind, faith is fire held in the heart.”

Corrie Ten Boom said:

“If all things are possible with God, then all things are possible to him who believes God.”

Jesus said:

[Matthew 17:20](#)

...I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

In other words, it takes very little faith at all to be able to accomplish very big things in your life...

☞ **Yet in Luke chapter 17** when Jesus begins to teach about forgiving an enemy of the things they have done to us, the apostles listening to Jesus say this:

[Luke 17:5](#)

And the apostles said to the Lord, “**Increase our faith.**”

I guess that when it comes to forgiving someone who has hurt us, most of us find that we don’t have any faith at all to do that...

In reality, you can measure your faith in the Lord and His word, by your own personal commitment to the Lord.

☞ **If you say** that you believe in Jesus Christ but that claimed belief does not effect your life dramatically, you do not believe in Jesus at all.

Last Sunday, we looked at Matthew 7

[Matthew 7:22-24](#)

22 **Many will say to Me in that day, “Lord, Lord,** have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’

23 And then I will declare to them, “**I never knew you;** depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

24 “Therefore whoever **hears these sayings of Mine, and does them,** I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock

By Jesus own definition then, “*Faith is defined as taking what you say you believe and put it into action in your life.*”

- ⊞ **Now, many times** I have people speak to me about how they have questions regarding whether or not they are genuinely saved or are genuinely a real follower of Jesus Christ.
- ⊞ **When I ask** “*Why do you ask that question?*” They say: “*Well because I am still doing this sin, or that sin...or I don’t really feel saved sometimes...*”

Then I ask them this question, “*Since the first day that you really believed that Jesus died for you and asked Him to forgive all of your sins and come into your life, has there been any change in your life since then?*”

“**Yes**” they say...

Well then that is evidence that what you have claimed you believe is real, because you have began putting it into action in your life.

- ⊞ **The mistake we make** is that we feel sometimes that the changes are so small, that they are not real.
- ⊞ **Or if our feelings change,** (They always do) we think our salvation experience is not real.

If believing in Jesus Christ has changed your life, that is clear evidence that you have exercised saving faith.

- ⊞ **But if your confession** of Jesus Christ **has not changed your life** then your profession is not real.

In Matthew chapter 8 and Luke chapter 7 this morning, we are going to look at real practical example by Jesus of what He calls “*Amazing Faith*”.

[Matthew 8](#)

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."

[Luke 7](#)

1 Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum.
2 And **a** certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die.

3 So when he THE CENTURION heard about Jesus, **he sent elders of the Jews** to Him JESUS, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant.

Now this is a study called “**Harmony of the Gospels**”, one of the benefits of studying all four gospels at the same time, is that we get to see what Matthew, Mark, Luke and John each had to say about a particular thing that happened in Jesus life.

- ⊞ **Matthew 8 and Luke 7** is one of those places in the Bible that critics have labeled “*A Contradiction in the Bible*”.
- ⊞ **Matthew 8** says that “*A Centurion Came to Jesus.*”
- ⊞ **Luke 7** says “**The Centurions sent the elders of the Jews to Jesus.**”

Is that a contradiction?

- ⊞ **Not if you understand** the culture of that time.
- ⊞ **Not if you understand** that it was customary during this time for people like the centurion who were in authority over more than 100 men, plus his household servants, that **the centurion would often send a messenger in their place** to take care of their business.
- ⊞ **They considered** that when you spoke to their messenger, it was the same as speaking to them personally.

Luke is the one that adds the detail that it was really the elders of the Jews who came.

- ⊞ **Luke was a medical doctor** and he is known for the details that he adds to his account of Jesus life.
- ⊞ **It is not a contradiction at all**, it is an added detail that we learn by reading the 4 gospels together.

The question is why would a Roman Centurion send the Elders of the Jews to Jesus?

- ⊞ **In the Book of Acts** we find out that this Roman Centurion was most likely a man by the name of “Cornelius”.

Acts 10:1-3

1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called **Cornelius, a centurion** of what was called the Italian Regiment,

2 A devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.

As it turns out, this man Cornelius, even though he is a Roman Centurion, he gave his own personal money to the people of Capernaum, to build them a Jewish Synagogue, a place of worship.

Luke 7

4 And when they (the Jewish Elders) came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving,

5 "for he loves our nation, and **(he) has built us a synagogue.**"

Now we understand why the Jewish religious leaders are the ones coming to Jesus in behalf of a Roman Centurion, they LOVED him, because he first loved them.

- ☞ **See what the Lord can do** once you give your life to Jesus Christ, He can transform your heart and give you love for people that you never would have loved before.

Listen, the only proof that you can offer to anyone that you truly know and believe and follow Jesus Christ, is if you can really begin to love people the way Jesus loves people.

In our bulletin, on the back as part of our declaration of our beliefs here at Calvary Chapel, is the statement:

CALVARY CHAPEL is a non-denominational fellowship of believers in the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We believe that God's (Agape) Love, which is greater than any of our differences, is the true basis of Christian fellowship and we look for the presence of His Love in our lives as the greatest evidence that we are truly following Him.

When you give your life to Jesus Christ, one of the first things that begins to happen is that you will begin to love people like you never could have before.

- ☞ **We feel here at our church** that this is the most important thing we are to grow in our lives, that is why we seek to be a very loving church.
- ☞ **People that have come here** to our little church, even from Huge Calvary's in other large cities have told us that they have never been in a Calvary Chapel that is as loving as this church is.

If you don't want to love people, then you are not going to be happy here...

- ☞ **If you are still mean and harsh with people**, and not loving and kind to them, then there is something wrong with your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Luke 9:52-56

55 and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him.

53 But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem.

54 And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?"

55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, **"You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.**

56 For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save the

The manner of Spirit that Jesus is of and that we are to be of is LOVING, KIND AND GENTLE with people...

- ☞ **Perhaps you need to cry out to the Lord** this morning to change you and make you more loving to people.'
- ☞ **And then you take steps** to be more loving.

The Jews hated the Romans, but here the Jewish religious leaders are coming to Jesus on behalf of a Roman Centurion **that they obviously love...**

John 15:13

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends

Are we laying down our pride, our prejudices, our agendas our life, and just being kind and loving towards people?

- ☞ **Notice the sincerity** of the Jewish leaders, they really love Cornelius, they are begging Jesus on his behalf.

Because many of these small towns was so far from the temple in Jerusalem, they were allowed to build their own synagogue for worship.

- ☞ **They needed only** 10 families to be qualified to build a synagogue.
- ☞ **In this case,** apparently Cornelius used his **own finances**, and possibly his own men to build the people of Capernaum a place of worship.

Listen, if we don't get involved together in our church and give our finances to support the ministry here, give our time to build and maintain the facilities, who is going to do it?

- ☞ **It's our church,** it takes all of us giving our tithes, our time and our help to make sure we have a church here.
- ☞ **We don't get** money or help from any one else outside of Winslow.
- ☞ **We depend on you** to make ministry possible.

Cornelius made worship possible in Capernaum because He gave his own money to build the church there.

Picture of Synagogue at Capernaum

A Roman Centurion, can you believe that? Not even a Jew, a Roman made worship possible...

- ☞ **The name** "Centurion" came from the fact that these men controlled, or were in charge of **100** highly trained Roman soldiers.

Picture of Roman Centurion.

- ☞ **There were 60 Centurions** in a Roman "Legion" of about **6,000 men.**

Picture of Roman Legion

- ☞ **The Centurions job** was to drill his men, inspect their arms, their, food and clothing and make sure they were ready at a moments notice if called into battle.

He was part of the Roman army that the Jews hated and despised.

In John chapter 1, Nathaniel said this about Nazareth when he discovered that Jesus came from Nazareth:

[John 1:46](#)

“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

Do you know why Nathaniel said that about Nazareth?

- ☞ **The Roman Army** was stationed in Nazareth.
- ☞ **The Jews hated** being ruled by the Roman Army,.
- ☞ **They despised Nazareth** because the Roman army was there.

And Yet, her comes the religious leaders of the Jews, to Jesus on behalf of Cornelius a Roman Centurion.

[Matthew 8](#)

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."

[Matthew 8](#)

7 And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."
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.**"
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."
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!"

Luke says essentially the same thing as Matthew

- ☞ **Except he adds the detail** that Jesus actually **went with** the messengers and was **on the way** to the Roman Centurions home.
- ☞ **While on the way**, the servants of the Centurion came to Jesus and told him it was not necessary to come, *'just say the word and the servant would be healed...*

[Luke 7](#)

6 Then **Jesus went with them**. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof.

7 "Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my

"When Jesus heard what the Centurion said, He marveled and said 'I have not found such great faith..."

☞ **How would you** like to have Jesus say that about you?

Wow Rob, I have never seen someone with that much faith!"

☞ **To just so fully believe the Lord** and put that belief into action, that you would AMAZE the Lord.

In today's language Jesus would have said: *"You just blew my mind..."*

- ☞ A Hated Roman.
- ☞ A Non Jew.
- ☞ Someone outside of the promises of God.
- ☞ The last person you would expect to see this kind of faith.
- ☞ Has the greatest faith demonstrated in the New Testament.

You see, many times we say *"Oh I really believe in the Lord..."*

- ☞ *"I really trust Him".*
- ☞ *"I know that the Lord is working out His plan in my life..."*
- ☞ *"I know all things work together for good..."*

Then a major trial comes, and we don't know anything anymore, except fear and despair and bewilderment: *"Does the Lord really Love me, why is this happening to me?"*

- ☞ **Faith is what you get** when you go through terrible trials.
- ☞ **Faith is what you see** when you **put into action what you say you believe.**
- ☞ **Faith, great faith,** the kind that moves mountains, is only seen **by doing things** in your life that show you have great faith.

Stepping out into areas that make absolutely no sense to you...

Matthew 8

13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; **and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.**" And his servant was healed that same hour.

Here is the key to getting amazing results in your life:

In direct proportion to you putting into action, what you believe, like this Roman Centurion, will be the proportion that is done for you.

- ☞ **He didn't need** to see anything.
- ☞ **Just the Lords word** was enough for him.

The Harmony of the Gospels Bible Commentary by Rob Robinson

☞ **He believed** in the Goodness of the Lord.

☞ **He believed** that Jesus had the power to carry out what needed to be done.

☞ **He understood** that everything in the universe is under Jesus authority.

Jesus said: *You don't see that kind of faith everyday, where people put into action, what they say they believe...*

In a village on the Island of Crete, a long drought threatened the lives of everyone on the island.

The pastor of the local church there instructed the members of his congregation to begin to fast and pray for rain.

That next week, everyone in the church fasted and prayed fervently for the Lord to send rain.

As the people came into the church building on the following Sunday, the pastor was very upset with the people;

"All of you go back home and continue to pray, you do not really believe the Lord will send rain, go home and pray until you believe..."

One of the members of the church said to her pastor, *"But pastor we do believe, we fasted all week and asked the Lord for rain, **we believe...**"*

"You really believe" said the pastor...***"Then where are your umbrellas?"***

They said they really believed, but by the action of their lives, they showed they did not believe.

☞ They prayed.

☞ They fasted.

☞ **Even though as yet it had not rained**, if they really expected God to make it rain, they would have brought umbrellas.

By not bringing their umbrellas, **they showed by their life** that even though they confessed belief, they really didn't believe.

Faith is

"Someone who goes after Moby Dick in a rowboat...and takes tartar sauce with them..."