

Title: A SOLDIER'S STORY, LUKE 7:1-10
(Chatham, NJ; 06/02/13, AM) [Pc – Narrative Analysis]

Theme: A soldier's great faith grows out of his humility and understanding of authority.

Purpose: To highlight the importance of humility and hierarchy to produce faith.

Introduction:

1. Jesus encounters faith in a Gentile soldier.
2. Ironically no Israelite displays faith as well as he does. Jesus marveled at it.
3. Several details about him illustrate the things that generate his faith.

I. He Was Humble – “I am not worthy to have you come under my roof” (6), he requested the elders to approach Jesus and sent messengers to keep him from coming to him, 3 & 7

A. Humility, an essential virtue

1. In relationship to God, Micah 6:8 (walk humbly with God) & James 4:6 – “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble”
2. In relationship to one another, Ephesians 4:2 – humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love
3. “The state of not being proud or pretentious; unassuming, to be lower in condition or station”
4. “To count others as more significant than yourselves,” Phil. 2:3 – thus to show deference to others

B. A natural personality trait or something learned from the trials of life

1. Discipline and hardship breed not only perseverance but humility
2. Facing difficulties gives you a sense of your weaknesses
3. Soldiers and athletes seem to know instinctively about the need to surmount difficulties and to submit to the rigors of doing so – this demands not only perseverance but humility: we have to submit
4. Trials also force a person to confront themselves
5. Extreme Makeover Show this week: a girl had to confront the excuses she kept making to herself; note Seal workout
6. A foolish man can never hear the rebuke of a wise man because his arrogance gets in the way
7. Paradoxically, humility makes you stronger by making you submit

II. He Understood Authority – “Just say the word,” (7-8)

A. The exercise of authority

1. At my word my soldiers do what I tell them, 8
2. The universe is a hierarchy though we may not like the word: God, parents, community, etc.
3. Hierarchy is built into the way things work
4. We recognize the need for coaches to guide a team
5. There is something more than me, myself, and I
6. We live in an age when many assume they are the final arbiters of right and wrong
7. There is a higher authority
8. The centurion came to faith because he recognized this truth

B. Exercising authority in the church

1. Jesus is the head of the church
2. Leadership as service still maintains the idea of oversight, 1 Peter 5:2-3

3. The younger are called to be “subject to the elders,” (5) and to “clothe themselves with humility toward one another”
4. T. Grandin quote from *Costco Magazine*: see copy
5. To be in a state of perpetually questioning authority is to rebel against the laws of nature, to assume that I personally am the center of the world, and to live in a state of anarchy
6. This is not to say that those in authority don’t need to be challenged but we do so only when the law and morality have been violated

III. He Believed – he must have heard the testimony of others

- He demonstrates no doubt that Jesus can fulfill his request
- Jesus is stunned by his faith, 9
- Matthew adds Jesus’ eschatological comment about who will get to eat in the Kingdom feast and who will not
- Jesus recognizes what John said later, “His own people did not receive him,” John 1:11
- A Gentile becomes the model of faith
- When the Gospel goes to the Gentiles, we see the same faith in many of them

Conclusion:

1. Humility is the first step in a relationship with God; he gives grace to the humble.
2. To accept his authority is to believe that he can do anything; he will fulfill his promises.
3. Remember the Centurion; believe!