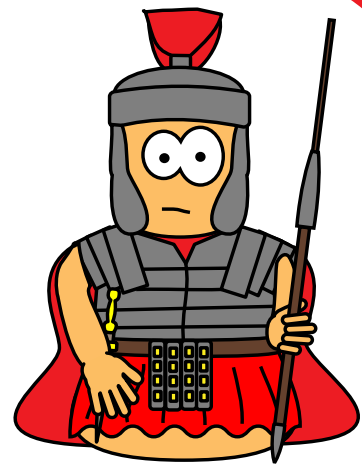


# Bible Heroes

The  
Centurion

Teachers  
Story notes



Essential Teachers notes:

The faithful Centurion is one of those biblical stories where the Sunday school picture often obscures the scripture - the officer in uniform kneeling at the feet of Jesus begging for his servant's life. While in Matthew's version of the story the Centurion does meet Jesus, in Luke's, which this retelling is based on, the Centurion and Jesus never meet. What plays out instead is a series of messengers running between the two. For the faith of a man to warrant praise from divine lips without being seen is something that is quite remarkable in the gospel accounts - it's also something totally relatable to us as modern Christians, who can't simply walk over to a nearby town to bump into the messiah.

Main Passage : Luke 7

Additional Passages : Matthew 8

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Beside a sick man a centurion sat on a small stool his face a picture of sadness, other servants came and left. "Bring my cape" said the centurion. It was the first command he'd given for hours and the servants ran to find his uniform pieces. He left instructions to fetch him when anything changed and walked out the house.

Capernaum was within walking distance and the Jewish teacher Jesus of Nazareth was supposed to be there often. The centurion had heard of this man, he held the ability to heal, he taught with wise words and the Jewish people followed him not by command but because they saw in him a truth. The centurion had heard all this from his favourite servant, the man who now lay dying.

As he rushed along he thought of the man who was now his friend. He had taught the centurion about the Jewish rules, like Sabbath and how the temple dictated their lives - he had helped him see the reasons behind why the people he lived among acted the way they did. It had not surprised him at all to find that almost all of his servant's wages were going towards building a new synagogue. It worried the Centurion now that he was not Jewish. Jesus was a Jewish teacher, would he even listen to a gentile's plea for help?

The small town came in sight and he spotted a group of Jewish elders sitting at the town gate. He would send them. They were Jewish and they loved his servant for they knew him from the synagogue. The men agreed and the centurion rushed home hoping he wasn't too late. Hours passed.

Meanwhile, the Jewish elders had found Jesus returning to the town by the other gate, they had pleaded with him to come and help their friend and told Jesus of all his work with the synagogue.

The centurion heard a shout ring out around the house when Jesus' crowd were spotted coming near. Once again the Centurion worried he was not good enough, not believing enough, to ask Jesus to heal his servant. But the centurion knew how power worked. He was in command of his men, he said what would happen and it did, he didn't even need to be there, he received orders the same way, orders by messenger from those who were more powerful than him.

He grabbed another Jewish servant and quickly told him to run to the party with a message.

**"Lord, do not trouble yourself to enter my house, I am not good enough to have you here or to even meet with you, but just say the word and I know my Servant will be well. I know how authority and power work, I command, or am told and it is done."**

Jesus listened his face amazed at the words he was hearing. The centurion didn't think himself good enough but his faith in Jesus was stronger than any of the people Jesus had met so far. He saw Jesus as powerful not just a teacher or a prophet or a healer. Jesus sent the messenger home and turned to walk away. Those with him could hear the shouts of celebration beginning already.

After hugging his servant the centurion ran upstairs to find an upper window. He scanned the crowd still walking away but could not tell which man was Jesus of Nazareth. At first he was sad, but then he recognised that even if he hadn't seen the shape of Jesus' face or the colour of his robe he had recognised the more important things, the ability to heal, to teach, to use power and authority. Perhaps now his servant was healed he would learn more about the Jewish faith and this man Jesus.

**Today's hero is The Centurion, because he shows us the gift of RECOGNITION.**