

**“Lessons from the Miracles of Christ”:
Healing the Centurion’s Servant**

in *The Youth’s Instructor*, Vol. XLIX, Nos. 46, 47
(Nov. 21, 1901; Nov. 28, 1901)

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**Sources for Healing the Centurion’s Servant,
in the order in which they first appear**

- (1) Wm. Arnold Stevens and Ernest DeWitt Burton, *A Harmony of the Gospels for Historical Study: An Analytical Synopsis of the Four Gospels in the Version of 1881* (Boston: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1893)
- (2) William M. Taylor, D.D., LL.D., *The Miracles of Our Saviour, Expounded and Illustrated* (New York: A.C. Armstrong & Son, 1891)
- (3) Mrs. E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Takoma Park, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Assn., 1898)
- (4) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “The Chief Physician and the Centurion’s Servant” (1878)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on Jun. 30, 1878 and it was published in Vol. 24 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1879). I have been unable to access this volume, so have used *The Treasury of Spurgeon on the Life and Work of Our Lord, Vol. IV, The Miracles of Our Lord, 1*, published by Baker Book House in 1979. This source is coded **Spurgeon1**.

- (5) Richard Chenevix Trench, D.D., *Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord, Revised, with Additions* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883)
- (6) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “Self Low, But Christ High” (1890)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on Aug. 30, 1890 and it was published in Vol. 36 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1891). This source is coded **Spurgeon2**.

- (7) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “The Centurion’s Faith and Humility” (1868)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on Mar. 15, 1868 and it was published in Vol. 14 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1869). This source is coded **Spurgeon3**.

- (8) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “A Man Under Authority” (1887)

Note: Spurgeon delivered this sermon in London on Oct. 2, 1887 and it was published in Vol. 41 of *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (1888). This source is coded **Spurgeon4**.

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the Sadlers pointedly differ from one another.
- (e) **Light blue** indicates a passage which anticipates something in the Urantia Book.
- (f) **Red** indicates an obvious mistake.
- (g) **Gold** points out words and themes that will be treated in a later discussion.

HEALING THE CENTURION'S SERVANT

INTRODUCTORY

0.1 *Preceding Events*.—The prominent events in the Saviour's life since the preceding miracle,—the healing of the withered hand,—were—

PART V. SECOND PERIOD OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY. (*A Harmony of the Gospels* 56)

XIV: ORGANIZATION OF THE KINGDOM. (*A Harmony of the Gospels* 56)

§47. THE WIDE-SPREAD FAME OF CHRIST. Matt 4:23-25. Matt. 12:15-21. Mark 3:7-12. [Luke 6:17-19.]

§48. THE CHOOSING OF THE TWELVE. [Matt. 10:24.] Mark 3:13-19. Luke 6:12-19.

§49. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. Matt., chs. 5, 6, 7, [8:1].

[*Note*: Matthew is used as much as Luke.]

0.2 1. The wide-spread fame of Christ. Matt. 4:23-25; 12:15-21.

0.3 2. Choosing of the twelve. Luke 6:12-19.

0.4 3. Sermon on the mount. Matthew 5, 6, 7.

0.5 NOTE.—This was the beginning of the second period of his Galilean ministry.

0.6 *Main Reference*.— Luke 7:1-10.

0.7 *Other References*.—Matt. 8:5-13.

0.8 *Bible Story of the Miracle*.—

XV: THE SECOND PREACHING
TOUR. (*A Harmony of the Gospels* 71)

§50. THE CENTURION’S SERVANT. Matt.
8:5-13. Luke 7:1-10.

Luke 7:1 After he had ended all his sayings in the ears of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion’s servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and at the point of death.

3 And when he heard concerning Jesus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would come and save his servant.

Matt. 8:[6] and saying, Lord, my servant lieth in the house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

Luke 7:4 And they, when they came to Jesus, besought him earnestly, saying, He is worthy that thou shouldest do this for him:

5 for he loveth our nation, and himself built us our synagogue.

Matt. 8:7 And he saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

Luke 7:6 And Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof:

7 wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee;

Matt. 8:[10] but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.

“After he had ended all his sayings in the ears of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

And a certain centurion’s servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and at the point of death.

And when he heard concerning Jesus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would come and save his servant,

and saying, Lord, my servant lieth in the house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

And they, when they came to Jesus, besought him earnestly, saying, He is worthy that thou shouldst do this for him;

for he loveth our nation, and himself built us our synagogue.

And he saith unto **them** I will come and heal him.

And Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof;

wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee,

but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.

SOURCE

Luke 7:8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

[9] And when Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned and said unto the multitude that followed him,

Matt. 8:[10] Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11 And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven:

12 but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And the servant was healed in that hour.

Luke 7:10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole.

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers, and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

And when Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned and said unto the multitude that followed him,

Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven:

but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And the servant was healed in that hour.

And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole.”

(The foregoing is an interwoven story of the miracle, gathered from Matt. 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10, but in the exact language of the Bible.)

0.9 *Place*.—Capernaum.

0.10 *Circumstances*.—At the conclusion of the memorable sermon on the mount, as Jesus was entering Capernaum, he was met by a delegation of the elders of the Jews, bearing a request from a Roman officer concerning the affliction of one of his servants.

It appears that this Roman officer was unusually friendly to the Jewish cause; for these Jews told how he had built for them a synagogue, and seemingly urged this upon the Master as sufficient reason why his request should receive particular attention. The centurion, when he knew the Saviour drew near his house, sent messengers to him, expressing a sense of unworthiness to have the Master come into his house, and requesting Jesus simply to speak the word,—thereby giving evidence of such faith in Christ as to draw from the Son of God the remarkable statement: “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

0.11 *Great Lesson.*—The personal, visible presence of Jesus is not essential to the healing of either soul or body. The divine word is the cleansing, healing, and saving agent. Jesus’ word of healing power is abroad in the world, and all who will by faith connect themselves with the divine Healer may experience its benefits.

STUDY OF THE MIRACLE

XI: THE HEALING OF THE CENTURION’S SERVANT (Taylor 161)

[I]n the first place, let us learn **not to judge too hastily** of a man from the occupation in which we find him, or the profession to which he belongs (T 168).

1.1 *A Certain Centurion.*—

Let us **not be too hasty to judge** a man from his occupation or profession.

This Roman soldier was apparently living up to his best light.

SOURCE

Now it becomes an interesting question as to why it is that the good man's estimate of himself should thus fall below that formed of him by his neighbors (T 170).

XXXII: THE CENTURION (White 315)

Among the Romans the servants were slaves,

bought and sold into the market places, and treated with abuse and cruelty;

but the centurion was tenderly attached to his servant, and greatly desired his recovery (W 315).

“THE CHIEF PHYSICIAN AND THE CENTURION’S SERVANT” (Spurgeon I 473)

Every employer should take a sympathetic interest in his domestics when they are ill, but in some cases this is not thought of (S1 473).

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

His humility is shown in that

his estimate of himself was far below that of his neighbors,

as well as by his own sense of unworthiness.

This centurion was a generous man, having built a synagogue for the Jews; he was a loving man, for the Jews said, “He loveth our nation;” and he was a conscientious man, as is seen in his tender solicitude for the welfare of his servant.

Roman servants were slaves,

and ordinarily greatly abused.

The narrative of this miracle contains a great lesson concerning

the interest Christians should take in their hired help,

and those who assist them in various ways.

XI: THE HEALING OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT. (Trench 238)

Doubtless [St. Luke's] is the more strictly literal account of the circumstances, as they actually came to pass; St. Matthew, who is briefer, telling it as though the centurion did it in his own person,

what, in fact, he did by the intervention of others—

an exchange of persons

of which all historical narrative and all the language of our common life are full (Tr 238).

XXXII: THE CENTURION (White 315)

Already he had broken through the barriers of national prejudice and hatred

that separated the conquerors from the conquered people (W 315).

1.2 *He Loveth Our Nation.*—

Matthew would seem to convey the idea that the centurion came in person to Christ.

This is probably an interchange of characters,

which is commonly met with in history and daily occurrences.

Luke calls attention to the fact that it was the elders of the Jews who came to Christ.

This Roman officer had succeeded in overcoming the prejudices

of the Jews against the Gentiles, as well as that of

the conquered against their conquerors,

and had won the respect of the community as well as of the elders of the Jewish Church, a striking illustration of how the most stubborn prejudice may be overcome by a consistent life.

XI: THE HEALING OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT. (Taylor 161)

It would have been a great thing for a Jew to receive such a testimonial from Jews. But that [the Centurion] should have earned from official Jews such a commendation as that which here they gave, was something altogether unprecedented ... (T 165).

XXXII: THE CENTURION (White 315)

The Jewish elders who recommended the centurion to Christ

had shown how far they were from possessing the spirit of the gospel.

They did not recognize that our great need is our only claim on God's mercy (W 316-17).

We believe

this instance is unprecedented in Jewish history.

1.3 When the Jews pleaded the centurion's worthiness and generosity as a reason why Christ should heal his servant,

they showed how little they appreciated the basis of Christ's love,

and that Christ did not heal people because they were worthy, but because they were needy;

yet he said nothing to these Jewish friends of the Roman soldier, for he had already read the heart of the centurion, and knew his sincere faith and true humility, as was afterward shown when he sent still other friends, saying, "I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof."

W. S. SADLER.
(Concluded next week.)

HEALING THE CENTURION’S SERVANT (Concluded.)

2.1 *He Hath Built Us a Synagogue.*—

The Jews sought to commend the centurion to Jesus by the fact that he loved their nation, and had built them a synagogue; but that which commended the centurion most to Christ was his sense of **need** and of **utter unworthiness**, indicated by his sending word to the Master, “I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof.” Man’s need constitutes the most eloquent plea for divine help. Sometimes people will say to the minister or doctor, “I wish you would visit So-and-so, and see if you can’t help him. He is very rich, and might help our cause;” thus intimating that he has already “built a synagogue,” or perhaps might build one. What a motive!—when in reality the great motive for our labor of love should be our realization of humanity’s vital **need** and **utter helplessness**. The Jews undoubtedly thought that several more synagogues might be forthcoming if Jesus would heal the centurion’s favorite servant. They had little faith in Christ, but abundant love for the centurion’s pocketbook.

2.2 *I Am Not Worthy.*—

The readiness with which Christ granted the centurion’s request for the healing of his servant is an illustration of the Master’s willingness to listen to all requests for help, and an assurance that none will be passed by.

“SELF LOW, BUT CHRIST HIGH”
(Spurgeon2 485)

But low thoughts of self

should always be associated with high thoughts of Christ; for they are both products of the Spirit of God (S2 486).

This state of mind, once more, *makes a man in love with the simple Word of God* (S2 489).

“THE CENTURION’S FAITH AND HUMILITY” (Spurgeon3 531)

By some means Satan almost always manages it this way, that when we get a little hope it is generally a self-grounded hope, a vain idea that we are getting better in ourselves ... On the other hand, if we obtain a deep sense of sin, the evil one manages to ... insinuate that Jesus is not able to save such as we are (S3 534).

The centurion, while he had low thoughts of himself,

had high thoughts of Jesus.

The lower our esteem of self, the higher will be our regard for the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

The soul that is humble, that has a small opinion of self, is one that has great regard for, and faith in, the word of God;

and, like the centurion, although feeling unworthy to have the Master come into his presence, has implicit confidence in the power of his word and the healing of his grace.

2.3 In this connection we must not overlook the fact that

Satan often endeavors to utilize this sense of unworthiness on the part of a humble soul. He seeks to make it the doorway of indifference and neglect, the gateway to deepest darkness and despair;

but this he is unable to do as long as one’s sense of unworthiness has mingled with it the loving faith and confidence of the centurion.

XI: THE HEALING OF THE
CENTURION’S SERVANT. (Trench
238)

*‘But say in a word, and my servant
shall be healed.’*

The manner is very noteworthy in which
the Roman officer, by help of an analogy
drawn from the circle of things with
which he himself is most familiar, by a
comparison borrowed from his own
military experience,

proceeds to make easier to himself this
act of his faith (Tr 242).

“A MAN UNDER AUTHORITY”
(Spurgeon 497)

Once more, the centurion went a little
further, and implied that, as Christ had
the power to perform the divine will, and
had that power well in hand,

Let not Satan use your sense of
unworthiness to drive you away from the
Father’s love, or to doubt the promises of
his word.¹

2.4 *Say in a Word, and My Servant
Shall Be Healed.*—

The faith of the centurion was most
marked. He did not even think it
necessary for Christ to go to his house.

He drew lessons from his military
experience

and the obedience of his soldiers,

to strengthen his faith in this respect.

The centurion’s faith is a great contrast to
that of the nobleman, who insisted that
Christ must come down from Cana to
Capernaum in order to be able to heal his
child. The faith of the Roman soldier
asked only that the Master speak the
word.

The centurion not only believed in the
power of Christ,

as so many do to-day,

SOURCE

he believed *he was willing to direct all that power to the one object of healing his servant.*

I believe that many of you know that the Lord Jesus Christ is almighty; you do not doubt that fact, but the question is,—Is he almighty to save you? (S4 500)

XI: THE HEALING OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT. (Trench 238)

In his true and ever-deepening humility he counted it a presumption

to have asked, though by the intervention of others, the presence under his roof of one so highly exalted (Tr 240).

[?]

“LESSONS FROM THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST”

but he also believed that Christ was able and willing to use this very power for the healing of the sorely stricken servant.

2.5 *I Say unto One, Go, and He Goeth.*—

The centurion considered himself so unworthy that he deemed it presumptuous

to expect the Master to enter his house,

so he sent word beseeching Jesus to heal his servant by the power of his word, saying, “For I also am a man set under authority.”

He did not say, “I am a man of authority,” as is often misquoted. He was under authority; that is, under the authority of Caesar; and by virtue of being under authority to a greater, he himself was invested with power and authority to direct those who were under him; for he recognized in Christ one who was first under authority—this authority being the will of the Eternal Father; and second, he recognized him as one who could speak the word, and angels from above would do his bidding.

2.6 *I Have Not Found So Great Faith*.—Christ did not find faith aught to compare with the centurion’s.

XI: THE HEALING OF THE CENTURION’S SERVANT. (Taylor 161)

When the centurion said, “I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof,” he was not feigning humility. There was no hypocrisy in his protestation (T 170).

There was no hypocrisy about his seeking for help, no formalism, no false humility.

His being under authority, and having others under his authority, he utilized to strengthen his faith in the Master’s ability to heal by his word, without his personal presence.

“THE CHIEF PHYSICIAN AND THE CENTURION’S SERVANT” (Spurgeon 473)

[H]e did wonder at the centurion’s faith, and on another occasion he marvelled at the people’s unbelief (S1 481).

Jesus marveled at the centurion’s faith, and upon another occasion he marveled at the stubborn unbelief of his chosen people.

These seem to be the only two cases which specially excited the wonder of Jesus while he was on earth,—the faith of a Roman, the unbelief of a Jew.²

It is remarkable that Jesus not only healed the centurion’s servant without his personal presence, but also without speaking any direct word, so far as we have any record.

W. S. SADLER

1. Ellen G. White:

When Satan tells you that you are a sinner and cannot hope to receive blessing from God, tell him that Christ came into the world to save sinners (W 317).

2. In his “A Blessed Wonder” sermon, Spurgeon writes:

He only wondered twice, according to the record, and on both of those occasions he marvelled concerning faith, once at the absence of it, and once at its presence (S 507).