



See the service sheet for the fuller service plan

### Opening Scripture

Hymn Man of sorrows what a name (458)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWOvD06hJqM>

Scripture Reading Ps 33

Prayer

Reading Matthew 8:5-13

Sermon The centurion's faith

Hymn I am trusting thee Lord Jesus (MP 258)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-TkHQjPNVg>

Closing prayer

Close -----

Listen to today's sermon by clicking on the link at [www.knbc.org](http://www.knbc.org).  
 The audio file is [20\\_11\\_22.mp3](#)

### Welcome, pray

It is not yet Christmas but consider for a moment the wise men. Herod plotted to kill them on their way back from seeing Jesus. They were **warned in a dream ...so they returned to their country by another route.** Mt 2:12

It's all very straight forward. They were warned and they took action. In life - To know something is to do something. Sensible right? Well not quite.

Often we know something but do nothing. – that's the problem

- In June 2018 Guatemala's Fuego volcano erupted. The national institute for seismology and volcanology said they issued the relevant warning in plenty of time but the Emergency agencies 'failed to heed the warnings' and evacuate, the result? 100 died with 200 unaccounted for. Alerts were issued, they knew it was coming - but they were not acted on, they were ignored. Just like on the Titanic where many died as a result.

Here the challenge is "if you know something - will you do something?"

The centurion did! What did the centurion know?

Let's look and learn - at him and the problem, - at his faith and the outcome.

### *So he is a centurion – He's an important man*

Here is a Roman, or certainly not a Jew, stationed in Capernaum and in charge of the garrison there. He is an outsider posted to this town.

When Jesus grew up and started his ministry at the age of thirty he left the village of Nazareth and moved the twenty miles to the town of Capernaum on the western coast of lake Galilee.

The account of Christ meeting the centurion is found in both Matt and Luke. Both record that prior to this Jesus had been speaking from the mountain, the justifiably famous 'sermon on the mount'. Luke connects this passage to that by saying: "**When Jesus had finished saying all this in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. There a centurion's servant....**" Luke 7:1,2a There Jesus meets the Centurion this man of standing in the town.

Centurions in the NT are often commended. Good conduct was generally the cause of their promotion to the command of a century (100 men).

✚ Greek historian Polybius noted for his work The Histories, which covered the period of 264–146 BC (vi. 24) said that centurions were chosen by merit, and so were men remarkable not so much for their daring courage as for their deliberation, constancy, and strength of mind.," Dr. Maclear's N. T.

Truthful and straightforwardness would make them open to conviction. We see that here and also with Cornelius the centurion Peter went to see who is described as "**devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly**" Ac 10:2. It was a centurion who came to Paul's rescue when he was up to his neck in trouble. And it was the centurion at the Lord's crucifixion who uttered the testimony so remarkable for a non-Jew: "**certainly this was a righteous man;**" Lu 23:47 "**Truly this was the Son of God.**" Mt 27:54

#### His understanding

So here is a man who is fully aware of what is going on in this Jewish town and although he is from a pagan background aligns himself with the God of Israel. Have you done the same? This centurion saw the uniqueness and reputation, power and claims of Yahweh. It had drawn him so much so that **he loved the nation and built the synagogue.** And all could see it.

He was clearly a man of action, not that he built it himself but once he had decided, made up his mind, he did not waver but got on with it. People could see where he stood by his action. No wonder they were happy to commend him to Jesus for help **This man deserves to have you do this**

The centurion had no doubt sat in the synagogue and heard Jesus speak because Jesus often spoke there.

In Mark 1 we read: "**They (the disciples and Jesus) went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.**" (Mr 1:21-22 NIV)

He may well have seen Jesus drive the evil spirit out of the demon possessed man, we read "**All the people were amazed and said to each other, 'What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!'**" **And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.**" (Lu 4:36-37 NIV) and (Mr 1:27 NIV)

Some are impressed and loved the display of power.

- Some today go from event to event looking for that special experience.

With the Centurion, and others, it was the person of Christ who stood out. On Jesus's descent from the mountain Matthew say: "**When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.**" (Mt 7:28-29 NIV)

2a

Jesus' authority stood out. It is impressed upon this centurion who now says. "**For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.**" Matt 8:9

✚ He had authority – and he understood authority when he saw it.

“How about you? What authority do you see in Jesus's teaching?

Are they good words, wise words, to be added to the words of others? Or do they have the authority of God behind them. “Yes” do I hear you say?

✚ How much you believe them is shown in the amount you obey them! As we said at the beginning “if you know something - will you do something?”

#### *His Problem*

Well there is nothing like an obstacle, a problem to test this. The centurion had a problem - his servant is ill.

How do you cope with problems? Maybe you don't cope. Many aren't coping.

Here is a very gifted and capable man but he is quite unable to do anything about the sickness of his servant. The boy is very sick he **lies at home paralysed and in terrible suffering.**" The centurion looks on painfully Like Naaman. He was powerful man, commander in chief of the Army - but he had no power over his own fatal leprosy.

You might be a gifted man or woman, you might be forceful, have a strong personality and like things to always go 'your way' - there are plenty like that around. But the Lord will bring to you things in your life that you will not be able to do anything about. What do you then do? Does it humble you? What did this Centurion do? What is his attitude?

As a soldier he lives in a military world where humility was in short supply. The army is all about prowess, performance, showmanship and being fearlessness. **That is not the Centurions attitude and Jesus can see it.**

This army officer, when faced with a sick servant, displays humility.

#### *His humble faith*

Those around didn't understand it: "**This man deserves it**" they said Luke 7:4,5

**The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.** Matt 8:8

2b

**just say the word** “you speak – and he will be better”

As pride and disbelief go together - so humility and faith go together. x2

Prior to this Jesus healed the leper by touching him.

Just after Luke records Jesus enters Nain where he goes up to the bier carrying the dead boy and touches the coffin “**Young man I say to you get up**” Jesus is God and just as he created this world by a command so he can raise the dead and heal the sick. The Centurion could see this. Many wanted Jesus to come and touch the sick, - he knows he need only “**say the word**”

This centurion is concerned for his sick servant just as in Capernaum the four friends of the paralysed are concerned for their poor friend. But he doesn't bring the sick person to Jesus - or Jesus to the sick person but he says simply “**just say the word**”

Jesus knows all about this, as he knows all about your situation and the trials you are facing.

He is less worried about the trials - as he is about you. Trials are a test and Jesus is testing the Centurion that his great faith may be seen by all.

So Jesus tests him <sup>7</sup> “**I will go and heal him.**” ‘I'll go’ says Jesus - “no you don't need to” the Centurion thinks, and humbly replies: <sup>8</sup> “**Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.**”

Christ's test is to expose and display his faith to all.

The centurion took Him at his word.

Do you take him at his word? Will you take him at his word?

Those trials you are going through now are tests to expose your faith in Christ - or your lack of faith in Christ.

And if you have it to strengthen it and let it shine brightly for all to see **because you know** (says James 1:3,4) **that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.** I hope you know that: and goes on to say **Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.**

When Jesus was faced with the hungry 5000 he turned to his disciples and said “**They do not need to go away, you give them something to eat.**” <sup>Mt 14:16</sup>

You give them something to eat! what? We don't have enough money, it's too far to go, where can we find food here etc. etc. Jesus is saying through this “*Don't look at the problem look at me*” x2

3a

- The more we know of God, the more unreservedly should we will trust him; so to the greater our progress in theology, so to the stronger and simpler - the more genuine and more childlike - will be our faith.

Jesus is saying to you and I his people “don't you know me by now?”

Remember Philip's comment “**Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.**” To which Jesus answered: “**Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?**” Joh 14:8,9

The Lord places us in situations where we have to take him at his word.

✚ **We expect something to happen – but in fact the opposite happens**

Like Naaman when he arrived at Elisha's house to be cured he didn't come out to meet him but just sent the message by his servant: “**Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed.**” But Naaman went away angry and said, “**I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. .... So he turned and went off in a rage.**” <sup>2Ki 5:10-12 NIV</sup>

“Naaman's servants went to him and said, “**My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed?’**” So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.” <sup>(2Ki 5:13-14 NIV)</sup>  
That's the point here, this centurion trusted Christ. He had weighed the evidence, he understood who he was, he could see his authority, he believed he could heal by his word – and therefore he acted on it. That is faith.

✚ “**He knew something – he did something**

**Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go! It will be done just as you believed it would.” And his servant was healed at that very hour.**” <sup>(Mt 8:13 NIV)</sup>

How about you

What do you know? About Christ? Have you acted on what you know?

Do you know that Jesus is God in the flesh, that he gave himself as the only sacrifice for sin, that he rose again conquering the grave, that he can bring me to the father? That to have Him is to move from death to life!

Here the challenge is “**if you know something - will you do something?**”

The centurion did!

3b

- I told my unbelieving brother I would pray for his sick daughter, trusting Christ can heal – and trusting he would use this to bring Glory to himself.

How much faith do I have?

*Jesus said: If you **believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.**" Mt 21:22*

Christ's Commendation

**10 When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.**

What a commendation. Jesus could see His heart, his trust, his belief.

Jesus is **astonished!** Jesus is saying 'here is a man you should copy'

✚ **Is this man a challenges you and I to act on what you know...**

- The years of preaching, years of sermons, years of listening - will this be the day when you fully entrust your life to Him?

Just before meeting the Centurion Jesus has just finished his sermon and finishes with the wise builder and the foolish builder – Which one are you?

✚ **How are you building? Are you building on God's word? Or on your own thinking?**

- There is only one way to build a lasting building, the truth is there is no true blessing outside of Christ: the person of Christ, the heavenly Man. The Gospel places before the sinner a risen, living Christ, as the object of faith and the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. While the eye of faith is kept on the heavenly Christ, all is light, joy and peace; but, if turned in on self, and occupied with what it finds there, and what it feels, or with anything that may come between the heart and Christ, all will be darkness.

✚ **It is through the GOSPEL of Christ that God makes his appeal to you**

Before you is the invitation – never yet turned to Christ? Is that you? Never trusted Christ fully? Never entrusted your life to Him?

When you turn to Christ his promises jump into effect for you...

Provision, He will supply, Direction he will direct your path, Health He is the life giver and sustainer and his grace is sufficient for you, Fragile relationships, Emotions, Loneliness, Lonely but never alone, He sets the lonely in families and promises never to leave or forsake us.

- My mother is confused and says "what am I doing here" Are you tempted to ask that? For Christ's people we know we have been placed just where he wants you.

First things first - entrust your life to Christ, and every promise is yes and amen in Him.

Job was a man of faith even when all the circumstance seemed to point that God was against him, when Job did not feel or sense God's presence he said the words of faith "**even though he slay me - yet I will still trust in Him**"

✚ **Senses for the things of sense; Reason for the things of thought and the mind; Faith for the things of God. —H. W. Warren**

Finally - His place at the great party

Jesus says many now far from God are invited - and will come... **11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.**

Abraham is the man of faith: He went, he waited, he was willing. - He went...land, he waited...Isaac, he was willing to kill his One and only Son.

✚ **Abraham's steps of faith—He left all for God, left all with God, found all in God and yielded all to God.**

✚ **He walked the steps of faith that fall on the seeming void, and found the Rock beneath. — J. G. Whittier**

Watch out - there are others who think they are close and need do nothing. **12 But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."** (Mt 8:5-12 NIV)

Will you be there on that day? When Christ comes back for his own – will that be for you? " ... **I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'** and to the south, **'Do not hold them back.'** Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth— everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." (Isa 43:5-7 NIV)

These are the days of Christ's call, He is calling you - everything is ready **At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'** Lu 14:17

✚ **C.H. Spurgeon spurs us to be – like this centurion - great believers! Little faith will bring your souls to Heaven, but great faith will bring Heaven to your soul.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **END**