

AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN by Carl McMurray

In Luke 7:1-10 there is the account of Jesus healing the Centurion's servant. Have you ever read this account and wondered why God chose to include this unnamed soldier in His word? I believe there is more here than just the chance meeting between him and our Lord. There are some simple, and yet far reaching lessons to be learned here. For example...

1. Vv. 3-4 show that he was a man of GOOD REPUTATION. Not just with his friends and other soldiers. This Roman officer asked for and received assistance from the Jews, the very people that he was in charge of overseeing. Rare indeed is the person whose "enemies" will respect and speak well of him, yet is that not the Christian's goal today in our treatment and dealings with others.

2. Vv. 6-7 show us his nature of HUMILITY. He did not allow his position of authority over the Jews to inflate his ego or "puff him up." As a Centurion in charge of the city, he still considered himself "unworthy" and "in need" when it came to approaching Jesus.

3. Vv. 7-8 illustrate that he UNDERSTOOD AUTHORITY. Understanding the authority of Jesus meant that he understood the power and ability of Jesus. This is a valuable lesson for those that do not seem to think that God can help them or change their lives for the better. Our prayers will reflect how much we truly understand the authority of our Lord today.

4. V. 9 plainly states his FAITH IN GOD! His faith was probably not based upon heritage or upbringing, seeing he was a Gentile. His must have been a faith deeply set into honest observation and drawing conclusions based upon those observations. Would that we could be so honest as this man: to see through the mistakes and failures of men to the real beauty and wisdom of God's law. More observation of God's word, less observation of other men, and more attitude adjustments based upon honest conclusions drawn from study will certainly always be welcome changes among God's people.

Elders, preachers, and all members need to learn the lessons from this man concerning HUMILITY, even in a position of authority, and appreciating the AUTHORITY (power & ability) of our Lord. We must all continue to strive after conduct and GOOD REPUTATION that will give glory to our Father in Heaven and bring honor and respect to Jesus Christ, even when others disagree with our convictions. Quite often it is not the convictions that make others uncomfortable, as much as it is the manner in which they are expressed. Lastly, we need the FAITH IN GOD that will lead us to action. Faith that is not based upon what we have been told, but faith that comes from diligent study and involvement in God's work.

From this soldier of the first century, let us learn the lessons that will help us in our own sphere of influence and authority today.