

MORNING SERVICE

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With George

Your CV
Doesn't Work Here

Luke 7:1-10



The process of a job application, with your CV and cover letter, is all about one thing...

"Prove what you have done to deserve this." In the world of Social Media our worth is calculated in engagement, likes, clicks, views and followers. In relationships, worth is tied to appearance and personality. Worth is measured by legacies, achievements, money and property. Everywhere

we turn, the message is the same: "earn it," "prove it," "deserve it." This is our day-to-day existence and sadly it has affected the way that we see the gospel and the way we approach Jesus.

You've had a good day, you've read the Bible in the morning and done a good day's work, spoken to a colleague about Jesus, had someone to your house for dinner and now heading to Homegroup and bringing your colleague along. You're feeling good, you come before God confidently in prayer because in your mind you're smashing it! But the next day, you sleep in so don't have time to read the Bible or pray, you don't work hard and get frustrated with yourself so don't engage well with your colleagues, you head home and have an argument with someone you love. You're feeling rubbish and think you'll just wait until tomorrow to pray because you've screwed up today. We come to Jesus based upon felt worthiness. When we're thinking like this, we're missing the gospel completely because the truth is, before our Holy God, no one is worthy. Even on our best days we are stained by sin! Any good we have done is like filthy rags. But Christ came as our worthy substitute so that in him alone we can be worthy. Despite this truth, we still come to Jesus based upon felt worthiness.

1) The Worthiness of the Centurion Jesus has just finished his teaching his Sermon on the Moun/Plain. It's like coffee time after church, you're chatting to one another, catching up on the week and talking about God's teaching, when the centurion, a professional officer in the occupying Roman army sends some Jewish elders to Jesus to speak on his behalf. These elder say to Jesus that this centurion has built the synagogue and he is taking care of us Jews. Repay this patron, so we can continue in his blessing. They believe that Jesus has the power to heal, but it is *why* Jesus will heal is where they go wrong. If we are honest we too relate to Jesus as supplier and not as Saviour. We treat Jesus as a slot machine; put the right things in so we'll get the right things out. We should be doing good stuff but that will not make us worthy of Jesus.

2. The Unworthiness of the Centurion Sending the elders to Jesus on his behalf, it is a sign of the centurion's awareness of his unworthiness and inferior status to Jesus despite his rank and power within the Roman war machine. "So Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed." (v6) There is a stark contrast between what the elders of the Jews say to Jesus, and what the Centurion says to Jesus. The Jews plead based upon the Centurion's worthiness. But the Centurion asks on the bases of Christ's authority. By the grace of God, the centurion clearly had a high view of Jesus incorporated with a faith in Jesus's power and authority. In the Old Testament, God speaks and things happen. Creation, life, healing, they all come by His word. Jesus, speaks with that same authority. From what we read, the centurion never meets Jesus personally! Isn't that amazing? He did not deem himself worthy of such a privilege. Just look at the way he speaks in verse 7, "I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you." This man had every reason to be proud and yet, before Christ, he knew his place. And yet,

we are unworthy to come before God so Jesus comes to us. Praise God for the gospel. He has humility and also boldness to come based upon Jesus's goodness. This war machine, this gentile, saw Jesus rightly!

It was understood that healing happened through direct physical contact. "Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all." (ch6,17,18) But the centurion says in verse 7, "Say the word, and my servant will be healed." The power of Jesus works from afar. Jesus doesn't need to be physically present or have the perfect setup. He doesn't even need to see the person. He just needs to speak. Jesus is not limited by your felt distance from him. He is not limited by your bad week; or by your lack of feeling. Jesus is not limited by how far gone a situation seems. If Jesus has authority (and he does) then he can work right now, right where you are. The centurion knows exactly where his authority ends and says, "I can't fix this." And that clarity drives him to Jesus. But we often do the opposite. We try to carry what we were never meant to carry. We try to fix what we don't have the authority to fix. And as we do this, we shrink Jesus. We act like our problems are bigger than His power. But the centurion says "I am limited, but you are not." And that's where real faith begins. He talks like John the Baptist who does not feel 'worthy' to untie the laces of Jesus's sandals and Peter who tells Jesus to depart from him because of his sin. So what does Jesus do with a man who says, "I am not worthy"... but looks to Jesus and says, "You have authority."

3. The Compassion of Christ "When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." (v9) Jesus, the one who amazes everyone else, is now amazed by this Gentile. Jesus marvels one other time at the unbelief in his hometown of Nazareth. This is a faith not based on works. It is faith that God will help despite who we are. Jesus describes it as, "Great faith," Which means this; Jesus is looking for those who trust him regardless of religious background, heritage or track record; those who cast themselves entirely on His mercy. Paul writes in Romans, "All are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." Freely. Not earned. Not achieved. Not deserved. Given freely. God does not receive you or justify you because of who you are. He receives you because of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done in your place. God judges your sin in Jesus and counts Jesus's righteousness as yours because he took the judgement we deserve and gave us the righteousness we do not have. So when God receives you, he is not lowering his standards, he is receiving you in Christ, who has already met his standards.

As Jesus looks at your faith does he see dependence on him and trust in his authority to overcome our two great enemies sickness and death. One day we will see the full realization of our faith when it becomes sight! What a glorious day that will be! But until then we are called to come to him in faith based upon his grace and his authority. Grace because we can't earn it. Authority because he can do something about what we are coming to him for.

Here is the invitation. Come to Jesus, not when you feel worthy, but precisely because you know you are not. Come to him with empty hands. Trusting not in what you have done, but in what Christ has done for you. I've got good news; your CV doesn't work here. Not because Jesus is harsh, but because his grace is better. You don't need to earn His help. You don't need to prove yourself. You don't need to deserve it. You can't deserve it, He gives freely.

The gospel is not that God rewards the worthy, it is that God justifies the ungodly through Christ. So come! Not based on your worthiness but based on His grace and His authority.

Your CV doesn't work here. Grace does.