



Like No Other: The Life of Christ

Theme Based Sermon Outline

To be used with Session 4

Sermon Title: Jesus' Authority

Sermon Text: Luke 7:1-10

Connection to Unit Theme: To complement the small group study of Like No Other, based on the life of Christ, these sermon outlines will use different Scripture passages to reinforce the same themes regarding Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection, so the pastor can reinforce the study from the pulpit, focusing on the same topic, but using different Scripture.

This sermon outline is based on the account of Jesus healing a Roman centurion's servant from a distance. A Roman centurion was a professional soldier who had been placed in authority over 100 soldiers. As a Roman charged with keeping the peace in a conquered region, we would not think he would have much humility or care for those over whom he had been charged. And yet this centurion demonstrates not only a wise grasp of authority, but also realizes the authority of Jesus and His words.

Introduction: As a teaching assistant in the public school system, I am able to witness firsthand the struggle for authority between students and faculty. It is sad to realize the lack of respect for those in authority demonstrated by many youth in our day. Contempt, indifference, and outright defiance are daily issues with which school administrators and faculty must wrestle. And all because students have not been taught to recognize and to respect authority by their parents. In fact, many parents do not recognize or respect the authority given to teachers and staff by the local school system to teach and nurture their children.

When Jesus journeyed about, teaching in local synagogues, the people recognized immediately that His teachings were different. They were not abstract observations or vague exhortations from a purely academic perspective. They were, instead, a refreshingly authoritative and powerful. Jesus backed up His teachings with power, example, and even miracles. By bypassed hair-splitting arguments and spoke straight to the heart of every issue. In Luke 7:1-10 we find an astonishing example of one who fully understood and submitted to the authority of Jesus and His words. It is astonishing because it is found in someone we would never have suspected....

A Roman Centurion Demonstrates to Us:

I. Recognition of Jesus' Authority

A Roman centurion was a professional soldier who had been charged with the command of 100 soldiers. This was a man hardened by Rome's many conquests, and accustomed to giving orders. More importantly perhaps. He was accustomed to having his orders obeyed. And yet, when he heard about Jesus' miracles and teachings, he sent a request for Jesus to heal his servant, who

was sick and close to death. He recognized that Jesus had authority to heal, but also the authority to choose whom He would heal. He did not command. He asked.

This centurion demonstrated an acute understanding of authority, because he was himself operating under the authority of another. In verse 8 he explains to Jesus that he as a man operating under the authority of another could give orders and expect those orders to be obeyed. With his position and uniform, he spoke with the authority of Rome, the ruling power of the day. He recognized that Jesus spoke with the authority of the God of heaven, a higher authority than even Rome. If the centurion gave orders as a man and they were obeyed, how much more would Jesus the God-Man's orders be carried out?

Jesus' teachings were authoritative because He was and is the Son of God, the agent of all creation, and the Savior of mankind. He designed and created the world in which we live, the bodies in which we reside, and He knows best how we are to operate in His world. When God says "Thou shalt not" He is really saying, from a heart of love for us, "Don't hurt yourself by acting contrary to my best designs for you." We can trust Him because He created us, redeemed us, and has our best interests in mind.

II. Submission to Jesus' Authority

This Roman centurion also demonstrated a remarkable submission to Jesus' authority. As a Roman charged with keeping the peace in a conquered region, we would not think he would have much humility or care for those over whom he had been charged. In fact, as troublesome as the region of the Jews was, we would expect him to have nothing but contempt or even hatred for the Jews. But this centurion was solicitous of the Jews and showed them respect, even building them a synagogue. He had respect for their God as well as their worship of Him.

The soldier, when he heard that Jesus was coming to his home, sent word ahead that Jesus did not need to make the journey. He stated that he was unworthy of Jesus making such a journey, and further, was unworthy to host Jesus in his home. He knew that Jewish rabbis would be ceremonially defiled by entering the home of a Roman, and did not wish to insult Jesus by requiring a visit to his home. As the Son of God, Jesus could exercise His authority from any location.

We submit to Jesus' authority when we honor His position of creator and redeemer. We doubly belong to Him. He not only made us, but He bought us back from the slave market of sin. We are truly bought with a price and not our own. "Don't you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body." 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (HCSB).

III. Belief in Jesus' Authority

Recognition of and submission to Jesus' authority was activated by faith in Jesus' authority. In verse 7 this Roman centurion demonstrated his faith in Jesus' words. He implored Jesus to not continue His journey to the centurion's home, but to "speak only the words" that were needed to heal his servant. His trust in Jesus' authoritative words was enough. In fact, Jesus was amazed and commended his faith by declaring that He had not found such faith in all of Israel. The word "such" used to describe his faith is the word used in John 3:16 where we are told that God loves

the world “so” much. It is a word used when we cannot adequately describe the amount. Even “God’s chosen” could learn faith in God’s Word from this hardened Roman soldier!

In Matthew’s account of this story, Jesus spoke these words to the centurion: “As you have believed, so be it unto you” (Matthew 8:13 NKJV). Do you trust in the Word of God? Do you believe in it so much that you obey it and live by it?

- *“I am now going the way of all the earth, and you know with all your heart and all your soul that none of the good promises the LORD your God made to you has failed. Everything was fulfilled for you; not one promise has failed.” Joshua 23:14 (HCSB)*
- *“For every one of God’s promises is “Yes” in Him. Therefore the “Amen” is also through Him for God’s glory through us.” 2 Corinthians 1:20 (HCSB)*

Closing: This Roman centurion’s trust in the authoritativeness of Jesus’ words was rewarded. His servant was healed from the very moment that Jesus commended his faith. Our faith in and obedience of Jesus’ words will also be rewarded. Obedience demonstrates faith. If we are truly submitted to Jesus’ authoritative words, we will follow them. Here are two great Old Testament illustrations of this:

1. II Kings 3 – The Israelites had journeyed for 7 days and were in need of water. God’s Word came to them through the prophet Elisha: “Make this valley you are in full of ditches, and God will provide water.” They were to dig as many ditches as possible and God would fill them with water. The Israelites dug ditches and the next morning they were filled with water. How could they have gotten more water? Dig more ditches. “As you have believed, so be it unto you.”

2. II Kings 4 – A widow woman pleaded with the prophet Elisha to help her. Her husband had died leaving her with debts. Her creditors were coming to take her and her children to sell as slaves to recover his losses. God’s word to her through Elisha was this: “Then he said, “Go and borrow empty containers from everyone—from all your neighbors. Do not get just a few. Then go in and shut the door behind you and your sons, and pour oil into all these containers. Set the full ones to one side.” (vs. 3-4). The small pot of oil she had in the house continued to produce oil to fill all of the borrowed containers. When she ran out of containers, the oil stopped coming. She was then instructed to sell the oil and pay her debts. How could she have gotten more oil? Borrow more containers. “As you have believed, so be it unto you.”

Trust in the teachings of Jesus. Live by them. He who has all power and authority is the same redeemer who bought you and loves you. He will never steer you astray!

Michael Stover is a graduate of Union University and Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. He has over twenty years of experience in local church ministry, as well as camp ministry and leading training conferences for Sunday School and VBS. He enjoys writing, computers, hunting, and fishing. Michael lives in Jonesborough, Tennessee with his wife Becky and four of their five children.