

Faith That Amazes God

Matthew 8:5-13

Nowadays, it is very difficult to surprise or amaze people. In a recent interview, the design director for Disney movies said, “Each day becomes more difficult to surprise children.” As I was reading I thought, “if it is difficult to surprise kids, it’s harder to surprise grownups, and almost impossible to amaze God.”

Story about trying to surprise my wife with a big and expensive gift (washing machine) for Valentine’s Day.

The title of the message (Faith That Amazes God) may lack meaning to you. According to what we know of God, one of His attributes is omniscience, which means that God knows everything. The psalmist reveals it this way: *O LORD, you have searched me, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise, you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. Psalm 139:1-4 NIV*

Now you may be wondering: *what we can do to surprise the all-knowing God?* What can we do to amaze God? How can we astonish the person who knows our present and our future?

Many people believe that they can amaze God through rituals. They think of pleasing God by repeating prayers, lighting candles, lighting incense or some other type of unrealistic ideas. But this is not what the Bible teaches.

Other people think that they can astonish God through laws or regulations. Such people keep with a list of things they can do and things they cannot do. If you do everything you have on the list of good things to do and do none of the things that are written on the blacklist, then you are right with God. But this is not what the Bible says.

Another group of people believe pleasing God through religion, keeping certain holy days, and attending many religious activities. They say: “If you participate in communion and you are religious enough then God will have your name on the VIP list.” But that is not what the Bible says.

The Bible teaches that God is not interested in rituals, rules or regulations, much less in religion. God is interested in having an intimate relationship with you. God wants and is interested in us learning to trust Him. The Bible teaches that, “*without faith it is impossible to please God*” (Hebrews 11:6 NIV).

The story I want to share today is a tremendous example of the “Faith that Amazes God”.

⁵When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. ⁶“Lord,” he said, “my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly.”

⁷Jesus said to him, “Shall I come and heal him?”

⁸The 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. ⁹For 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.”

¹⁰*When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, “Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.* ¹¹I 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. ¹²But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

¹³Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would.” And his servant was healed at that moment. **Matthew 8:5-13 NIV**

This man, the centurion, is one of the most important people in Capernaum. He has influence in politics. He is a man of war. He has achievements which he can be proud of. He is a rich man who has not only money but also authority.

The centurion is a man who has many obstacles to face in order to come to Jesus. His nationality was not in his favor. The Jews hated the Romans. So, most likely the centurion thought that Jesus was one more Jew who would also hate him. But no doubts, neither money, nor fame, nor his authority was greater than the desire he had to meet Jesus.

This man comes to Jesus and does not dare to speak with arrogance, nor even with a tone of command or authority. He humbles himself and implores Jesus. He begs... The centurion doesn't dare to look at Jesus' eyes; he cannot even lift his head.

If this man had something that he could make a claim for, he left it thousands of miles behind, because what we see in this account is a man without reservation, without pride, a man who does not care how much authority he has, or how many men are under his command. The only thing he cares about is that at this time he is facing the greatest man of all times, who has power and authority over all creation. So, he must show reverence, respect and admiration.

The question is simple, *what does it take to have a faith that amazes God?*

One of the first things we learn from this account is that a faith that amazes God is full of desire to have a real encounter with the One who can change our lives. It's faith that seeks God regardless of one's physical circumstances. It is faith that does not allow pride nor shame, riches nor hardships to become obstacles in one's relationship with Christ.

- **Another thing we learn from the centurion is that a faith that amazes God goes beyond words. The centurion's faith went beyond words because he believed that Jesus could help him.**

The centurion knew Caesar, but Caesar could not help him with the situation he was facing. He had a lot of money but he couldn't buy health for his servant. He had men under his command, but he couldn't give an order to make his servant feel better. Maybe he held titles, but the title of Divine Physician belongs to God alone. No titles or trophies, awards or achievements could get him out of this situation.

There are certain things that political figures can do. There are some things that money can buy. There are certain commands that we can say. There are certain places we can get access to because of our own achievements, but still we have limitations. Things that are beyond our means and seem impossible, God can do.

You can have the most important titles and honors in the world (i.e. PhDs; you can sing like an angel), but if the power of God is not within you, it is worth nothing. This man had no religious credentials but he had a faith that amazed Jesus.

The centurion has a faith that goes beyond words because he believed that Jesus was the answer. Jesus is impressed by people who trust him regardless of their financial condition, much less their status in society.

The genuine faith of a hated gentile ashamed the stagnant piety of many Jews who were religious leaders.

- ***A faith that amazes God* believes that God has the power to do new things. The centurion believed that Jesus can do something completely new, something never seen before.**

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" (Matthew 8:8 NIV).

In other words, the centurion is saying, "Master, you don't have to come to my house, you don't have to lay your hands on my servant or anoint him with oil. I know you don't need to put mud on him to heal him. I am certain that you can heal my servant from this very place."

All the miracles Jesus had performed until this moment somehow had a personal touch. So far, Jesus had always shared the same room with the people who had received a miracle. But this man knew Jesus had the power to do new things, things never seen before.

That is the faith that amazes God. Faith that goes beyond words. The kind of faith that believe in the impossible. Faith that does not need to see in order to believe. A faith that is not subject to any pattern.

Normal faith is faith that believes that God can do what he has done. It is the faith that thanks God for the food we put on the table, the roof we have over our heads, the shoes we wear. It is faith that expects God to help us pay the rent this month; it is the faith that expects God to help me graduate with excellent grades.

Faith that amazes God is the faith that trusts God can do what he hasn't done so far. It is not based on what God has done in the past; rather, it is based on what He will get done. God wants to do great things for us. "*What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived [are] the things God has prepared for those who love him*" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Faith that Amazes God is the faith that is confident that the best is yet to come. It is faith that expects God to become a sea in a small lake. It is not based on past patterns; it is confident that God has the power to do new things in my present and my future.

- ***A faith that amazes God believes in and recognizes the power and authority of the Word of God. The centurion believed in the power of the Word.***

Faith that amazes God recognizes the authority of the Word of God. (Just say the word)

The Word of God has the power to:

Create and do new things: "*The universe was formed at God's command.*" **Hebrews 11:3 NIV**

Clean: Jesus said, "*You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.*" **John 15:3 NIV**

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

Revive: "*I am afflicted very much; revive me, O LORD, according to your word.*" **Psalms 119:107 NKJV**

Rebuke the devil: Jesus said to him, "*Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only. Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.'*" **Matthew 4:10-11 NIV**

The Word of God is

Living, active and reaches deep into the soul: "*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*" **Hebrews 4:12 NIV**

Food to the spirit: "*Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*" **Matthew 4:4 NIV**

Eternal and stands for ever: *The grass withers, the flower fades but the word of our God stands forever. Isaiah 40:8 NIV*

Look forward to have faith to amaze God. Let's go beyond words. Let us come to God looking for help. He is the only one that can really do the impossible. He can do something completely new in your life, something that He has never done before. Let us trust and believe in the power of His word. If you do, not only are you going to amaze God, but you are also going to receive from Him what you need, what you have been looking for.

Let's have the faith that amazes God