

## How Deep is Your Faith? Matthew 8:5-10

- I. Promises, Promises
  - A. Most people use this term in a sarcastic way
  - B. But Jesus has given us many promises — and He will keep them
    1. Food, drink, clothing
    2. The things needed for both life and godliness
    3. Eternal salvation
  - C. We just need to keep the faith
- II. Authority
  - A. Matthew 8:5–9 (ESV); <sup>5</sup> When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, <sup>6</sup> “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” <sup>7</sup> And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” <sup>8</sup> But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup> For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”
  - B. Jesus’ reputation went before him where ever he travelled
  - C. A centurion was a Roman “captain of 100”
    1. A legion contained 6000 foot soldiers so there were 60 centurions in each legion
    2. Five of them were considered senior centurions and one was the chief centurion
  - D. Israel was an occupied “country”
    1. A vassal of Rome required to pay tribute
    2. Legions and cohorts were stationed in these occupied countries to ensure peace
    3. This centurion was charged with keeping the peace in Israel
    4. Yet he recognized Jesus as one with authority and power (who actually had no power and authority in Israel)
    5. Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) in Alaska
      - a) These inspections determine the Wing, Base, and unit’s ability to conduct their wartime mission
      - b) Don’t fail an ORI!
      - c) I was an M-60 Machine Gun Specialist
      - d) I was tasked with giving the M-60 briefing to the ORI inspectors
      - e) I was just a young Airman First Class (A1C) with no authority or power
    6. Matthew 7:28–29 (ESV); <sup>28</sup> And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, <sup>29</sup> for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.
    7. “The Romans believed in many different gods and goddesses.
      - a) For everything imaginable they had a god or goddess in charge.
      - b) Mars for example was the god of war. This meant he was good at fighting and it meant that he had most of all the soldiers at heart. A Roman soldier would hence most likely pray to Mars for strength in battle.
      - c) But Minerva was the goddess of wisdom, intelligence and learning. Not many soldiers would ask her for help. But perhaps a schoolboy would ask her to help him learn his grammar or understand his maths better” <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Roman Gods." Roman Gods. Romanempire.net, n.d. Web. 08 June 2017.

8. And so, the Romans indeed had hundreds of different gods. This entire collection of all their gods was called the Pantheon.
9. Even though this centurion probably prayed to Mars and was charged with keeping the peace (not allowing a riot to break out led by someone without any power or authority) he could not deny the power and authority Jesus wielded

### III. Faith

- A. Matthew 8:10 (ESV); When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith.
- B. Hebrews 11:1 (ESV); Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
- C. We often argue with people about creation versus evolution
  1. Both are theories (not matter what anyone else tells you) — Neither has been proven by man
  2. Man has been unsuccessful in recreating both creation and evolution
  3. We must look at the evidence for both and then make some kind of informed decision (guess)
  4. We must have faith to believe in both creation and evolution
  5. The evidence I have seen has led me to decide that we were created by God
  6. And that the event in Genesis chapters 1 and 2 is an accurate account of the creation of the world and everything in it
  7. But it takes faith — none of us saw God create the earth
  8. That is an easy thing to have faith in for a Christian
- D. Jesus
  1. We know that Jesus was a person who taught some great ways to live a philanthropic life (a life dedicated to helping others — both physically and spiritually)
  2. He also claimed to be the Messiah, the long awaited savior of the world — John the Baptist says as much
  3. John 1:29 (ESV); The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
  4. There is plenty of evidence that has led me to decide that Jesus is the Christ and that He died so I could have eternal life with Him
  5. Again, that is a pretty easy thing to have faith in for a Christian
- E. Love
  1. This one is a bit harder on our faith
  2. John 13:34–35 (ESV); <sup>34</sup> A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
  3. We don’t get to define what kind of love, either — “just as I have loved you”
  4. We are commanded to love each other with a self-sacrificing love
  5. We often let our own feelings and desires get in the way of that
    - a) Just look at all the unloving behavior that has gone on in the last 8+ years
    - b) Those who were against our president said and wrote some really bad stuff
    - c) Those who are against our current president continue this cycle
    - d) I’m not saying anything about what is true or untrue — my focus is on our words and if they promote loving one another or hating one another
    - e) Gossip is gossip, whether truth or fiction
  6. While we might say the right things, our actions tell a different story
    - a) The 80-20 rule — people listen to 20% of what you say and 80% of what you do
    - b) Jesus reprimands the Jewish rulers with this very same idea

- c) Matthew 23:1–4 (ESV); <sup>1</sup> Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup> “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, <sup>3</sup> so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. <sup>4</sup> They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.
  - 7. Paul admonishes the church at Corinth for their unloving behavior towards one another
    - a) In chapter 11 he corrects them on their understanding of the Lord’s Supper
    - b) In 12 and 14 he corrects them on their attitude towards each other’s spiritual gift
    - c) In 13 Paul corrects their understanding of love
    - d) 1 Corinthians 13:1-7
    - e) The greatest of these is love (verse 13)
  - 8. There are a lot of us who may have hard feelings for people who have hurt us (physically and spiritually)
    - a) Many don’t want to come worship God because of judgmental and unloving attitudes (not to be confused with desiring Christians to approve of their sin)
    - b) I’m not talking about excuses to behave how you want, but a true anxiety about the people of God because of one person’s behavior
    - c) Maybe you are a victim of assault, theft, gossip, lying, etc.
    - d) We are not given a “pass” on loving the person that hurt us
    - e) Matthew 5:43–48 (ESV); <sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. <sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup> You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
  - F. This is not an easy thing for anyone, Christians included
  - G. Our faith must encompass all the teachings of Jesus — we must “step out” on faith that God is in control and that He loves us no matter what is happening at the moment
  - H. 2 Corinthians 5:6–10 (ESV); <sup>6</sup> So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, <sup>7</sup> for we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup> Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup> So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.
- IV. How Deep is Your Faith?
- A. We must move on from the easy things to the more difficult
  - B. Our faith must be steadfast with all things taught by Christ
  - C. We must look daily into the mirror and examine our faith — determined to make it deeper