

Sermon: The Centurion's Faith
Morning Star Chapel

April 22, 2016
Rev. Calvin Odhner

(SLIDE 1 TITLE)

(SLIDE 2 RECITATION)

Text: Matthew 8:5-13

Arcana 5712, 9031

“If you know these things, you are happy if you do them” (John 13:17).”

Has anyone here ever seen anyone famous? My brother saw Clint Eastwood (SLIDE 3) walking down the street big as day... he couldn't believe how tall he was! Whenever he thinks of Clint Eastwood, other than “make my day” ...he thinks of that moment when he saw him.... live...in person... its sort of burned in his mind... he can recall that image anytime.

(Slide 4) Thought brings presence doesn't it?(AE 815:4) He says “every time I think of that moment...it's just like I was standing right in front of him.”

Nobody has any trouble believing in Clint Eastwood... but, we can apply this same principle, “thought brings presence,” to our image of the Lord. If you have a favorite image of the Lord bring it up in

your mind right now...you may have to sort through a couple images you have, or maybe you haven't thought about this a while,...but, pick your favorite pick your favorite pick your favorite image image...

(Slide 6) turn it about in your mind... have a good look at it. If you're not quite comfortable with that image you can change it... Or, if you still don't have one, the True Christian Religion provides one for us, we read (SLIDE 6)

“The gaze of this faith can be compared to looking at a shining white cloud with an angel in its midst who is inviting us to enter it and be raised into heaven. This is how the Lord looks to people who have faith in him.”

(TCR 339:3)

To have faith in something.... is to believe in it... to have an image of it... in your mind, to see it in your minds eye... and this brings it's presence.

This is why it is so important for us to have an image of the Lord in our mind. So that when we pray to Him, we can call upon Him, we can bring up His image... of a Divine Human Man... who we can talk

to... and confide in. And don't worry if it's an image from your childhood! For we read

...there must always be... historical faith before it becomes a saving faith; for a historical faith becomes a saving faith with man by his learning truths from the Word, and living according to them.

(AR 815:4)

While the Lord was on earth he performed thousands of miracles but there were at least 37 miracles we get to read about!

Each healing had to do with the person's image of the Lord in their mind... whether they acknowledged the Lord's Divine Omnipotence... that he was God (AR 815:4).... and according to their faith... they were healed! The number one primary thing for the church and faith to be born within each one of us is that we believe that the Lord is God Almighty!(Ibid).

Now soon after the Lord started his ministry... He left Nazareth and went to Capernaum by the sea. And He began teaching and healing. (SLIDE 7) We read

Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. (Matthew 4:25)

He spoke like no other man and people watched as he healed others with the touch of his hand!

One day a centurion approached the Lord. (SLIDE 8) Now a centurion is the commander of 100 men in the Roman army... 80 foot soldiers and 20 military servants. They are paid 10 times the denarii of a regular Roman soldier... and for good reason! They are fearless... first in the line of combat... leading their troop into the harshest part of the battle. They're chosen from their strength, their size, and their ability to throw the javelin... as well as the use of a sword and shield. They are easily identified as a symbol of authority by their transverse helmet crest and staff... cut from a grapevine. (centurion slide). One centurion, Lucilius, was nicknamed by his soldiers "fetch another"...

each time he would break a grapevine staff over an unruly soldier he would say “fetch another.” Centurions had an extremely high casualty rate... and yet we see this centurion pleading before the Lord,

6 saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.”

7 And Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.”

Every disease has its origin in evil. And every disease the Lord healed is symbolic of a spiritual disease we can have within us. One of the reasons the Word became flesh, was so that the Lord could show us that by the power in His Word, all our spiritual diseases can be healed! This particular disease was called “paralysis” or the “palsy”. People would lose control of their muscles and sometimes shake violently, or just remain utterly powerless. It’s a disease that represents the separation of the will and understanding... when a person has evils in there will but does not have the truths in their understanding to fight those evils... and they remain “paralyzed” by them.

8 The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this *one*, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does *it*."

Did you notice the soldier's humility and complete faith in the Lord? The centurion did not say, "for I am a man **of** authority," but, "for I am a man **under** authority." This subordinate officer knew how to obey... because he was himself under authority, he knew how the men under his command obeyed him without question. He recognized that his power was not personal; that the power which his men obeyed in him was the same power to which, in his superiors, he was obedient: the power of the Roman army. And he was convinced that in the Lord, there was power to which disease must submit at His command.

It took time and trust on the centurion's part...to go to the Lord...to believe in Him. And because he believed Jesus to be God Almighty (AC 10083:5) his servant was healed!

When we take that image we have of the Lord in our mind... and we acknowledge that He is the Lord, the Savior of the world... the

only One who can save our (AC 8364, 9031, 9086) spiritual life...like the centurion...our faith is born! For it is by this acknowledgment that truths and goods from heaven begin to flow into us (AC 10083:5) from the Lord. This is the beginning of our healing...the healing of our spiritual illnesses. If we have turned aside from truth and chosen to live for ourselves alone... our spiritual life is in (AC 9031) poor health. The miracle cure that the Lord has to offer us is simple: learn the simple truths in the Word and apply them to your daily life...let them cleanse your thoughts...and eventually we will hear the Lord say

**“Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith,
not even in Israel!**

(SLIDE 9)

Amen (The rite of holy supper will not take place)