



Week 19 – The Faith of the Centurion

This week we are looking at Jesus' interaction with a Centurion who sought Jesus in faith that he could heal a paralyzed servant. Jesus uses this interaction to teach those following him that the Kingdom of Heaven will include some unexpected people and that the defining characteristic of these citizens is their faith.

Read Matthew 8:5-13

How does the Centurion display his trust in Jesus – where do you see examples of his faith?

The other people mentioned in this account are the 'Sons of the Kingdom' which was a term used to refer to the nation of Israel.

What contrast does Jesus draw between the 'sons of the kingdom' and the centurion?

In Luke 18:9-14 Jesus again contrasts two individuals. How might the individuals of this parable reflect the nature of the Centurion and the 'sons of the kingdom'?

The account of the Centurion focusses on the concept of faith, while the Parable of the Pharisee and tax collector focus on that of humility. What is the relationship between these two concepts? (See also Matt 5:3; Psalm 51:16-17)

A key message that Jesus is conveying through these contrasts is that we become Kingdom citizens through faith, not through works. Read Galatians 3:7-14 to summarize this concept.

Where do we as a church or you individually find that you turn back to works for your righteousness?

Jesus message to the Centurion and his listeners is one of hope – it is a message of good news. Looking back to Matthew 8:5-13:

What blessings are pointed to for kingdom citizens in Matthew 8:11?
What is the significance of reclining at the table with the Patriarchs?

What is the good news to the Centurion? (See Paul's quote of Hosea in Romans 9:25-26 and Isaiah in Romans 15:12)

What is the good news to the 'sons of the kingdom'? (See Matt 11:30; Romans 3:21-22)

Jesus message is one of hope, that by faith we can be counted righteous and join the family of God as true children of Abraham.

For prayer, please consider the ways that you have heard the good news articulated tonight and spend time thanking God for the work that he has done on our behalf. Please pray that our church would continue to preach the same gospel in our words and actions being discerning as to where we are placing our trust in something other than God for our righteousness.