CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JUNE 21 2025

faith-full soldier

Scripture Story: Matthew 8:5-13; Matthew 12:22-28; Luke 7:1-17.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 32; 33.



Photo by Alden Ho

key text

"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.' "

(Matthew 8:10, NIV)

flashlight

"The Jewish elders who recommended the centurion to Christ had shown how far they were from possessing the spirit of the gospel. They did not recognize that our great need is our only claim on God's mercy. In their self-righteousness they commended the centurion because of the favor he had shown to 'our nation.' But the centurion said of himself, 'I am not worthy.' His heart had been touched by the grace of Christ" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 316).

what do you think?

Think for a moment about the power entrusted to the president of the United States by the Constitution. Below is a list of statements about the president's power. Write T or F next to each statement depending on whether you think the president has that power or not.

The president can:

1. Declare war on any other nation without getting the approval of the U.S. Congress.
2. Designate certain parts of the country as national park reserves.
3. Go anywhere in America they wish and at any time, including your home.
4. Veto bills that they do not agree with, and that veto can never be overturned.
5. Choose to disregard a law if they do not agree with it.

did you know?

Did you know that out-standing Roman soldiers called "centurions" were given this title because they commanded a century—a legion of 100 soldiers or so? Centurions would be the equivalent of today's captains or lieutenants. They often fought alongside their soldiers, leading them from the front into battle. According to a StudyLight .org Bible encyclopedia, centurions were responsible for drilling their men; inspecting their arms, food, clothing; and commanding them in battle. The Romans believed that if they had strong, brave centurions, their military would be almost invincible, and for hundreds of years they were.

INTO THE STORY

"When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, 'This man deserves to have you do this, because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue.' So Jesus went with them.

"He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: 'Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For 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.'

"When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, 'I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.' Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well."

"Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. All the people were astonished and said, 'Could this be the Son of David?'

"But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, 'It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.'

"Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.'"

(Luke 7:1-10; Matthew 12:22-28, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Today's *Into the Story* passage presents two different stories from Jesus' ministry travels. What differences or parallels do you see in each?

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What did the Jewish leaders say to Jesus during the centurion episode? What was their attitude?

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Look at the second story in the *Into the Story* section. What is the attitude of the Jewish leaders in this story? What accusation are they making about Jesus here?

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Pay close attention to spots in the stories where there is a turn in the action. Place an X at each spot.

What does Jesus say in each story? Look for the power and authority in His words. Does He seem shy or timid? Is He overly concerned about what the Jewish elites would think of Him?

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What lessons can we learn about what people make up the family of God?

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punch lines

"What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!' " **(Zechariah 4:7, NIV).**

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" **(Hebrews 11:6, NIV).**

"May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you" **(1 Thessalonians 3:12, NIV).**

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" **(Galatians 6:2, NIV).**

"I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me" **(John 14:30, NIV).**

"When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time" **(Luke 4:13, NIV).**

further insight

"He who rejects the work of the Holy Spirit is placing himself where repentance and faith cannot come to him."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 321

"Look up, you that are doubting and trembling; for Jesus lives to make intercession for us. . . . The Spirit invites you today. Come with your whole heart to Jesus, and you may claim His blessing."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 54

Sabbath

Read John 17:1-5.

How did you do in the *What Do You Think?* activity? Some of those statements were very tricky, and you may have needed to consult your civics textbooks to be sure.

The Constitution is the document that defines the president's authority and what they are supposed to abide by. Who or what was the source of Jesus' authority while on earth (John 17:1-5)?

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How did the centurion know that Jesus had the authority simply to speak and heal his servant? After all, he was not a follower of Jesus. Explain your answer.

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"The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. . . . The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word revealed in the Scriptures" (The Church, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 12).

Sunday

Read John 15:12.

After reading the *Into the Story* Bible passage, complete the *Out of the Story* questions.

Notice that both the centurion's servant and the demon-possessed man were brought to Jesus by other people. Write about a time you took a friend to Jesus. Maybe you did it by praying for them, or maybe you invited them to church. Share what led you to do this.

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As the family of God we are called to reach out to all people. "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you" (John 15:12, NIV).

Monday

Read Mark 12:32-34.

Read this week's *Key Text* again. Wouldn't you love for Jesus to give you a compliment like the one He gave the centurion? Jesus was known to give awesome compliments. What did He say to the religious teacher in today's reading?

Why was Jesus so "impressed" by the centurion's display of faith?

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The centurion was not a Jew. In fact, he was part of the Roman force that occupied the Jews. Can you think of a time you saw a non-Christian show great faith in God? How did that person's show of faith impact you? How did it strengthen your faith?

Tuesday

Read James 2:1-7.

Read this week's *Flashlight* quotation and then read Luke 7:1-5.

What special favor had the centurion done for the Jews?

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The Jewish leaders felt that this made the centurion worthy of Jesus' help and support. Do we sometimes feel the same way about rich and powerful people who have done great things? What does the apostle James say about how we should treat all people, whether rich or poor, deserving of our help or not (see James 2:1-7)?

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As the family of God, we are called to reach out to all people in need of God's care. Our need draws God to us—nothing else.

Wednesday

Read this week's *Punch Lines*. Who is the speaker in Zechariah 4:7?

What often-quoted verse precedes Zechariah 4:7? What point do you think God was making to Zechariah, Zerubbabel, and Judah?

These two verses remind us that God is truly the "author" and "finisher" of our faith, and everything else in our lives.

Thursday

Read Matthew 12:24.

When Jesus freed the demon-possessed man and restored his sight and speech, the people were astonished, but the Pharisees were not impressed.

Have you ever faced criticism for doing something good?

Should such criticism stop you from using your gifts and talents to do good?

Friday

Read Matthew 10:1.

Jesus was empowered to do great works on earth, but did you know that He also gave this power to His disciples and to us today. Consider what Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 10:1. If God gave this power to you, what would you do with it?

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 32; 33.

* A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.