

Luke continues to describe the miracles performed by Jesus, provided evidence that He was the Messiah (Luke 4:16-21; 7:19-23). The first of the two miracles in our focal passage involves Jesus responding to the faith of a centurion in the Roman army by healing the man's servant. The second miracle occurred when Jesus interrupted a funeral procession to raise a widow's son from the dead.

1 Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

“Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people” – Jesus had been preaching (Luke 6:20-49), using content strikingly similar to what is called the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matt. 5:1-7:29). Either Luke is describing the same event as Matthew, or perhaps Jesus reused much of the same material on another occasion. He has now finished preaching and has dismissed the crowd. **“he entered into Capernaum”** – The location where Jesus was preaching was obviously in between towns but apparently near to the town of Capernaum, which is where He goes after preaching.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

A centurion was an officer in the Roman military who commanded 100 men. This man was a Gentile and so would not naturally be a believer in the God of the Jews. He also represented the military force occupying Judea, which would normally make him unpopular among the Jews. Under Roman law, a master had the right to kill a slave who could no longer fulfill his duties and so the centurion would be within his rights to kill his slave who was already at the point of death. However, this centurion genuinely cared about the well being of this slave and wanted him to live.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

Notice that when this centurion heard that Jesus was in town, he didn't personally go to impress or intimidate Jesus into coming to heal his servant. Instead, he sent Jewish elders to plead his case, perhaps believing that Jesus would listen to them more favorably than to a Gentile member of the Roman military. We will see even more of the centurion's humility in vs. 6-7.

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: 5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

Ordinarily the Jews would not trouble themselves on behalf of a Gentile, but this centurion had found respect and appreciation among the Jews of Capernaum. He had demonstrated his love for the Jews by financing the building of a synagogue and the Jewish elders argued that because of this the man was deserving of the request that he was making of Jesus.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof:

Jesus decided to go with these Jewish elders to heal the centurion's servant but the centurion sent “friends” to intercept Him as He was approaching the house. These “friends” may have been Jewish or even Gentile friends of the centurion. They brought a new message from the centurion, asking Jesus to not go to the trouble of entering the house. The Jews believed that contact with Gentiles would make them unclean, so the centurion considered himself unworthy for Jesus, a Jew, to become ceremonially unclean by entering his house. The centurion may also have considered himself unworthy because of his sinfulness, much as Simon Peter did (Luke 5:8).

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

“Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee” – The centurion did not even consider himself worthy of coming to Jesus personally to ask for his servant's healing. The desperate need of this beloved servant was what had motivated him to dare to make this request of Jesus.

“but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed” – Not only do we see the centurion's humility but we also see his faith. He recognizes that Jesus could perform the healing simply by speaking.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

As a military officer, the centurion understood how authority worked. All he had to do was speak a command and those under his authority obeyed. He recognized that Jesus, as the Son of God, had all authority over all of God's creation. Therefore, if Jesus simply spoke the command that the servant should be healed then the physical laws of the universe would have to obey. The centurion also recognized that Jesus' authority extended beyond His immediate presence, so that He didn't have to be in the same room or in physical contact in order to heal the servant.

9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

The Greek word for “marvelled” means “to wonder at” or “to admire.” The idea seems to be that Jesus was not surprised but that He was struck by the irony of the situation, so much so that He turned to His crowd of followers and commented on it. Jesus should have been able to find many people with such faith in Israel, the nation who claimed to know and trust in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. However, Jesus discovered that this Gentile exhibited more faith than anyone He had encountered in Israel.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

In Matthew's account of this scene (**Matt. 8:13**) it says "And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour." Apparently Jesus sent the message back to the centurion through either the elders he had sent (v. 3), the friends he sent later (v. 6), or both. When they arrived at the house to deliver the message, they discovered that the servant who was sick and on the verge of death was now healthy once again. Jesus had honored the centurion's faith. Jesus always honors legitimate faith that is in agreement with His will (**1 Jn. 5:14-15** "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him"). Jesus will not answer our selfish prayers, no matter how much "faith" we have (**Jam. 4:3** "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts").

11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

"And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain" – Nain was a village in Galilee that was something like 7 miles SE of Nazareth. Apparently after healing the centurion's servant in Capernaum, the next day Jesus traveled some 20 miles south to visit the village of Nain.

"and many of his disciples went with him, and much people" – The use of the word "many" in reference to the disciples implies more than the twelve. Luke makes a distinction between Jesus' disciples and the "much people. The disciples were those who genuinely believed in Jesus and the "much people" apparently were those who followed Jesus merely out of curiosity. Their interest may not have been much more than the entertainment value of seeing what Jesus would do next.

12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

Jesus was approaching the gate of the city when a funeral procession was coming out of the city. The only son of a widow had died and they were apparently taking the young man to be buried. The fact that she was a widow and that her only son was dead meant that she was now alone with no men in her life to help support her, which no doubt added to her sorrow. As was the custom in that day, many people had joined the funeral procession to express their condolences and respect.

13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. 15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not" – Jesus instantly understood the situation and compassionately felt the woman's pain. When He said "Weep not," Jesus was saying that she had no right to weep. Rather, He wanted to comfort her because her reason for weeping was about to cease.

"And he came and touched the bier [*coffin*]: and they that bare *him* stood still" – The Jews believed that touching the coffin of a dead person would ceremonially defile a person, but Jesus' life giving power is greater than death. The pall-bearers stood still, perhaps in surprise that Jesus would touch the coffin. Another possibility is that they recognized Jesus and were waiting to see what He was going to do.

"And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise" – Only Jesus can speak to the dead and expect them to obey. Jesus instructs this dead son to get up out of his coffin. Later, Jesus will instruct a little girl who had died to arise (Luke 8:54) and even later He will call to Lazarus to "come forth" from the tomb (John 11:43).

"And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother" – We don't know what this young man was saying when he sat up in the coffin. Perhaps he was calling for his mother, or perhaps he was responding to Jesus' commands. Jesus apparently helped the young man get out of the coffin and then took him to his mother.

16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

The large number of people that had joined the funeral procession (v. 12) were witnesses to what Jesus had done. The fact that the raising of the dead was completely out of the realm of human ability caused them to fear (the Greek word can also refer to expressing reverence). They recognized that God was at work among His people once again, like in the days of the OT prophets. However, instead of recognizing Jesus as the Son of God, they seem to consider Him only as a "great prophet."

17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about.

The "rumor" (the Greek word refers to an idea or concept spoken by mouth) spread throughout Judea and the surrounding region. The idea that Jesus was a great prophet and that God was working through Him spread by word of mouth. It may have been difficult in that day to have not heard about Jesus.