

Speaking to the soul



Faith

The officer said, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into my home. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed.” Matthew 8:8

The officer in question was a Roman Centurion. He was a powerful person in the army that was occupying Israel at the time and was, therefore, much hated by the population who longed to be set free. However, it's difficult not to warm towards this particular soldier. He approached Jesus because of his concern for his servant. This, in itself, was remarkable because servants were viewed as property and had no legal rights of their own. The fact that the Centurion was concerned about his servant and was going out of his way to seek his healing is impressive. But, more than that, we note his huge respect for Jesus. He didn't believe that he was worthy to have Jesus visit his home and, in any case, he had such great faith in Jesus' healing ability he didn't consider that such a visit would even be necessary. He was sure that all that was needed was for Jesus to pronounce healing for his servant and it would be done.

Jesus was amazed by the Roman officer and commented that his faith was beyond anything that he had seen in Israel. The Jews were looking forward to a great banquet at the end of time and Jesus affirmed that there would be plenty of Gentiles who would be sitting down at this great feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And, sadly, there would be many Jews who assumed that their tickets were booked for the banquet, but who would be thrown into outer darkness, where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Jesus was clear that the doors of the kingdom had been flung open to the world.

God welcomes faith wherever he finds it, and we need to do the same. We need to keep our minds and hearts open to celebrate people's faith and to encourage it to grow. This story tells us that we need to be ready to find it in the most unlikely places.

QUESTION

In what unlikely places have you found people of faith?

PRAYER

Lord God, I praise you for the gift of faith. Increase my faith and help me to be ready to recognise and encourage it whenever I meet other men and women of faith. Amen

