**Surprising Truths:**

**Jesus Marvels**

*Luke 7:1-10*

**Context**

There are many narrative accounts in the scripture that may appear on the surface to be just another story. In Luke’s gospel account and in this particular passage of scripture, there is so much to understand. Not the least of which is the fact that Jesus “marvels.” How is it the Son of Man, God incarnate, marvels at anything?

To help us, the placement of the story in the larger Luke narrative is important and specific. Jesus finished a sermon in chapter six and heads to Capernaum at the start of chapter seven. Next, a Gentile centurion has a sick slave who was highly regarding by his owner. The owner is well regarding by the Jewish people and seems to be a worshipper of Yahweh. To appeal to Jesus directly, he implores his Jewish friends to request of Jesus that He heal his slave. As the story unfolds, we see Jesus marveling at this Gentiles faith—in contrast to the unbelief of the Jews who are making the request.

**Application:** if you were alive during Jesus’ earthly ministry, would He have been amazed at your faith?

We know that many people marveled at Jesus—rightly so. They were constantly amazed at what He said and did.

**Luke 4:32***—and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority.*

**Matthew 7:28***—When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching*

Luke’s gospel particularly identifies the people’s common reaction to Jesus in an awe inspiring way. The Greek word (*thaumaz*) means—to wonder at; to marvel at; to be astonished at; to be amazed at.

**Luke 11:14***—And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute; when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed.*

**Luke 20:26***—And they were unable to catch Him in a saying in the presence of the people; and being amazed at His answer, they became silent.*

In some ways, we’re not surprised that they marveled at Jesus. He is God in the flesh. One would expect Him to be amazing. We would expect Him to say and do things that are divine.

**3 settings**

1. **The chronological setting**

**Luke 7:1**—*When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum.*

* + 1. The transition
       1. From 6:20-49, you have the familiar “Sermon on the Mount”(Cf **Matthew 5-7**)
       2. Luke doesn’t record the people’s response, but Matthew does

**Matthew 7:28-29**—*When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching;****29****for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.*

* + - 1. On the heels of this message, Jesus is confronting this centurion
         1. Why is that significant?
         2. This centurion is a living example of the message He just gave
    1. The man
       1. Time frame: 29 AD, at the start of Jesus’ Galilean ministry
       2. There were many “disciples” following Jesus at this point
          1. Disciple(*Mathitis*)—learner; student
          2. Disciples ranged from Apostles to curious onlookers
          3. There is a distinction between a true disciple and a false disciple

**6:20**—*And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He began to say, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.*

* + - * 1. A true disciple

Penitent and recognizes his spiritual poverty (**vv20-26**)

Hungers for righteousness that he does not have but desperately needs

Weeps over their sin

Not only a hater but a lover

**6:27-28**—*But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,****28****bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.*

He is a giver

**6:30-31**—*Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.****31****Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.*

Expecting nothing in return

to those who can’t repay

**6:35**—*But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.*

*He is merciful*

***36****Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*

* + 1. Immediately, we see a living illustration of the message
       1. A centurion who loves his slave—in contrast to considering a slave as a tool to be discarded
       2. A centurion who loves the Jews who hate him (a Gentile/Samaritan; a representative of Rome)
       3. He loves his “enemies”—manifested by building their temple

1. **The Geographical setting**

**Luke 7:1**—*When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum.*

* + 1. The sermon was delivered on the hillside
    2. Jesus then walks to a very nearly city Capernaum
       1. North shore of the city of Galilee
       2. Surrounded by beautiful hills
       3. Agricultural setting
       4. Sloped down to the sea where fishing occurred (Peter and others)
       5. This became headquarters during Jesus’ Galilean ministry
       6. They would have heard a fair amount of His teaching

**Matthew 11:23-24**—*And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.****24****Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.”*

* + 1. Centurion

**2***And a centurion’s slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die.*

* + - 1. It was unusual that this unnamed non-Jew centurion is the one demonstrating this love
      2. Not a rabbi, not a Pharisee, not a scribe or even a Jew

(Cf. **Matthew 8:5-13**)

* + - 1. He is a captain in the Roman army; that title was earned—loyalty, courage, bravery, fortitude and strength
      2. That was usually hand to hand combat
      3. “Centurion”—usually 100 or more men under him
      4. They gave orders to be obeyed; they followed ordered
      5. They modeled what they expected
      6. That structure would have kept the army functioning
      7. In scripture, it is used of a soldier with character, manhood and integrity
         1. Three are identified as believers in scripture

This man who is unnamed

One watching Jesus being crucified

**Luke 23:47**—*Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, “Certainly this man was innocent.”*

Cornelius

**Acts 10:11**—*Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort,****2****a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually.*

* + - 1. Paul and a centurion

**Acts 22:22-30**—*They listened to him up to this statement, and then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!”****23****And as they were crying out and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air,****24****the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way.****25****But when they stretched him out with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?”****26****When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and told him, saying, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman.”****27****The commander came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman?” And he said, Yes.”****28****The commander answered, “I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money.” And Paul said, “But I was actually born a citizen.”****29****Therefore those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him; and the commander also was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains.* ***30****But on the next day, wishing to know for certain why he had been accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Council to assemble, and brought Paul down and set him before them.*

* + - 1. The land of Palestine, conquered by the Roman Empire, was occupied now with many non-Jews (Pax Romana)
      2. It’s likely that there was a centurion in Capernaum to secure Roman rule and compliance with Roman law—especially taxation
      3. Which would have only been one more reason for him to be hated by the Jews

**Summary:** This is a man who, without the background and with everything against him is a model of a true disciple, marked by compassion, mercy, love, faith, submission, penitence.

1. **The Theological connection**

**Luke 7:2-10**—*And a centurion’s slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die.****3****When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave.****4****When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, “He is worthy for You to grant this to him;****5****for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue.”****6****Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, “Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof;****7****for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.****8****For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.”****9****Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, “I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.”****10****When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.*

* + 1. The theology of discipleship in chapter 6
    2. The practical example of discipleship in chapter 7
    3. The connection between the two chapters is not abstract
    4. The message is seen in the example of this man
    5. **Summary:** Jesus wants to illustrate what a true disciple looks like, He shows us a man.  That's the practicality of it

**Conclusion—prayer**

Might we live in a way that people are amazed at our faith at our compassion, love for our enemies, generosity, trust, humility, repentance, and at our obedience. With so much exposure to the truth of God’s Word, we have no excuse not to strive toward that end. Might we do so for His glory.  Amen.