**Lord, I am not Worthy**

Based on [Matthew 8:1-13](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Mt8.1-13)

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Third Sunday after the Epiphany

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Today’s gospel is about the evidence and anatomy of faith. Faith is in Jesus Christ, and even one outside of Israel, a roman centurion, has faith. In Jesus’ ministry, gentiles, non-Jews, habitually show greater faith than those in Israel. And the faith has two parts…First, such faith is never offended by Jesus; Second, such faith believes in the authority of what Jesus says.

First, the faith of the centurion does not get offended by Jesus. The Centurion was a professional roman officer in charge of a hundred soldiers, whose servant was lying paralyzed at home suffering terribly. He came to Jesus and appealed to him for help. Jesus said, “**I will come and heal him**.” Then the centurion says two things that manifest his great faith. First he says, “***I am not worthy that you come under my roof***”,

“I am not worthy that you come under my roof.” He says this because Jews did not usually come into the home of Gentiles, and he knew it *and he respected it*. He was not offended. He did not call Jesus arrogant.

It is ironic, because it is the people Jesus “came to”, his own people, “the Jews” who were constantly getting offended. “This man eats with sinners”; “This man heals on the Sabbath.”, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat”, “this man says he will destroy the temple”; “this man says he’s greater than Abraham.” “this man says he is the son of God”;

Yes, he said all of these things, more or less, but rather than engage what he says, they spin it and get offended. But it is a gentile that doesn’t get offended, and this is something that the Holy Spirit comments on more than once. When ten lepers are healed, only one returns to thank Jesus…a Samaritan. In a parable of Jesus, when a man is beaten and left for dead on the side of the road, a priest and a levite pass by, but only a samaratan stops to help. The Holy Spirit is telling us that more of God’s own people will be offended by Jesus’ words than those from the outside.

This is patently the same today. I have never seen a non-christian be offended at our practice of closed communion. They get it. It is only those who reckon themselves within “Christendom” that get offended to hear that they cannot partake. Just as in a parable, the Jews were figured as workers who were upset that they worked longer as God’s people, yet receive the same salvation as the “Johnny come lately” gentiles. God responds, “didn’t I agree to pay you what I paid you; do I not have the right to do what I want with what is mine?” No, everyone who claims to have the blood of Christendom will rather get offended that they cannot commune here.

Jesus sheep hear his voice, and are not scandalized by him. “Blessed is the one who is not offended by me.” Do not offend people with the doctrines of men, but the sheep of Christ will never be offended by his words, no matter how partial they may seem. Just as the Canaanite woman respected Jesus’ statement that he came for the lost children of Israel not a gentile like her. And just as the hemorrhaging woman did not assert herself but snuck up just to touch the hem of his garment. There is nor partiality with God, yet we are not judges over his choices.

Jesus is not partial, he loves everybody. But Jesus can appear to be partial; and rebellious people look for every opportunity to get offended. But faith is not worried about whether Jesus treats them equally, but only whether he will save them. Jesus is not an egalitarian. Were he ministering here today, the Canadian government would revoke his healing license for primarily serving his own people. Jesus is not an egalitarian; he is God. We don’t judge his fairness; he judges our sin. And if all he does is forgive our sin, we have everything and need not quibble like children over unfair treatment. Faith doesn’t do that. Everyone whose faith amazed Jesus was in the same situation as this centurion, outside of Israel and too humble to be offended by Christ’s authority. “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.”

In addition to the humility of his faith, which is it’s form, his faith has the substance of believing in the word of God. First you are not worthy; but you believe in the power and authority of the One who is.

After the centurion affirms Jesus right to treat him less than the Jews—indeed Paul the apostle called himself the chief of sinners—after the centurion comes to Jesus in manifest faith, then he proclaims the substance of that faith. He says

“Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. **9**For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” **10**When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel*4* have I found such faith.[[1]](#footnote-1)

He believed that since his own word accomplished so much, Christ’s word would do much more. At Christ’s word even sickness, death, and hell would have to flee in a moment. In short, nothing was impossible for him.

1. [*Lutheran Service Book Historic (One Year) Lectionary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ltrsrv1ylect?ref=YearMonthDay.1-27-2019&off=389&ctx=SPEL%0aMatthew+8:1%E2%80%9313%0a~+%0aON+THE+SAME+DATE+%7C). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Concordia Publishing House. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)