


# Renewed Health

## Teaching Tips

April 3, 2016

## Bible Study Guide 5

### Words You Should Know

**A. Centurion** ([Luke 7:2](#)) *hekatontarches* (Gk.)—An officer in the Roman army in command of about 100 footmen. 

**B. Authority** (v. 8) *exousia* (Gk.)—The power of choice, liberty to do as one pleases; the power of influence or privilege.

### Teacher Preparation

Unifying Principle—Good as New. Everyone has desperate needs at times that cause her or him to wonder if any help is available. To whom can Christians turn for help that makes a difference? The centurion's faith in Jesus Christ as the great healer made all the difference in meeting his need to see his servant healed.

**A.** Pray for your students and lesson clarity.

**B.** Read [Luke 7](#) in multiple translations. 

**C.** Complete the companion lesson in the *Precepts For Living*® Personal Study Guide.

### O—Open the Lesson

**A.** Open with prayer and introduce today's lesson title including the Aim for Change.

**B.** Tell the class to read the In Focus Story silently, then discuss it.

### P—Present the Scriptures

**A.** Have volunteers read the Focal Verses and mention what questions these verses raise for them.

**B.** Use The People, Places, and Times; Background; Search the Scriptures; At-A Glance; In Depth; and More Light on the Text.

### E—Explore the Meaning

**A.** Divide the class into groups to discuss the Discuss the Meaning, Lesson in Our Society, and Make It Happen sections. Tell the students to select a representative to report their responses.

**B.** Connect these sections to the Aim for Change and the Keep in Mind verse.

## N—Next Steps for Application

A. Summarize the lesson.

B. Close with prayer.

## Worship Guide

For the Superintendent or Teacher

Theme: Renewed Health

Song: “Only Believe”

Devotional Reading: [Malachi 3:16–4:2](#)



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## Bible Background • [LUKE 7:1–10](#)



Printed Text • [LUKE 7:1–10](#) | Devotional Reading • [MALACHI 3:16–4:2](#)



## Aim for Change



By the end of the lesson, we will: KNOW the story of the centurion’s faith and Jesus’ healing of the centurion’s servant; EXPERIENCE strong faith for deliverance from illness, like the centurion; and COMMIT to regularly visiting the sick to pray with them.

## In Focus

Faith wanted to get up out of bed but she just couldn’t do it. She had come down with a fever that seemed to get worse by the minute. This definitely was not the time to be sick. She had already missed too many days at work and was in danger of being fired. The thought of being fired caused her more pain than the sickness. She was a single mother and could not afford to be out of work. With no savings and nothing to fall back on, she couldn’t imagine what she would do.

Suddenly the phone rang. It was her friend Shante. Shante had moved to Atlanta from Cleveland and they hadn’t talked to each other in years. Faith told Shante all about her situation. By the time she finished talking, her face was covered in tears. After consoling Faith, Shante began to pray out loud and to ask God for healing. As Shante prayed, Faith felt a surge of energy in her body. For a moment she just thought it was from being too hot, but she knew this was different. Right after Shante said, “Amen,” Faith began to praise God, believing that her prayer went through. She soon began to get up and put on her work clothes. She couldn’t believe it. She wasn’t going to miss work today. In fact she was going there to let everyone know about the power of prayer and how good God is.

*God has the power to heal us of any sickness or disease. Have you ever experienced healing as a result of your faith in God?*

## Keep in Mind

“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” ([Luke 7:9](#)).



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## Focal Verses

KJV

**Luke 7:1** Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.



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

**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.

**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.

**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 shouldest enter under my roof:

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

**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.

**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.

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

NLT

**Luke 7:1** When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people, he returned to Capernaum.



**2** At that time the highly valued slave of a Roman officer was sick and near death.

**3** When the officer heard about Jesus, he sent some respected Jewish elders to ask him to come and heal his slave.

**4** So they earnestly begged Jesus to help the man. "If anyone deserves your help, he does," they said,

**5** "for he loves the Jewish people and even built a synagogue for us."

**6** So Jesus went with them. But just before they arrived at the house, the officer sent some friends to say, "Lord, don't trouble yourself by coming to my home, for I am not worthy of such an honor.

**7** I am not even worthy to come and meet you. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed.

**8** I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'Go,' and they go, or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this,' they do it."

**9** When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to the crowd that was following him, he said, "I tell you, I haven't seen faith like this in all Israel!"

**10** And when the officer's friends returned to his house, they found the slave completely healed.

## The People, Places, and Times

**Capernaum.** Capernaum, meaning "a village of comfort," was a city on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee in the region of Gennesaret. The city was on the road from Damascus to Acco and Tyre, in a heavily populated and commercially prosperous district of Galilee. Many important events in the Gospel narrative took place in the city of

Capernaum. It was in this city that Jesus healed the nobleman's son ([John 4:46](#)), Peter's mother-in-law ([Mark 1:31](#)), and the paralytic ([Matthew 9:6](#)). Jesus prophesied the downfall of Capernaum due to the people's lack of repentance, even though so many mighty works were done there ([Matthew 11:23](#), [Luke 10:15](#)).

**Synagogue.** A synagogue was a building that housed gatherings of Jews for prayers and the worship services. These buildings began to be constructed during the time of the Babylonian exile in the absence of the temple. Ten Jewish males were required to form a synagogue, as they served as a Jewish meeting place throughout the Diaspora. Since New Testament times, synagogue services were held on feast days and every Sabbath day. As an observing Jew, Jesus frequented the synagogue, which became the site for healing and miracles. Paul also frequented the synagogue in an effort to convince the attendees that Jesus was the Messiah.

## Background

In [Luke 6](#), we see a progression of Jesus' fame growing beyond Galilee. As Jesus broke the social taboos of the Pharisees and scribes, He drew attention to Himself as a Rabbi with a different type of authority. His approval of His disciples eating grain with unwashed hands and healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath only aroused the religious leaders' wrath. At the same time, it also increased His fame among the people. After these episodes, Jesus went up to a mountain and prayed to God. Coming down from this all-night prayer session, Jesus selected the twelve as His apostles.

Once He selected the twelve, Jesus taught what scholars call the "Sermon on the Plain" ([Luke 6:17–49](#)). Jesus' presence in Galilee drew huge crowds waiting to hear the latest teaching or be healed by the Rabbi from Nazareth. Not only did He draw huge crowds from the Jewish population, but people also came from Tyre and Sidon to hear Him and be healed. These crowds came to listen to Jesus as He taught them and redefined what it meant to live life in the kingdom of God. Once Jesus taught them, He headed into Capernaum, where He would encounter an officer in the Roman army. Now Jesus would demonstrate what it meant to live life in the kingdom.

## At-A-Glance

1. The Elders' Request ([Luke 7:1–5](#))
2. The Centurion's Response (vv. 6–8)
3. The Servant's Renewal (vv. 9–10)

## In Depth

### 1. The Elders' Request ([Luke 7:1–5](#))

After finishing the Sermon on the Plain, Jesus goes to Capernaum, where He hears about a centurion whose servant is sick. The centurion must have heard of Jesus' fame, because he sends a delegation of synagogue elders to request Jesus' help with his situation. With a sense of urgency, the elders come to Jesus and ask for help. This underscores the desperate condition of the servant: healing needs to happen right away or he will die.

The elders know that as a Gentile, the centurion would have been unclean, because he doesn't follow Jewish kosher laws, so they make the centurion's appeal mentioning his status as a God-fearer, a Gentile who was not a full convert to Judaism but probably lived by the Ten Commandments and believed in Yahweh as the one true God. The centurion built a synagogue for the Jews, and gave this as a reason for Jesus to make an exception in coming to his house. The centurion is in a crisis. His servant desperately needs help. Some situations are so bad that whatever barriers we face, our faith must go all-out in seeking Jesus.

### 2. The Centurion's Response (vv. 6–8)

Jesus decides to go to the centurion's house. Here we see Jesus' compassion for the man and his servant, who is about to die. On the way to the house, the centurion sends a group of friends to Jesus showing that he recognizes Jesus' superiority. The centurion's admission of not being worthy to have Jesus enter into his home shows great humility. Although he is used to being in charge, he realizes that he has no right to ask a miracle. Remarkably, he sees Jesus' higher authority and relies on His mercy and compassion.

The centurion instead asks for Jesus to do a long-distance healing. In the first century, Jewish rabbis commonly performed healings, but a long-distance healing would have been a unique miracle. The centurion bases his faith in Jesus' power to do this on his understanding of authority. He rightly believes Jesus is under a higher authority (God the Father) and has authority over diseases. In the same way he commands his soldiers, Jesus can command diseases; all Jesus has to do is speak, because the power to heal was in the word. The centurion's faith was in the word of Jesus.

### **3. The Servant's Renewal (vv. 9–10)**

Jesus makes an astonishing remark: He has not found this kind of faith in the nation of Israel. For a Gentile to have this much faith in Him was quite amazing to Jesus. He calls it "great faith" because the centurion believed in the power of Jesus' word and in Jesus' worthiness as opposed to his own. In Matthew's version of this story, the centurion's faith is held up to indicate who will enter into the kingdom of God and receive the blessings of the covenant. Jesus highlights this faith as what really brings God pleasure and invites His favor.

On hearing this, the servants turn back home. They have received the answer in Jesus' praise of the centurion's faith. Upon entering the house, they find the servant restored back to physical health, all because of Jesus' response to the centurion's faith. Not only did this event bring healing to the centurion's servant, but it showed what God looks at most: faith.

### **Search the Scriptures**

1. Why did the centurion send his friends to Jesus ( [Luke 7:6](#))?
2. What did Jesus say about the centurion's faith (v. 9)?



### **Discuss the Meaning**

1. In this story, the centurion understood Jesus' authority. How does His authority apply to our daily lives as followers of Christ?
2. Jesus says the centurion's faith is great. How can we cultivate "great faith" in our lives?

### **Lesson in Our Society**

Many in our society are ravaged by sickness and disease. Most of the time we respond to by resorting to natural means. There is nothing wrong with this and we should be encouraged to seek medical care and attention. Many believe the solution is health care and more doctors. Others believe the solution to bad health is a better diet and exercise. In case of terminal illnesses, these things can only do so much. In these times, we are more likely to seek God's intervention. This is when our faith in God is most important. Jesus has authority over all situations, including our bodies. This is why we can approach God with confidence in His power to heal.

### **Make It Happen**

Some who are sick do not have faith in God for their healing. They may not even know God. Ask your pastor if there is a ministry to the sick at the church. If not, then ask to start one. Christians can meet the needs of those who are ill by gathering a group of fellow believers and visiting them in hospitals and nursing homes. Be prepared to pray for

people's healing and to encourage them to believe God will heal according to His will.

## Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do.

## Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned.

## More Light on the Text

### Luke 7:1–10

This narrative also appears in [Matthew 8:5–13](#) with alterations. In comparing the two narratives, the reader will be able to gain a broader perspective of Luke's authorial intent.

### **7:1 Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.**

Capernaum is no longer an inhabited town today, but an archaeological site located at the north corner of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum was the center of Jesus' activities. He taught in the local synagogue there. It was also the town where Peter, James, Andrew, John, and the tax collector Matthew lived. Its citizens were mainly fishermen, farmers, and people who provided services to the Roman road and caravans, including tax collection. Similar to [Luke 7:1](#), [Matthew 8:5](#) places Jesus in Capernaum.

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

A centurion was a Roman army officer who commanded about 100 soldiers. The centurion in the Luke narrative appears to be a patron of the Jewish people. During the time of Jesus, the Roman Empire ruled the vast lands that surrounded the Mediterranean Sea, including Palestine. In order to maintain governance over such large territory, the Roman Empire depended on a hierarchical patron-client relationship in which a wealthy and politically powerful person acted as a benefactor to a person or group who needed assistance. This relationship was reciprocal; the clients, who received resources and aid from the patron, were expected to respond to the patron's needs when required. In this verse, the centurion acts as patron to the Jewish population in Capernaum and he sends the Jewish elders, the clients, on a mission to see Jesus on his behalf. The Jewish elders obey their role by pleading the centurion's case for him.

Compare the Luke narrative with [Matthew 8:5–6](#): "And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." First, the Lukan verse does not specify the type of illness that ails the centurion's servant, yet Matthew's version does. Second, in Matthew, the centurion himself goes directly to Jesus and pleads with Him to heal his servant from palsy (paralysis). The Jewish elders do not appear in Matthew, so that Gospel does not highlight the existence of a patron-client relationship between the Roman centurion and the Jewish population. That Gospel also does not mention the centurion establishing the Capernaum synagogue, which Luke would have focused on to establish him as a Gentile God-fearer, as Luke wrote for a a majority Gentile audience.

The term "servant" (Gk. *doulos*, **DOO-los**) can also be translated "slave." Slavery played an integral part in the Roman Empire of the first century. Besides manual labor, slaves performed many domestic services, and might be employed at highly skilled jobs and professions. Teachers, accountants, and physicians were often slaves. Unskilled slaves, or those condemned to slavery as punishment, worked at farms, mines, and mills. Their living conditions were brutal, and their lives short. Under Roman law, slaves were considered property and had no legal rights of their own. They

were subjected to harsh treatment by their masters, sexually exploited, and tortured. In fact, very often a court of law would not accept the testimony of a slave unless the slave was tortured, because they believed slaves would not reveal evidence against their masters unless physically forced to do so.

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

The second delegation sent to Jesus by the centurion is stated as “friends.” Notice that the friends actually speak for the centurion. In the first instance, the centurion, by way of his friends, acknowledges that, as a Gentile, he is unworthy to ask Jesus to enter his house. This is because according to the Mishnah, a compilation of Pharisaic oral tradition, Gentile houses were considered unclean. The second instance is the centurion’s sense of unworthiness in relation to his understanding of the authoritative position of Jesus as the Son of God. The centurion’s behavior implies that the kingdom of God is similar to the hierarchical power system of the Roman Empire. The centurion understood the transmission of power in an authority structure and considered that Jesus, by virtue of His relationship to God, would be able to act.

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

In comparing [Matthew 8:10](#) with [Luke 7:9](#), we see that Matthew has added two more verses after he writes what Jesus said about the centurion having more faith than those in Israel. Matthew goes on to explicitly state that some within Israel will not be part of the kingdom of God, yet many will come from east and west to eat with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (vv. 11–12). Matthew states in verse 12, “But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” The Lukan narrative does not make such eschatological claims, but instead focuses on praising the Gentile for his great faith.

Overall, when the Lukan story is placed in juxtaposition to the Matthean narrative, distinct differences can be noted. First, Luke writes that two different groups approach Jesus: the Jewish elders, then the centurion’s friends. Matthew does not include these groups in his narrative; he has the centurion approach Jesus directly. Luke gives those details because he is writing for a Gentile Roman audience, to engage them with the story. Second, in comparing [Luke 7:6–8](#) with [Matthew 8:8–9](#), we notice that the friends’ words on behalf of the centurion in Luke are the same exact words uttered by the centurion himself in Matthew: “Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.” These words give us a grasp of the centurion’s faith, the main point of the story. Lastly, Matthew adds a very harsh statement regarding the outcome of those who have no faith in Jesus. Although the eschatological vision in [Matthew 8:11–12](#) certainly refers to inclusion of the Gentiles in God’s promise, it by no means excludes all Jews from the promise. Very recently in 8:14, Jesus healed a leper and told him to go to the priest and make an offering according to Mosaic law as a testimony, indicating that Jesus continues to witness to both Jews and Gentiles.

## Say It Correctly

Capernaum. ka-**PER**-nee-um.

Centurion. sen-**TUR**-ee-an.

## Daily Bible Readings

## MONDAY

Rebuilding Health  
([Isaiah 58:6–12](#))



## TUESDAY

Healing Wings  
([Malachi 3:16–4:2](#))



## WEDNESDAY

Words of Healing  
([Proverbs 12:1–2](#), [13:16–17](#), [16:22–24](#))



## THURSDAY

Total Health  
([Matthew 4:23–25](#), [5:3–11](#))



## FRIDAY

Emotional Health  
([Matthew 6:16–27](#))



## SATURDAY

Eternal Health  
([John 5:24–30](#))



## SUNDAY

Renewed Health  
([Luke 7:1–10](#))

