

AMAZING GOD
Matthew 8:5-13

Matthew 8: 5 When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. 6 "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly." 7 Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?" 8 The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." 10 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. 11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." 13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that moment.

INTRODUCTION

We are amazed by a lot of things BUT there's a story in the Bible where it shows where our Lord is amazed at.

By God's grace, in the past weeks, we studied : "Obeying God". Then we studied about "Pleasing God." Last week we started our study on "Amazing God". Yes, our Lord is amazing but we're not using this as an adjective but we're using it as a verb.

When it comes to pleasing God, we studied, that God is already pleased with us and the reason why we please Him is because He's already pleased with us. We summarized pleasing God in one word – sacrifice. It takes a giving up one's self in order to please God.

But when it comes to amazing God – **HERE'S THE KEY:**

10 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.

The same story is seen in Luke

Luke 7:9 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel."

Now, there are only two characters in the New Testament where our Lord Jesus called that their faith is great. First, this centurion. The other one was the Syro-Phoenician woman in the same Gospel of Matthew where our Lord said...

Matthew 15:28 28 Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Now, the only difference here is this.

It was only with this centurion where we see that our Lord was "amazed".

Etymology : thaumazo – marvel; admired

Imagine that, yes we please God with our sacrifices but the ultimate is when God is amazed.

So then by God's grace, let's look deeper. Why would God be amazed the great faith of the centurion but never mentioned anything with the Syro-Phoenician woman?

Note : Not to take away from the Syro-Phoenician woman, remember, she also received that commendation that her faith is great.

I looked at the two words here.

CENTURION

10 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.

SYRO-PHOENICIAN WOMAN

Matthew 15:28 28 Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith

ETYMOLOGY ON THE SYRO-PHOENICIAN WOMAN FAITH

Great – megas – huge large, strong,

ETYMOLOGY ON THE CENTURION'S FAITH

Such Great or So Great - tosoutos – so great – from o (last letter of the Greek alphabet, omega) and autos – this means, overwhelming, or the ultimate

But based on context, here's the difference between "megas" faith (megas faith is already good).

Note : There is no faith, then there's little faith and then there is "megas" faith.

Remember, the disappointment of our Lord Jesus Christ with his disciples. Look at

Matthew 8 : 26 He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?"

NOW HERE'S THE DIFFERENCE :

Syro-phoenician woman – great faith compared to Centurion's such great faith.

The centurion's faith is "THE ULTIMATE" kind of faith...it's the omegas, autos...in short, it's one of a kind.

Illustration :

There's a little building, there are great buildings but there is a one-of-a-kind building or the ultimate building.

Or there's a regular singer, there are great singers but there's this one-of-a-kind singer that just blows you away or in this case...amazes you.

IN SHORT, I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS KIND OF FAITH.

Remember what our Lord said.

¹⁰ When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.

THAT'S THE KIND OF FAITH THAT AMAZED OUR LORD!

The Elements of SUCH Great Faith

FULL TRUST IN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY, MERCY AND AUTHORITY

FULL TRUST ILLUSTRATION : One time, there was a man who had a cart that is being pulled by carabao. He happened to pass by a lady who was carrying 3 sacks of rice over her head. So she asked the lady where she is going and she said that she still needs to go over that mountain. So the man said, "You carrying such a heavy load over your head. Get into the cart, I'm going that way." So the woman got on the cart. And they went on their way. After 10 minutes, the man looked back to make sure the woman is alright and to his surprise, the woman was riding in the cart but was still carrying the 3 bags of rice over her head.

Last week, we talked about this.

I. TRUST IN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

⁵ When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. ⁶ "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly."

Notice that the centurion acknowledged Jesus as Lord.

Etymology : Lord "kyrios" master;

Note : When you call Jesus "Lord", it says a lot. If you call someone Lord, it means you look at yourself as the servant. So if you call Jesus "Lord", you are saying to Him, I am your servant, I'll do whatever you want me to do today.

The centurion who is in charge of men himself, who is in charge of enforcing the Roman law (because the Jews were under Roman occupation and Jesus was a Jew), calls Jesus, “Lord”.

The centurion had such great faith that amazed our Lord because He trusted on who Jesus is...**HE IS LORD!**

And as Lord, He can do anything and He can decide on what He wants to do but at the end of the day, we need to also see the our Lord Jesus is good and loving and kind and holy....IT MEANS ALL HIS PURPOSES ARE GOOD EVEN IF WE, DON'T UNDERSTAND IT.

IMPORTANT QUOTE: This is the foundation of faith that amazes God. It's putting our trust in what He can do but more than that IT'S TRUSTING ON WHAT HE WANTS TO DO. JESUS IS LORD.

Quote : Faith for my deliverance is not faith in God. Faith means, whether I am visibly delivered or not, I will stick to my belief that God is love. There are some things only learned in a fiery furnace. – Oswald Chambers (Run Today's Race)

That's the reason why one of my favourite quotes that I always shared with you.

Quote : 'God is too good to be unkind and He is too wise to be mistaken. And when we cannot trace His hand, we must trust His heart.' - Charles Spurgeon

This now brings us to the second element of this omega “such great one-of-a-kind” faith.

II. TRUST IN GOD'S MERCY

⁸ The centurion replied, “Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof.

Faith is total dependence on God's goodness and not on our own goodness.

It was A.W. Tozer who said:

“God answers our prayers not because we are good but because He is good.”

Biblical Illustration : Isn't this how the Lord tested the only other person in the Bible whom He said has great faith. The Syro-Phoenician woman asked that her daughter be healed from demon possession.

Matthew 15 : 26 And He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.”

I have a separate sermon for this before and we have to remember that the Lord was testing this woman's faith or intentions. The Jews called Gentiles as “dogs”. What the Lord was testing the woman by saying to her that “Why would I help you? You're not even part of God's chosen people.”

Illustration : I remember before when I was asking for my Nanay some extra money. She would say to me, “Bakit? May pinakipkip ka bang pera sa akin?” (Why would I give you money? Did you give me money before to keep for you?”)

Look at the reply of the woman.

²⁷ But she said, “Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” ²⁸ Then Jesus said to her, “O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed at once.

One of my favorite radio talk show host is Jack Ramsay, when asked by listeners, “How are you?” He replies, “Better than I deserve.”

One time, I used that reply at work. My workmate asked, “How are you?” and I replied, “Better than I deserve.” My workmate was surprised and immediately tried to comfort me by saying, “No Jerry, don’t say that. You’re a good person, you deserve all the best things in the world.”

That’s how the world thinks. It’s because they think they did this or did that, God should answer our prayers. We call that “entitlement.”

Biblical Context : Remember during that time that the Jews doesn’t enter the house of a Gentile (the centurion is a Gentile) or else they will be unclean. The centurion knows about this and he admit his own uncleanness...his own unworthiness

In the parallel passage, the Jews asked Jesus in behalf of the centurion and they said that Jesus must heal the servant because he deserves it because of what he has done.

Luke 7: ³ The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. ⁴ When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, “This man deserves to have you do this, ⁵ because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue.”

Note : Isn’t this sometimes how we think when we pray? Lord, answer my prayers because I pray every day. I give to those who are in need. I go to church and etc.

But the centurion said in verse 6

... “Lord, don’t trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. ⁷ That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you.

Some people think that God needs to answer their prayers because of what they did.
There’s no room for pride or for self when it comes to have faith.
Faith is not 75% God’s goodness and 25% because of my goodness.
It is all dependent on God’s grace and mercy.

The school of prayer:

Elementary kind of prayer “I want, I want, I want”

High school kind of prayer “You need to answer or else”

Illustration : One time a pastor asked one of the church members why they are not attending church. The church member answered, “It’s because there’s this one time that I really prayed for something and he did not answer my prayers.” (that’s the “or else”). It’s like high school, if they don’t get what they want, they rebel.

College kind of prayer , “Please answer my prayer because of what I did for you...”

Graduate school kind of prayer “Lord I don’t deserve anything but I know you are good and loving and merciful God.

Such great faith is going to God because we know His heart... His character.

Psalm 103:8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

By God’s grace, let’s dissect this quickly.

Merciful : In other versions, “compassionate”

Hebrew : rakham... from rakham (root word) to be soft...gentle...soothing...tender...

Gracious :

Hebrew : khan-noon from khan-nan ...also means to show mercy or favour or pity (awa in Tagalog)

Slow to anger : arek (slow; patient; prolong) ap (anger; nostrils)

abounding in mercy : rab (great, abundant, many) hesed (that’s why other translations is “love”) loving kindness; great love; zealous; passionate love

That’s who our God is.

The Lord is merciful and loves to show mercy and favours mercy and is full of mercy.

Quote : “God’s mercy is so great that you may sooner drain the sea of its water, or deprive the sun of its light, or make space too narrow, than diminish the great mercy of God.”- Charles Spurgeon

Illustration : One of the best musicals which turned into a movie that I watched is “Les Miserable”. There is this part of the story where Jean Valjean, the lead character was just recently released from prison because he stole a piece of bread for his sister. Now that he was out, he had no place to sleep and he was so hungry. The bishop of the church, invited him inside and he fed him and gave him a place to sleep. But while everyone was sleeping, he stole some of the silver cups and run away. The police caught him with the silver cups and noticed it belonged to the church. Jean Valjean said the bishop gave it to him. So they brought Jean Valjean to the bishop to corroborate the story. The police said here are your silver and wanted to confirm from the bishop if he really gave the silver cups or stole it from him. The bishop said, he gave Jean Valjean the silver cups and even said, you left so early that I wanted to even give you this silver

candlesticks. So the police let him go. And the bishop said to Jean Valjean, use this silver to change your life and help others.

That's what God's mercy is all about. We are wretched sinners who doesn't deserve anything from Him but we go to Him because of who He is... He is God who is full of mercy and love.

Quote : Mercy is not something God has, but something God is. A.W. Tozer

That's why I love the song "Jireh" where they got these lyrics from what Jesus said,

*If He dresses the lilies with beauty and splendor
How much more will He clothe you?
How much more will He clothe you?
If He watched over every sparrow
How much more does He love you?
How much more does He love you?*

That's the kind of faith the centurion has. He has full trust in God's sovereignty, that God is in total control and trust in God's mercy

He believes the **Jesus is Lord**, which means He can do whatever He wants to do and He's in control of everything but also **Jesus is Love**.

Next week: Full trust on God's authority

S.G.D.