

# YIELDED FAITH

Leader pages on pp. 140-143

**THE POINT:**  
**FAITH ACKNOWLEDGES  
THE AUTHORITY OF  
JESUS.**

## LUKE 7:1-10

<sup>1</sup> When he had concluded saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum.

<sup>2</sup> A centurion's servant, who was highly valued by him, was sick and about to die.

<sup>3</sup> When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, requesting him to come and save the life of his servant.

<sup>4</sup> When they reached Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy for you to grant this,

<sup>5</sup> because he loves our nation and has built us a synagogue."

<sup>6</sup> Jesus went with them, and when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to tell him, "Lord, don't trouble yourself, since I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.

<sup>7</sup> That is why I didn't even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.

<sup>8</sup> For I too am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under my command. I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

<sup>9</sup> **Jesus heard this and was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found so great a faith even in Israel."**

<sup>10</sup> When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant in good health.

### MEMORY VERSE

### KEYWORDS

**Capernaum (v. 1)**—The name means "village of Nahum." It was situated on the northwest shore of Lake Gennesaret (Sea of Galilee). This thriving Jewish village served as the base of operations for Jesus as He began His ministry.

**Under authority (v. 8)**—The word rendered authority also means "power," "privilege," or "right." The centurion's words can be interpreted in one of two ways.

**Israel (v. 9)**—This designation first applied to an individual, then to a community of his descendants, and finally to a land area.

# HOW DO WE YIELD TO JESUS'S AUTHORITY IN OUR LIVES?

Frank David Bennett was no more than 5'5" tall and well into his 70's when I came to Louisiana College as a theater major. It was his last year of teaching and my first year on campus. I had received the only theater scholarship in the department, and I was also working in the theater set shop.

He was a small man, but with one stroke of the pen, he could have ended my scholarship and my job in the theater. I could have been relegated to working in the cafeteria, which would have been the worst-case scenario for me as an 18-year-old freshman. His authority was paramount that year as a freshman. He knew it and I knew it.

That's the thing about authority. The strongest police officer can't literally stop a car, but with the one hand, he or she can command the brakes of law-abiding citizens. Why? Because we yield to authority. Jesus seemed like an unusual authority figure to many people He encountered, but surprisingly, a centurion recognized his authority and received a great reward.

## Yield to Jesus for Help // Luke 7:1-5

Sometimes the greatest lessons come from the most unlikely people. This is certainly true in Luke's

account of the healing of the centurion's servant. All indications point to the fact that this centurion was a Gentile, an authority in the Roman hierarchy, and most likely a Roman himself. Centurions were Roman Army officers who had authority over 100 soldiers. In other words, he had tremendous authority and control, except in the areas of life that only God can control. Everyone eventually reaches the conclusion that many things in life happen without our permission. We must resign to the stubborn fact that we are not in control of everything. As many have said, "We must resign as general manager of the universe." Life is messy, and everyone is struggling with something. Even the strongest people among us--those with the most authority find themselves rocked by adversity. Billionaires can get pancreatic cancer just like the rest of us. Accidents will happen even when we are cautious. No matter how many self-help books we read we can still be betrayed and rejected by family members. We all find ourselves struggling under the weight of uncertainty in life. The question for all of us is, where do we turn when life is unfair? What do we do when we take an unexpected hit or life turns dark?

Jesus in His sovereign knowledge knew that the punishment that He would face for our sins would



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be meted out by the same system that employed the centurion. If we had that much knowledge, if we had that much forethought of the future, what would our reaction be? Don't you think it would be difficult for you to lend a hand to the ones who would ultimately execute you? Even with this knowledge, Jesus didn't bat an eye. He moved toward mercy and away from judgment. Jesus acted under the same principle of grace. Faith in Jesus can't be based on our worthiness, efforts, or achievements. Otherwise, it wouldn't be faith. Regardless of our position or past, we can approach Jesus, and He is enough to carry us.

The Jews despised the Romans and their leaders, but this centurion stood out among the rest. Apparently, the Jews in that village saw him as a benevolent authority. He'd helped build a synagogue. They wanted to make sure Jesus had the backstory of this centurion. Jesus never asked, "Why should I listen to the centurion?" They answered that question before it could be asked because they assumed it was coming anyway. Certainly, only people who deserve to be heard will be heard. Right? They shared with Jesus that He deserved it. It was the standard of goodness that they thought brought them into favor. The Jewish mindset was "Be good." The Jesus mindset was "Be God's." Paul is clear on this: For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast. (Eph. 2:8-9) Jesus is open to the voices of desperation, and He rejoices in the opportunities to see anyone redeemed. He's just that good.

### WHERE DOES OUR CULTURE ENCOURAGE US TO TURN WHEN THINGS GET DESPERATE?

#### **Yield to Jesus's Authority // Luke 7:6-8**

A friend of mine went to a Dallas Cowboys football game on a Monday night. Jeff had bought the cheapest tickets available and was enjoying the game from the nosebleed section. On his way to the concession stand, a wealthy member of his church spotted him. This friend asked Jeff where he was seated. Jeff jokingly pointed at his binoculars and smiled. Jeff's wealthy friend winked at him and said, "follow me." He took Jeff through security, simply saying, "This one's with me." They rode an elevator to a luxury box complete with a buffet of steaks and shrimp. He came to the game as an ordinary fan but ended up "rubbing elbows" with the big shots of Dallas in leather easy chairs and with a gourmet feast. As he told me this story, I was reminded of the access that we get through Jesus. He has all authority. The only thing that He has to say at the end of the day is, "This one's with me." I also wonder how many times I sit in the cheap seats of life ignoring God's invitation to a life of spiritual amazement and joy.



### DIGGING DEEPER THE CENTURION

A centurion, an officer of the Roman army, commanded a century or one hundred foot-soldiers. Most centurions were enlisted men who rose through the ranks and were promoted after fifteen to twenty years of service. In addition, they were selected because of their size and strength, swordplay ability, and missile-throwing techniques. They were responsible for training, assigning duties, maintaining discipline, and completing other administrative tasks. Centurions exhibited courage along with excellent leadership skills as they stood on the front line of battle. In verses 2-9, we are introduced to a centurion of great faith, who showed love for his servant by asking Jesus to heal him, garnered respect from the Israelites, recognized the authority of Jesus Christ, and understood the importance of submission.

**Are you willing to relinquish your authority and worldly titles to yield to the authority of Jesus Christ?**

It's fascinating to hear the faith of the centurion. Somehow, he knew that Jesus didn't need to be present to be powerful and sufficient. He could just say the word. Somehow the centurion knew that the one who spoke stars into existence could speak healing a few hundred yards away from a dying servant. While everyone else was worried about records, proof-texts and resumes, the centurion reframed the situation by trusting in the power and sovereignty of Jesus over the laws of time and distance. He accepted Jesus's authority as a given. This must have left those listening bewildered with this concept of divine technology. It would be like saying to your teenage self that in the future your phone could be in your pocket, and you can see the person to whom you are calling while that person is 500 miles away! That's how mind-blowing this conversation between Jesus and the centurion must have been for those within earshot. "You don't have to come. I know you can just say the word."

### WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE ABOUT THE CENTURION'S POSTURE TOWARD JESUS?

As a side note, I wonder how our prayers would change if we had faith enough to believe deeply that all Jesus has to do is just say the word. How would it affect the time we spend in deep, specific, and intensive prayer? How would this constant belief change the way we live out our lives from crisis to crisis?

## Yield to Jesus's Response //

**Luke 7:9-10**

Throughout Scripture, we read about the amazement of people when Jesus would do Jesus-things. The disciples were amazed when the fig tree withered and died. When Jesus came into a town, they were amazed. They were amazed when the dead were raised, when the storms ceased at His word, when the lepers were healed, and when He forgave people of serious, deeply damaging sin. In this story, it was the other way around. A Roman centurion amazed Jesus with his faith. The King James Version uses the word *marveled*. It's surprising to me that the King of everything would marvel at someone's faith. He had seen it all. How could Jesus marvel in amazement? Perhaps it

speaks to the fact that Jesus is enthralled with our faith when we express it.

As a father, I was amazed when my son ran for over 100 yards in a peewee football game. I didn't expect it. I'd been to all the practices, and I'd never seen him run the ball like that before. One of my other sons went to college and played the lead in the classic play *Our Town*. If you had asked me when he left for college if he could memorize the Gettysburg Address, I would have said, "Probably not." I didn't know he could memorize that much. But I sat in the audience that night in tears of amazement as he brought the house down. Those were the big moments of amazement, but I've also seen the little moments of amazement too. Once I walked into one of our son's bedroom and noticed that everything was immaculately in order. I marveled. If you knew him, you would marvel too!

When our resources are few and we continue to give generously, we are in the cross hairs of divine amazement. When we yield ourselves to Him and



trust Him with supernatural faith, we get to feel the amazement of the Heavenly Father just as the centurion amazed Jesus. If you want to please Jesus, just have a little faith. Faith is important. Of course, that's an understatement. Hebrews 11:6 reminds us that without faith it is impossible to please Him. If we want to please, truly please, our Heavenly Father, we must yield to faith. A yielding faith isn't discarded when storms gather in the western sky. It isn't left at home when we walk into an adversarial workplace. A yielding faith isn't

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waiting for the perfect environment or situation. Our yielding faith is a ready faith that withstands the tempest and the trials of a chaotic season. In this world of uncertainty, as nations rage and fools rule the day, we can be certain that God is looking for people of faith who are willing to overcome the atmosphere and enter an all-consuming, relentless pursuit of Jesus.

The good news about yielding in faith is that when we draw near to God in faith, He promises a great reward. This reward supersedes the flimsy assurances our world offers. Our life here on earth, outside of Christ, has no guarantee of success. But with Christ, even what appears to be failure will be vanquished into the greatness of His reward. That's really the story of the gospel. Jesus didn't come to earth as a conquering hero dispelling his enemies with a bolt of lightning. Jesus personified faith even amid His own apparent demise. Except that's not the end of the story, is it? Jesus conquered all worldly sin. Now He invites us into the same faith that raised Him from the dead so that we can be more than conquerors both here on earth and throughout eternity. Yield in faith. You'll probably be amazed.

### HOW CAN PEOPLE TELL THAT JESUS HAS AUTHORITY OVER YOUR LIFE?

### DID YOU KNOW?

In 1950, Tulsa Oklahoma Police Chief Captain Clinton Riggs invented the first yield sign to be used at one of the busiest intersections in Tulsa. It seemed that many citizens were confused about who was to yield or legally proceed through the intersection. Within a year of Riggs' sign being posted, accident rates dropped significantly. While the sign is triangular shaped today and reads, "Yield," we still adhere to it, and drivers are required to slow down and give the right-of-way to pedestrians and vehicles that are coming from another direction. In essence, yielding requires that a driver give up to another or surrender his position. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, failure to yield is one of the top reasons for yearly accidents, and it is the fourth leading cause of fatal crashes for drivers in the United States.

**Biblical Truth:** Trusting God means not yielding to our own understanding (Prov. 3:5-6).

**Has your failure to yield to Christ caused accidents and major upsets in your life?**

## LIVE IT

### Is your faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ evident in all walks of your life?

Where is your faith today? Are you hanging on by a thread? Are you radically depending on Jesus? Are you somewhere in between? The good news about faith is that the more you practice faith, the better you get at it. A mountain is scaled one step at a time. You'll be amazed how far you'll rise on the wings of yielded faith.

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- **Thanksgiving.** Spend some time alone reflecting on how God has provided for you in the past. Give thanks!
- **Pray.** Make a list of the circumstances that challenge your faith. Ask God to give you a greater faith in His presence and power.
- **Seek.** Seek out someone who is struggling in life during this season. Connect with them. Bless them with your words and deeds.



# DAILY READINGS

## 1. REPENTANT FAITH // JOHN 5:19

The Father sent His Son to not only save us from our sins but to also set an example for us. Christ, through His earthly ministry, showed us what a yielded faith looks like. The Son often proclaimed that He did "only" what the Father instructed Him to do. While we as humans will make mistakes and poor decisions, because of Jesus' perfect submission to God, God's grace is sufficient to help us grow in submission. As we daily acknowledge our sins, repent, and yield to God, we begin to do more consistently as Christ would do and reflect His image more brightly. God's goal is not that we live mistake free lives but yielded lives especially when we make mistakes.

**A yielded faith requires penitence.**

## 2. ULTIMATE AUTHORITY // COLOSSIANS 1:15-18

Jesus is described as the image of the invisible God in Colossians 1:15 meaning that to look at the Son was the equivalent of looking at the Father. Colossians 2:9 further indicates that Jesus represented the fulness of the Godhead bodily meaning that He not only reflected His physical image but His thoughts, deeds, and actions. The source of the Son's power was that of the Father. The aforementioned scriptures, among many others, help to confirm that the Father and Son operate as one and because they do we can be confident in Christ's ability to act on our behalf as our Lord and Savior. Jesus holds "all power and authority in heaven and earth" which justifies our faith.

**Jesus has all authority; we have no reason not to trust Him!**

## 3. A LIVING FAITH // 1 PETER 3:22

1 Peter 3:22 exclaims that after Jesus ascended back to the Father upon dying for the sins of mankind, He was seated at the right hand of the Father. The Son was exalted for yielding to the Father's Will. God does the same for us too.

When God is pleased with His children, it is due to our faith; for without faith it is impossible to please Him (Heb. 11:6). When we surrender in awestruck humility and wonder to God, He blesses us in accordance with our faith. It is a sign of our trust in Him as the source of all that we receive from Him and not we ourselves.

**Faith requires us to live out what we believe.**

## 4. EXPECTANT FAITH// ROMANS 12:12

When we expect God to act on our behalf just as He has promised by faith, we can rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, and keep praying no matter what our physical condition looks like just as Romans 12:12 encourages us to. An expectant faith is possible because it believes God to keep His promises. It is difficult to believe someone you do not trust, but God is trustworthy because He does what He says without fail. God does not lie; if He spoke it, He will make it good. If He said it, He will bring it to pass (Num. 23:19). Moreover, when God does bring His Word to pass, He goes above and beyond what we ask, think or imagine (Eph. 3:20)!

**Expect God to do what He says.**

## 5. ALIGNED TO HIS WILL // 1 JOHN 3:22

As we yield to God, we acquiesce to His will for our lives; we align with His mind. In doing so, our prayers align with His desires and hence when we ask Him for something, He graciously does it. While yielding to God is not necessarily the easiest task due to our own stubborn wills, it is the absolute best decision we could ever possibly make because we position ourselves to be blessed. Life is made easier not more difficult when we yield to God. He becomes the driver of our decision-making and not just a spectator. God's way is perfect and when we align with His way, He can freely bless us as He desires which is beyond anything we can comprehend.

**God answers our prayers according to His will, not our desire.**