



Encountering Faith (Luke 7:1-10)

1. What do you think of when you hear the word 'faith'? How would you define 'faith'?
2. A quick web search for 'quotes about faith' returns a wide variety of responses! With each of the quotes listed below, what is the object of faith (what is the faith 'in') and how is faith expressed (or actioned, or received)?

'Always be yourself, express yourself, have faith in yourself, do not go out and look for a successful personality and duplicate it' - Bruce Lee, Actor and Martial Artist.

'I believe if you keep your faith, you keep your trust, you keep the right attitude, if you're grateful, you'll see God open up new doors' - Joel Osteen, Megachurch Pastor.

'When you have come to the edge, faith is knowing you will be taught to fly' - Anonymous.

'Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see' - The Author of Hebrews (Heb 11:1).

'Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy' - Norman Vincent Peale, Best-Selling Author and Donald Trump's former Pastor.

'I find your lack of faith, disturbing' - Darth Vader, antagonist from the film 'Star Wars'.

'Faith in action is love, and love in action is service. By transforming that faith into living acts of love, we put ourselves in contact with God Himself, with Jesus our Lord' - Mother Teresa, Nun and Missionary.

Of these quotes, if you were to survey people in Melbourne, which do you think would be the most popular definition of faith?

Read Luke's account of Jesus' encounter with the Centurion in Capernaum (Luke 7:1-10). Which of the above quotes best fit best with Jesus' understanding of faith?

3. Re-read verses 2 to 5. The Jewish Elders of Capernaum tell Jesus that the Centurion 'deserves to have you' heal his servant. What reasons do they give? Do you think these kinds of things impress God? Why / why not?
4. Re-read verses 6 to 8. How would you expect the head of an occupying army in a small fishing village to approach a wondering religious teacher if he needed something from him? With what kind of attitude does the Centurion approach Jesus?
5. What kind of trust does the centurion place in the authority of Jesus? What does he think is required of Jesus to make his servant well? (see verses 6 to 8)
6. How does the centurion's appeal to Jesus contrast and compare with the town Elder's appeal to Jesus?
7. Based on this passage, a good definition of faith might be "trust in the authority of Jesus". Do you agree?

Thinking about the problems and opportunities you face this week, what things might stop you trusting in Jesus' authority?

8. Re-read verse 9 and 10. Why do you think Jesus is amazed? What is it that Jesus praises the Centurion for?
9. How would this encounter with Jesus encourage or challenge the following people:
 - a. a person who doubts they are good enough to be accepted by God?

- b. a family who is worried about their financial security, but can't see the point of asking God for help?
- c. a Christian friend who is struggling with a long term illness?
- d. somebody who donates a large sum of money to the church and says they now deserve to have their name put on a plaque on the wall?

End the study by reflecting what this encounter has taught you about who Jesus is, and about how you are to respond to him.