



## **25: KEEP THE JESUS SIGNAL ON! (Luke 7:1-10)**

Gravity is one of the universe's fundamental forces and dominates every moment of our conscious experience. It keeps us close to the ground, drags baseballs and basketballs out of the air and gives our muscles something to struggle against. Cosmically, gravity is just as consequential.

From collapsing hydrogen clouds into stars to gluing galaxies together, gravity represents one of just a few players that determine the broad strokes of the universe's evolution.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus is the personal gravity of the Universe. Jesus has authority over life and death. Jesus draws people to Himself. Jesus breathes life into people.

And we can observe Jesus' cosmic, gravitational power when we look at His healing of a centurion's servant in Luke Seven.

The report of Jesus healing the centurion's slave demonstrated that not just Jews, but also Gentiles (non-Jews), could have faith that was acceptable to Jesus (compare Matt 8:5–13). By including narratives like this one, Luke continued to support his central

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.space.com/classical-gravity.html>

theme that Jesus was the Messiah for the whole world.<sup>2</sup> We start in Luke seven, verse one:

*1 When (Jesus) had concluded saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. 2 A centurion's servant, who was highly valued by him, was sick and about to die. 3 When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, requesting him to come and save the life of his servant. 4 When they reached Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy for you to grant this, 5 because he loves our nation and has built us a synagogue." (Luke 7:1-5)*

After Jesus' sermon (chap. 6), which was given outside of town, He entered Capernaum, where He performed many of His messianic signs.<sup>3</sup> Capernaum was a fishing village on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee and served as Jesus' ultimate base of operations during His public ministry.<sup>4</sup>

Here in Capernaum, a centurion's servant, who was highly valued by him, was sick and about to die. A centurion was a Roman military officer in charge of roughly 80 soldiers.<sup>5</sup> Though we do not know this particular Centurion's national background, we do know he was not Jewish. Perhaps he was a potential proselyte<sup>6</sup> or, more likely, a soldier who followed the Roman custom of respecting religion as a socially healthy force in the empire.<sup>7</sup>

The Centurion heard the word about Jesus. We're not sure if he believed in the God of Israel or not. We're not sure how committed to Roman paganism he was. One thing was for sure, the Centurion heard about the miraculous things Jesus was doing, and believed it was possible for them to apply to his servant.

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<sup>2</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 7:1–10). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>3</sup> Martin, J. A. (1985). [Luke](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 221). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>4</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 7:1). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>5</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 7:2). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>6</sup> Oxford Dictionary defines a proselyte as "a person who has converted from one opinion, religion, or party to another."

<sup>7</sup> NIV Application Commentary Copyright © 1996 by Darrel L. Bock.



Whenever the citizens of Gotham City would turn on the “Batman Signal Light”, or the “Bat Signal”. They trusted and knew that whatever was happening, and from wherever he was in that moment, Batman was gonna show up and fight the crimes being committed!

If you signal the “Jesus light”, and genuinely cry out to Him, you can bet that He’s gonna show up! Just turn on your Jesus light! And by the way, keep that light on all day! He don’t slumber or sleep and will dwell with you every moment!

Someone doesn’t have to fully understand Jesus Christ to be curious about Him. Somebody doesn’t have to be a full on disciple of Jesus to receive a touch from Him! You can be anyone, in any walk of life, at any time in your life, and if you genuinely ask Jesus to show up and show out for you, He will do so.

I’ll never forget the time that I had a near death experience due to an overdose, at the age of seventeen. I had taken a large amount of something that almost made me crazy and could have killed me.<sup>8</sup> Right in the middle of that horrible experience, when I basically left my body and then came to again, I earnestly cried out to “whatever was out there”, and had a warm, comforting rush through my body and a peace fill my soul like never before, and from there I wanted to confess all the horrible things I was doing to my parents and turn my life around.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://goddrugsandrocknroll.com/2013/07/22/my-near-death-experience-on-psilocybin-mushrooms-2/>

Now I believe in that moment that Jesus was reaching out to me, even though I had no idea who He was. I'll even tell you that I had a brief vision of a person who I'm pretty convinced was Him in the middle of this terrifying experience.

And I'm telling you today that whoever you are. Wherever you're coming from. Whatever you're struggling with, Jesus wants to touch your life! He's not asking you to change first. He's not asking you to clean up your act first. He's not asking you to get yourself together first. Sure, those who have been touched by Him multiple times need to respond and live out their faith in Him! We certainly shouldn't take advantage of His grace! But I'm telling you today that if you don't know Him, He wants to show you who He is with a miraculous intervention in your life! We'll see how He did just that in the life of this Roman Centurion!

Since he was a Gentile (non-Jew), the centurion sent Jewish leaders to vouch for him to Jesus, a Jewish teacher.<sup>9</sup> These were probably Jewish civil leaders, not synagogue leaders.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the reason he sent them to present his request was that he doubted that Jesus would have heeded a Roman soldier's request.<sup>11</sup> This dude was a Gentile, and this dude was likely wealthy.

Sometimes we can't make it on our own! Sometimes we gotta lean into other people who have more "spiritual clout" than us to step in the gap for us. We gotta send people ahead of us to Jesus to ask Jesus to help us. When we live in the community of God's people, we can lean into one another in these tough times and hold each other up!

The elders' favorable opinion of the centurion was based on his generosity to the Jewish community.<sup>12</sup>

They liked the fact that this dude "built them a synagogue". And I'm not trying to be all jealous or weird, but obviously, because Streetlight Community Church doesn't own a building, it's easy for me to be cynical and self-righteous about Church buildings! Lord have mercy on me!

It's definitely not a bad thing that the Centurion loved the people of Israel, and it's definitely not a bad thing that he built a synagogue. This is just a side note, but it's just interesting how we tend to value people for what they do for us, and the magnitude with

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<sup>9</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 7:3). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>10</sup> NIV Application Commentary Copyright © 1996 by Darrel L. Bock.

<sup>11</sup> Martin, J. A. (1985). [Luke](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 221–222). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>12</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 7:4). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

which they do it. We tend to value people less if they don't do as much for us. We tend to value people more if they do more. We also place far too much spiritual estate in real estate and not enough spiritual estate in God's truly priceless estate- that being the people He has created in His image!

This is exactly why James wrote, while addressing the way that the Christ followers in Jerusalem acted while assembling for worship together;

1 My brothers and sisters, do not show favoritism as you hold on to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. 2 For if someone comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and a poor person dressed in filthy clothes also comes in, 3 if you look with favor on the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Sit here in a good place," and yet you say to the poor person, "Stand over there," or "Sit here on the floor by my footstool," 4 haven't you made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? (James 2:1-4)

Listen man, I get why these Jewish elders liked this Roman Centurion. He had been generous and done good for them! I'm just saying, we can't allow what people have, what people do for us, and what status people have dictate the way we treat them. The word is clear that the ground is level at the foot of the cross! Amen!

The account of the scene in Luke 7 continues;

*6 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. 7 That is why I didn't even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. 8 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." (Luke 7:6-8)*

Jesus started moving towards the Centurion's house, and when He was getting close, the Centurion sent friends to rendezvous with Him before He arrived.

The Roman Centurion said he was not worthy. Coming from a leader in the Roman occupying force, this would have been a shocking expression of reverence toward a Jewish teacher.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 7:6). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Our jobs don't make us worthy. Our titles don't make us worthy. Our experience doesn't make us worthy. Our net value doesn't make us worthy. Our looks don't make us worthy. Our social media platform doesn't make us worthy. Our talent doesn't make us worthy. We, like the Roman Centurion, are unworthy of Christ, Christ is worthy, and Christ actually makes us worthy in the eyes of God!!!!

The centurion probably was aware that a Jew who entered a Gentile's house became ritually unclean and thus doing so would have been a serious inconvenience for a Jewish person like Jesus. (compare Acts 10:28)<sup>14</sup>

The centurion also recognized that Jesus had considerable authority over sickness, similar to his own authority within the military chain of command.<sup>15</sup> He understood Jesus' authority and knew that if he just issued the order, the healing would occur.<sup>16</sup>

Do you believe that God can do it? Do you believe that if you call upon the Name of Jesus, that He will move? Do you believe that He can remove and redeem your addiction? Do you believe that He can remove your desire for loveless lust? Do you believe that He can restore your joy again? Do you believe that He can replace your unforgiveness problem with His forgiveness? Do you believe that He can sweeten up your bitterness? Do you believe that He can make you desire what is whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—and if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—to empower you to dwell on these things.? (Phil 4:8) You better believe He can. You gotta call on His Name! There is power in the Name of Jesus!

And how did Jesus respond to the Centurion's genuine cry and genuine faith in Him?

*9 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." 10 When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant in good health. (Luke 7:1-10)*

Jesus was amazed at this dude. He made sure to declare so publicly. Jesus said He hadn't found so great a faith, even in Israel. He was praising one of Israel's foreign rulers, which would not have been well received by Jesus' Jewish listeners.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 7:6). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>15</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 7:8). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>16</sup> NIV Application Commentary Copyright © 1996 by Darrel L. Bock.

<sup>17</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 7:9). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

I remember when I was once in the presence of a woman who was battling poverty and addiction, and we were within earshot of a pastor who thought she was a hopeless “sinner”. Jesus’ words rang through my head as I was hearing her give an account of how she spent a lot of her time bringing food and supplies to homeless people that lived in tents not far from her house. I told her thanks for honoring Jesus and doing ministry for Him. She denied that she was worthy of such a statement. She began crying and pouring out her desire to be in a better place and I got the chance to pray for her.

Afterwards, the pastor within earshot made a point to come and tell me that this woman wasn’t saved, and I shouldn’t be saying things like that to her, because she’ll get the wrong idea.

I told the pastor that it’s God’s kindness that leads us to repentance!

Now I don’t know if what I said was the best thing. But I do know that Jesus speaks life into people when all they believe about themselves is death. I do know that the Lord Jesus wants to encourage, build up, lift up, and bring out the Imago Dei in people. And I know that the Holy Spirit will breathe the same thing into our mouths to speak life into the people who need it the most!

Jesus sure doesn’t care about our religious pious platitudes. He ain’t impressed with our vain efforts to prove that we belong to Him. He wants us to genuinely just trust and love Him.

And what does He do for the Centurion’s servant in response? He heals him fully and restores him to good health.

Jesus heals, but in doing so He forgives sin.<sup>18</sup> Jesus didn’t ever do a miracle without drawing people into believing in Him and following Him. Not everyone He did a miracle for responded to Him by following Him, but the call to follow and surrender was always there. The healings that Jesus brings are meant to give us a taste of eternity, and what it will be like to live in a forever resurrected, sinless state, cause one day we’ll be in the new heaven and new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth will have passed away, and the sea will be no more. One day we’ll be in the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. It’s where God will dwell with humanity, and He will live with us. We will be his people, and God himself will be with us and will be our God. He will wipe away every tear from our eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things will have passed away. (Rev. 21:1-4)

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<sup>18</sup> NIV Application Commentary Copyright © 1996 by Darrel L. Bock.

And I can tell you today that the Lord Jesus wants to heal you. He wants to physically heal you. He wants to touch your life. He wants to restore your sanity. He wants to drive the lies of demons straight out of your body and your head. He wants to remove your addiction. He wants to remove your hatred. He wants to reset your soul. He came from heaven to earth, to show the way, from the earth to the cross, your debt to pay, from the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky, and we lift His Name on high!

This Centurion wasn't even in the physical presence of Jesus and Jesus healed his servant. Jesus can heal someone or do a miraculous work in their life wherever He wants to at any time! It doesn't need to happen in Sunday Church but it certainly can and certainly does because His power is more manifest when many are gathered in His Name! But it can happen to someone in their house while they're by themselves. It can happen to someone in a mall, a park, a restaurant, a movie theater- wherever! I came to know Jesus by myself while reading the Bible in my studio apartment at the age of twenty, and He visited me with mighty power! He can meet you and will meet you wherever you're at and wherever and whenever He wants to meet you! Surrender to Him!