Student’s Name

Professor’s Name

Course

Date

Healing of the Paralytic

In the miracle of Jesus healing the centurion servant (Luke 7:1-10), Jesus enters Capernaum, and a certain service to the Centurion was sick, but he did not want him to die because he was dear to him. He sent the Jewish elders to plead with Jesus to go and heal the servant. The leaders presented the Centurion as deserving because he had participated in building a synagogue and loved the nation. Jesus agreed, but when he was halfway to the Centurion’s house, the Centurion asked his friends to tell Jesus that he was not worthy to have him in his house and himself to meet Jesus. He asked Jesus to say a word, and he was sure his servant would be healed. Jesus marveled at his great faith, and when the friends went back to the house, the servant had been healed.

The story of the Centurion’s servant is covered in Mathew 8:5-13 and also in Luke 7:1-10. Both account for a suffering servant who needed help from Jesus. Despite their agreement on how these events occurred, there are differences between the two accounts. Mathew was a Jew. His recordings depict concern for Israel, as he describes Jesus warning the nation to remember personal responsibility and encourage individuals to have hope and faith in God instead of a man and their institutions (civil and religious). On the other hand, Luke, a Greek, showed concern for his fellow gentiles and encouraged them to be humble and ask for help from Jesus to solve their problems. Luke shows that a centurion (Gentile) could convince Jewish leaders to implore Jesus to heal his servant.

The account of the Centurion servant has sparked various interpretations, including the importance of faith and that the gospel was meant for all people, whether Jew or Gentile. Many accounts emphasize having unwavering faith in the Lord and recognizing his power of Healing. This discussion will look at various textual and interpretations and meanings and their original impact on the people in Capernaum.

It is important to consider that just like Mathew, Mark, and John, Luke's accounts of Jesus’ life and ministry is mainly that of the vision of faith. Faith is the epicenter of what Christians believe about God. It is a comprehensive lens through which details of historical life must be discerned. One thing to consider while reading St.Luke’s gospel is the hospitality concept. According to Byrne hospitality in different perspectives, have formed significant reference points for Jesus’ Ministries (08). This gospel depicts how Jesus visited the world on God’s behalf. He started as a visitor but became the host who extended God’s hospitality to the world, allowing them to be human.

One specific human transformation is that of labels that human beings are quick to impose on others because they consider them a threat, aliens, or disturbing. Individuals appropriate salvation; they resist it while others accept it, and both responses impact human lives. Salvation should not be considered a type of “goodie” poured down from heaven like manna and then appropriated like other benefits in life. Salvation is about someone’s whole life, and it begins while he is on earth. In the stories of salvation, Luke emphasizes its promises fulfilled in the story of Jesus’ mission, resurrection and death fulfilled later in the churches’ Spirit-empowered missions. “With believers from the extra-Jewish “Gentile” world primarily in view, Luke writes to communicate to them where they fit within the great story that hitherto seemed focused upon Israel alone” (Byrne 11). The Gentiles and the Jews knowing where they fit in their community’s or family’s salvation story, forges and preserves the human identity.

Fitzmyer’s commentary in his text The Gospel According to Luke emphasizes how Jesus manifested his powers in different miracles. According to him, St Luke’s gospel stresses the power that comes from the word, compared to other Gospels, which relay preaching of the word as more powerful. While healing the Centurion’s servant, Jesus' healing power is manifested by distant Healing, merely through word of mouth. The Centurion’s had relevant experience as a commander. Therefore he was well aware that Jesus did not necessarily have to come to his house to visit and pray over the afflicted servant. The Centurion believed in Jesus' authority to heal despite the distance.

Fitzmer’s commentary of the power of the word stresses how an individual must understand their faith even in challenging times. The Centurion was faced with a trying time, and he realized where his fundamental relationship with Jesus and God lies (Fitzmyer, 728). True faith does not need a visible sign; the Centurion’s faith was Christ’s spiritual capability, and he was confident that Christ’s word would be effective in healing the dying and the sick. Jesus entered Capernaum after the sermon on the plain; this message was intended for the gospel audience; hence, Luke’s determination to ensure the St. Luke’s Gospel audience also reflects on their link with their faith and God.

Johnson’s commentary also emphasizes the importance of faith. The two accounts, the Lukan account and the Mathian account, are different. According to Mathew, Jesus indeed went to the Centurion’s house and healed the servant. This is contrary to the Lukan account where the Centurion sent another friends’ embassy. Mathian account does not mention any friends sent out. Therefore, it can be seen that the Lukan account the Centurion sent the Jewish elders to beseech Jesus to come to the servant’s rescue and later sent friends to deter him from entering the house. The Centurion knew well enough that the “labels” which Byrne talked about existed, and that a Jew entering the house of a Gentile would be defaming. Mathian account, however, does not mention such things, instead the Centurion went to Jesus personally. Johnson emphasizes on the importance of trusting one’s faith and indentifying it (Johnson 138). Evidently, Jesus saw how a Gentile came to realize his faith in him and acknowledged the fore glimpse of his ministry’s effect. In addition, Jesus is reacting to respond to appeals just like in the previous chapters’ healings of the leper who asked him to make him clean. The Centurion also asked Jesus to heal his dying servant.

It is from Johnson’s analysis that Luke’s intentions are made clear. Luke is trying to raise certain points from his *Healing of the Centurion* miracle: the importance of coming into terms with personal faith and Christ’s overwhelming power. Luke’s account of miracles such as calming the storm explain a fulfillment of various motif present in the gospel marked with complete impacts of important issues answered later in other books such as the Epistles and the utilization of phrases meant to be reminiscent of texts delivered earlier in the Gospel portions.

Karris' commentary, similarly to Byrne, emphasizes the fact that the message of the kingdom of heaven is for men and women alike (696). Karris section highlights Jesus dismantling boundaries that separate the clean from the unclean to restore individuals to life and community. The commentary includes the themes of individuals who do and do not respond positively to God’s messengers. The tax collectors, the Gentiles, the hopelessly ill and sinners acknowledge the authority of Jesus. Healing the Centurion’s servant depicts the way the unclean Gentiles are ready to receive the message of Christ’s kingdom. It is a story that presages Christianity complete movement to the Gentile community. Luke describes the theme of certain individuals worthy of Jesus’ benefits. The Centurion was a Gentile officer, potentially an employee of Herod. One can note the parallel existing between this miracle and Luke’s description of the first Gentile convert called Cornelius, also a Centurion in Acts 10 (Karis 696). He had alms; hence, he was able to care for the people of God. It was through the Centurion that Jesus showed Peter that God was impartial.

Included in the unexpected and generous response soldiers give to the messengers of God, it can explain why Centurion displayed exemplary characteristics such as caring for his servant. The Jewish elders were the first among the two delegations sent. Luke provides revenue to discuss what an individual should have to be worthy of benefits from Jesus. Consequently, the Jewish elders make a case for the Centurion, saying that he should not consider the Centurion as a Gentile because of what he had done for God’s people; hence, worthy of God’s scope blessings promised to the Israelites (Karis 696). Contradicting what the Jewish elders say, the Centurion says that he is not worthy. He does not possess such Holy standards that he should host Jesus in his house to break a purity rule. He uses an analogy of his experience in authority to argue his side and acknowledging Jesus’ power of sickness and death. Jesus’ word was enough. Notably, the Centurion proved himself worthy and not because of his good deeds to the God’s chose people, but because he believed in Jesus conquering death. His great but unexpected faith is contrasted with those expected to believe but did not.

Lohfink does not touch on the Centurion servant’s Healing but speaks of overall miracles. For Christians, miracles occur every day as God continues to sustain the order he created. Miracles were bizarre happenings that disturbed the natural laws. Jesus was able to heal the servant without getting close to him, only by word of mouth. Even Jesus marveled at the Centurion’s faith to expect a word to heal. This means that God also breaks natural laws if necessary because “from time to time, he intervenes directly into the world’s causal connections in order to demonstrate his power in a plausible way” (Lohfink 140). However, if something occurs every day and God brings graciously into the world, God would intertwine nature’s laws with the human course. Therefore, miracles exalt nature as miracles are an elevation of the natural laws and not breaking them. However, when it comes to faith, independence between humans and nature can be seen. Lohfink cites Mark’s account of Jesus healing the woman with bleeding as he told her that it was her faith that made her well. Lohfink emphasizes faith’s independent meaning, which does not appear anywhere else in antiquity. For people in ancient times, the miracle happening dependent on whether the individual believes in the miraculous reality. In contrast, it is whether the sick individuals believe the healing power. The Centurion believed in a place of his servant, and Healing occurred.

Christians need to learn that they cannot earn God’s approval on their own despite their good deeds. Self-righteousness does not bear any fruit. The Centurion’s humility and his faith are what caused the Healing. When the Healing occurred back at the house, it means that the act is not centerstage. What is emphasized is the Centurion’s faith and humility. Today individuals focus much on miracles and the people speaking in tongues. Emphasis on such gifts alone proves that these individuals are not legitimate. Therefore, true faith is depicted in a humble way to God.

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