



Small Group Guide: The Forgotten Jesus

“One Surprise After Another”

Icebreaker

Think of a time when someone surprised you by demonstrating unexpected wisdom or insight. What made that moment so memorable?

Key Scripture

Matthew 8:5-11 CSB

When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, pleading with him, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible agony.”

He said to him, “Am I to come and heal him?”

“Lord,” the centurion replied, “I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man 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.”

Hearing this, Jesus was amazed and said to those following him, “Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with so great a faith. I tell you that many will come from east and west to share the banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”

Main Takeaways

- Faith is not merely intellectual agreement. As Pastor Robby noted, Jesus was not commending the centurion for passing a theology exam. Faith always leads to action. The centurion demonstrated trust through humility, boldness, and confident expectation.
- The kingdom of God is for everyone. Matthew intentionally places this story right after the Sermon on the Mount to show that kingdom ethics and kingdom blessings are not restricted to one people group. The first person to clearly recognize Jesus after the Sermon on the Mount was a Gentile.
- Understanding authority requires being under authority. The centurion's insight into who Jesus was came directly from his own experience living under authority and leading others under his. He understood the chain of command, and he applied that understanding to Jesus's relationship with the Father.
- Religion can get in the way of relationship. The religious leaders missed Jesus because they were looking for a Messiah who would fit their system. The centurion, the tax collectors, and the

sinner accepted Jesus as he actually is. As Pastor Robby said, "Sometimes religion can get in the way of relationship."

- God's power is not restricted by geography. Jesus demonstrated that healing and spiritual work are not limited by physical proximity. The centurion believed this before Jesus even confirmed it, which is part of what made his faith so remarkable.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

- The centurion told Jesus he was not worthy to have him come under his roof. He understood that Jewish law would make Jesus ceremonially unclean by entering a Gentile home. What does it tell you about the centurion's character that he was aware of and sensitive to this cultural and religious boundary?
- Jesus responded to the centurion's request by offering to come to his house, which was a striking and countercultural move. What does Jesus's willingness to cross that boundary say about his view of people who are considered outsiders?
- The centurion explained his faith by drawing a parallel between his own position in the Roman chain of command and Jesus's position as a representative of God the Father. What does this comparison reveal about how the centurion understood who Jesus was?
- Pastor Robby made the point that "a leader who cannot be questioned is a questionable leader." How does this principle connect to the centurion's posture of humility before Jesus? How should it shape the way we relate to leaders in our own lives?
- Jesus said he had not found faith like this in all of Israel. He was surrounded by religious people who knew the scriptures. Why do you think someone on the outside of the religious system was able to see Jesus more clearly than those on the inside?
- Pastor Robby said, "Sometimes religion can get in the way of relationship." What is the difference between the two, and have you personally experienced that tension?

Reflecting

- The centurion understood that being in authority required first being under authority. Where in your own life do you currently struggle to submit to leadership, whether that is a boss, a spouse, a pastor, or God himself?
 - Pastor Robby shared that surrendering his own sense of control and submitting to God's authority changed the direction of his life. Can you think of an area where your resistance to submission may be keeping you stuck spiritually, relationally, or professionally?
 - Adam made the observation that submitting to authority is a voluntary act, like a patient willingly surrendering to a surgeon. He noted that the world sees submission as limiting, but that in God's economy it actually opens us up to more. Do you agree with that? Why or why not?
 - Pastor Robby closed with this question: "Who is Jesus to you? Is he the Jesus of the Bible, or a Jesus of your own imagination or creation?" Take a moment to sit with that question honestly. In what ways might you be shaping Jesus to fit your preferences rather than accepting him as he is?
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Closing Prayer

Thank God for sending Jesus as his representative on earth with full authority. Ask him to give your group the humility of the centurion, a willingness to recognize who Jesus truly is, to submit to his authority, and to trust that his word alone is enough. Pray for any specific needs within the group, trusting that God's power is not limited by distance or circumstance.