

Sabbath School Today **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

Health and Healing **Lesson 3: “Celebrating Spiritual and Physical Fitness”**

“And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, ‘Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.’ And Jesus saith unto him, ‘I will come and heal him.’ The centurion answered and said, ‘Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the *word only*, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.’ When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, ‘Verily I say unto you, *I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ And Jesus said unto the centurion, ‘Go thy way; and as thou hast *believed*, so be it done unto thee.’ And his servant was healed in the *selfsame hour*” (Matt. 8:5-13; emphasis supplied).

What is special about this story? Why did Jesus say that He had not found so great faith even in *Israel*, not even from among those who *professed* to be God’s people and were supposed to have such great faith? After all, the man was a Roman, a gentile, and a soldier at that, a leader of *fighting* men, a mighty man of war. Why did Jesus say he had *faith*?

Through all the ages, since Adam’s first transgression, man has tried to make himself better. It started with Adam himself when he and Eve tried to cover themselves with leaves and scurried through the garden playing “hide and seek” with God. We still play games with Him sometimes, don’t we? Do we hope somehow to come just close enough to feel good, but not so close that He can actually touch us? We tantalize Him by buying His books, putting His picture on the wall, displaying the cross, while we quietly *deny* Him by seeking our *own* way out of a crisis, and thinking *only* of our own pleasure. We excuse ourselves by saying, “Oh, it’s just a little thing,” or “I’ll do better next time,” but in reality it is a blatant denial of God’s ability to make sense out of our lives, and to order them for good. We *need* to understand this story of the centurion.

The centurion understood the power of the word of authority. He said, “Speak the *word only*, and my servant shall be healed. For I [too] am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.” The power of this man’s faith was that he *believed* that Christ was the *living God*, that He had the power of God in His *word*, and that he was willing to *depend* upon that *word* to do what it said. And what was the result? it says in verse 13, “His servant was healed in the *selfsame hour*.”

He said, "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."

Faith is believing that God's word only can do what it says.

Matthew 28:18 says, "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.'" Do we really *believe* that God can do what He says? Do we take His word, plain and simple, as it reads, and *believe* that He has *all power*? By the way, if God has all power, how much power does that leave for Satan?

Faith is also expecting God's word only to do what it says.

OK, so we believe that God is smart and powerful. He knows what He is doing and has the power and authority to do it. But, *will* He do it? Does He know we are here? Does He care? Where *is* God when we need Him? Do we really *expect* that God cares about this planet enough to actually *do* something for us?

And finally, faith is depending upon God's word—only—to do what it says.

Well, OK, maybe God does care about this planet. Maybe He does things all the time for *some* people, but does He know about *me*? Does He know where *I am*. Will He do things in *my* life? Yes, friend, He already *is* doing things for you. Just look all around you. The fact that you are here studying His word is one indication that God is working in your life. The air that we breathe and the food that we eat are all purchased with His blood. Listen to the birds sing praises to God. He will show you other things, as well. Behold! The Lamb of God cares about *you*! Once we believe this in our hearts, once we receive a heartfelt appreciation of God's salvation already bestowed upon *us* and appreciate that the price paid for us on the cross was the value of His own eternal life, we will stop depending on our own resources to solve our dilemma.

What we need is to learn to *depend* upon *His Word only* to do what He says. We need to let go of our *own* way and allow Christ to have full control, believing that He is working, that all things come from Him, and that He has *already* provided a way of escape if we are simple enough to let Him work it out in *His own way—by His word only*. Like the centurion, we need to throw ourselves upon God's all-powerful word, believing that there is no human way out, and letting Him have full control in our lives, our thoughts, our desires. It is all in God's *word*. We have no strength at all.

The centurion *did* this. He *believed* that *God's word only* could do what it says. He *expected* God's word *only* to do what it says. And finally, he *depended* upon God's word *only* to do what it says, and he knew that Jesus Himself was God's Word. And by believing this, the centurion was expressing appreciation for the strength of God's word. The answers are not anywhere else.

As we learn to exercise faith in God's ability to heal us *physically*, we need to remember that all this physical healing is to remind us that God stands ready constantly to heal us

spiritually. Just as God asks us to cooperate with Him in His healing of our *physical* bodies through proper exercise (and also healthy diet, abstemiousness, sufficient rest, fresh air, pure water, and sunshine), He wants us to cooperate with Him in our *spiritual* healing by *believing* that we are dead indeed to sin and alive *in* Christ and *with* Christ because *He* is dwelling in us through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:11). Faith is the substance of that promised spiritual healing (Heb. 11:1). That means that when we say “Yes” to God’s desire to give us the experience of His righteousness, we believe that it is an accomplished fact. Now get up from your knees and go with confidence doing whatever the Lord places at your hand, for God is with you (1 Sam. 10:6-7). This is the *exercise* of faith, that our faith may grow.

“O, ‘understanding how to exercise faith: this is the science of the gospel!’ And the science of the gospel is the science of sciences. Who would not strain every *nerve* to understand it?” (A. T. Jones, *Review and Herald*, Jan. 24, 1899; emphasis supplied).

—Craig Barnes