

## Faith That Makes Jesus Marvel

It's been said that we all have three people that observe our lives and their opinion of what they see in us is extremely important; so we would do well to ask what these observers see. We are **first** seen by others; those around us. No one lives in a world to himself. Everyone's life is seen and observed by somebody. Everyday there are some that see/hear you and form an opinion on the basis of what they observe. When they look at you, do they see someone that they can respect or someone that they abhor?

**Secondly**, we are seen by ourselves. We all have an opinion of the type of person that we are. The question is do you look at yourself honestly or do you have an inflated opinion of yourself? There is a danger of have an inflated opinion of our selves. **(Gal 6:3) For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.** We ought to think of ourselves soberly and honestly.

**Thirdly**, we are seen by God. While we may deceive others and maybe even from time to time deceive ourselves, we will never deceive God as to the kind of person that we are. *Oliver Cromwell ruled England back during the 1600's and he had a huge wart on his face and one day he was having a portrait painted and he said to the artist, "I want you to paint me exactly as I am, wart and all."* And when God looks at us, that's the way He sees us; warts and all. He knows what others don't know and at times what we don't even know about ourselves. **(Heb 4:13) Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.** God know everything there is to know about us.

This morning we are going to look in Luke 7 at an episode in the life of Jesus. In this episode, we find these three spectators and how each of them evaluated this man's life. This account revolves around a centurion. A centurion was an official; a military man in the Roman army. He was a man of position and power. In the eyes of the world, he was a special man. The impressive thing is that Jesus also viewed him as an extraordinary man. Luke 7:9 says that Jesus marveled at him; Jesus admired this man. The thing that Jesus admired about this man was not his prominence/position, but his faith. So let's look at these three spectators that observed his life; as we do keep in mind that the same three are looking at our lives.

First we see **HIGH OPINION** of this man by others; those that were around him. He was respected because of the kind of person that he was. **(Luke 7:1) Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. (2) And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. (3) And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. (4) And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this.** In pleading for Jesus' help, the people described this man as worthy of help.

He is a good man that we can honor and admire. It's so important to have a good name. **(Proverbs 22:1) A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.** You can't put a price tag on the value of a good name. If you have to sacrifice a good name in order to gain wealth, then you lose. The opinion others have of us IS important. This centurion had a good name.

In v 5 they explain why he was worthy for whom he should do this. **(Luke 7:5) For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.** He loved our nation. Even though this man was a Roman soldier; a Gentile, he had a love and respect for the Jewish community. Ordinarily Jews despised Gentiles and Gentiles had no love for the Jews, but not the case here. Here was a Gentile who accepted the Jewish nation with value/worth. He also accepted them religiously. **He hath built us a synagogue.** Some think this was the only synagogue in the immediate area around Capernaum. If so, then prior to this these people had no place

to go on the Sabbath. They had some spiritual needs and this Centurion met those needs. Because of what the centurion did, the people had a high opinion of him.

Making application, we need to ask ourselves what opinion other people have of us. When those around you look at your life, can they respect what they see? The opinion of others about us is important. Our actions/words are to be above reproach. While the attitude of the world is not the most important thing in life, it is still an important. People's attitude toward us influences their attitude toward the Lord and His church because we are God's representatives in this world.

In addition, the opinion of others of your life can open up doors of opportunity or it can limit your opportunities depending on whether their opinion of you is good or bad. While they may not like your lifestyle of righteousness and while they may speak against you; they will have a respectful opinion of you. **(1 Peter 2:12) Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.** The text says having your conversation (life) honest. This means you choose the lifestyle that you have. You choose it by the things that you do, the way that you talk, the places that you go and that behavior displays the message of *"This is the name that I choose."* Peter's admonition is to choose a behavior that is honest, above reproach, respectful.

No. 2. In our story we see **HUMBLE OPINION OF SELF**. The second spectator of a person's life is himself. We all have an opinion of the kind of people we are. The centurion had every right for the world's perspective to think highly of himself. He was a wealthy man, he was a man of position and rank, and he was highly respected by his peers. Yet he had a very humble opinion of himself. **(Luke 7:6) Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: (7) Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.** Twice he said *"I'm not worthy."* He didn't have an inflated opinion of himself as some do. You will occasionally meet someone who thinks that they are God's greatest gift to humanity. Such a person thinks he is always right and never wrong and is quick to point out your flaws. It's been said that men love to be at the back of the bus, the front of the church and the center of attention. **(Rom 12:3) For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.** Here Paul instructs us not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. Or similarly Paul writes to Christian in the region of Galatia, **(Gal 6:3) For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.** So there is a danger of thinking of ourselves too highly. Listen to the advice of Solomon. **(Prov. 27:2) Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.** The centurion had the attitude of humility.

He had a personal humility as he said in essence, *"Lord don't bother to come to me because I'm not worthy for you to come into my house and I'm not worthy to come to you."* He did not feel worthy to stand in the presences of Jesus. This is a good attitude for us all to embrace. We are unworthy to stand before our Lord, but because of God's grace we can. So when we come into the presence of God to worship, let us do so with all humility, respect and reverence. What a privilege we have to be worshipping God.

Not only was it a personal attitude of humility, it was a proper attitude of humility. The centurion was absolutely right in his assessment. He didn't deserve to have Jesus in his home and he wasn't worthy to come in the presence of the Lord. Fact of the matter none of us are. We at times take credit where credit is not due because we become proud of the accomplishments that we have achieved. Now I realize that God expects us to be involved/active to achieve the blessings in our lives but not to the extent that we leave God out of the formula. Let us not forget James 1:17. **(James 1:17) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.** Or **(1Tim 6:17) Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain**

***riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*** This is especially true regarding salvation. Salvation is a gift of God's grace. Grace from God is receiving something of which I'm not worthy and that's certainly true of salvation. ***(Eph 1:7) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*** So we bow before the presence of God because we are not worthy of God's blessings; we are not worthy of His forgiveness.

No. 3. We see **HOLY OPINION**. The third spectator of this man's life was the Lord himself. We see the Lord's evaluation of this man in v. 9. ***(Luke 7:9) When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. (Luke 7:10) And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.*** Jesus heard what the man had to say and He marveled. Only twice in scripture is it said that the Lord Jesus marveled. He marveled once at the unbelief of the Jews and here he marveled at the faith of the Gentile. The idea of marvel is admiration. Jesus respected him because of his faith.

Jesus admired this man because of his expectation. ***(Luke 7:7) Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. (8) For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.*** This man recognized that Jesus was a man of authority and that the power of God was working thru Jesus. This centurion acknowledged that he had authority over some people but that Jesus had even greater authority. Jesus had such authority that all he had to do was say the word and his servant would be healed. While he may not have known all there was to know about Jesus, he believed and recognized what he could do by simply speaking the word. The depth of this man's faith made Jesus marvel. He believed that Jesus could heal from afar by speaking the word and it was that kind of faith that impressed Jesus so much.

While it was important what others thought about this man and also what he thought about himself; the most important evaluation of him is what the Lord thought. In the final analysis, if you please the Lord, then it doesn't matter who you displease. On the other hand, if you displease God, it doesn't matter who you please. We make it our aim to please the Lord and what He thinks about us should be a great concern to us in our life. I hope that he has a high opinion of your life, but if he doesn't then you can turn that around this morning.

Do you remember way back during the time of Noah as God gave his assessment of the world and he observed ***(Gen 6:5) ... that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*** Wouldn't it be terrible if that was the assessment God had of my life and yours? How terrible it would be if God looks at our lives and shakes His head and says, ***"I just can't respect that man because his thoughts are always on evil."***

On the other hand, He can look at your life and marvel at your faith. The difference is with you. Where are you spiritually? For some that may be becoming a NT Christian by obeying the gospel plan put forth in scripture. For others it may be repentance and prayer of forgiveness.

Invitation