July 12, 2026

Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Lesson Leaders:

James Haymon
Barry Hosford

Class Leaders:

Deacon: C M Hester

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
In Matthew 8, Jesus encountered a man who also knew something about taking and giving instruction. A Roman centurion, this man understood that Jesus had the authority to heal, just as the centurion had authority to issue commands to those under him

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:
Father, thank You that You lead me and guide my steps. Please help me to walk daily in dependence on You as You direct me according to Your plan and purpose

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And 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."

(Matt 8:9 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Aug 04, 2024)

Series: The Testimony of Faithful Witnesses

UNIT 2: Faithful Witnesses Say "Yes" to Jesus

NEXT WEEK

Zacchaeus, the Repentant Tax Collector
(Luke 19:1-10)

The Believing Centurion
Matt 8:5-13

Lesson Background and Introduction

Today's lesson comes shortly after the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5-7, Jesus gives an authoritative interpretation of the Torah (or Jewish Law), explaining the ethics of God's kingdom. The sermon includes Jesus' self-identification as "Lord," to whom everyone owes obedience and allegiance (7:21-23). Jesus compares His teachings to a foundation stone (7:24). His words are like the ground on which one might stand; they ensure the stability of whoever lives by them (7:24-27). As Jesus descends from the mount, a "leper" approaches Him (Matthew 8:2). The Torah, which Jesus just showed authority to interpret, contains purity laws that regulate contact with those who are sick. Anyone with visible disease struggled day-to-day, facing the prospect of making others ritually impure. The man's request for cleansing reveals faith in Jesus' authority over sickness and death. Thus, when Jesus responds by cleansing the man with a touch, Jesus accepts ritual impurity (8:3). Simultaneously, he displays the capacity to heal the diseases that the Law of Moses carefully regulated. Jesus demonstrates healing with a touch, setting the stage for a second healing without physical contact.

The centurion in today's lesson gives us a refreshing example of approaching God properly. Our methodology is critical as we intercede for those who are suffering. The centurion showcases essential aspects of a faithful petition: acknowledge Jesus as Lord, submit to God's authority, and do so with great humility. The centurion also appeals to the Lord's mercy. He holds complete confidence in Jesus' ability to alleviate suffering, even from a distance. This story demonstrates that we can be confident like the centurion, in Christ's authority over sickness, death, and every power. This story shows that faith sees beyond the physical to perceive spiritual realities that are deep and salient. Faith perceives Jesus' divine jurisdiction; faith gives us boldness to act with adept confidence; faith makes us children of God.

(*Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Belief in Need and Faith (Matt 8:5-9)

Need for healing (5-6)

A healing physically (Matt 14:14)

A healing spiritually (Isa 53:5)

A healing that Jesus proved His Divinity (Matt 11:2-5)

A healing through His abiding (John 15:1-4)

A healing through growth in faith (2 Thess 1:3)

Jesus answered request (7)

Answered because God's eyes are on the righteous (Ps 34:15)

Answered because God promises to answer even before speaking (Isa 65:24)

Answered because God promises to fulfill answers and seeking (Matt 7:7-8)

Answered because of obedience (1 John 3:21-22)

Unworthiness expressed (8)

Unworthy because we sometimes put others before God (Matt 10:37)

Unworthy because Jesus is so much more holy and powerful (Luke 3:16)

Unworthy because of sin (Luke 15:21)

Unworthy because God loved us when we were His enemy (Rom 5:8)

Centurion's understanding of authority (9)

Authority to drive out demons (Matt 10:1)

Authority in heaven and on earth (Matt 28:17-18)

Authority over life and death (John 10:17-18)

Authority to give eternal life (John 17:1-2)

Belief Manifested (Matt 8:10-13)

Manifested to include the gentiles (10-11)

Gentiles included because Jesus will glorify them (Isa 11:10)

Gentiles included through repentance that leads to eternal live (Acts 11:17-18)

Gentiles included to glorify God (Rom 15:8-9)

Gentiles included because in Christ all are one (Gal 3:28-29)

Manifested to exclude some Israelites (12)

Israelites excluded because of not producing good fruit (Matt 3:9-10)

Israelites excluded because of rejecting Jesus (Matt 21:42-43)

Israelites excluded because salvation is not because of being Abraham's descendants (Rom 9:6-8)

Israelites excluded because of lack of knowledge of who Jesus was (Rom 10:1-2)

Manifested regardless of distance (13)

Regardless of distance and time (John 4:49-52)

Regardless of distance and worthiness (Mark 7:26-30)

Regardless of distance but it takes obedience (Luke 17:12-14)