

Remnant Life Church
February 1, 2015

“The Character of Integrity” (Matthew 8:5-10)

- What is character?
 - I have been called a character
 - A character is also a part of a play or a story
 - Defined as how you think, feel, or behave; personality
 - “True greatness is not measured by the headlines a person commands or the wealth he or she accumulates. The inner character of a person – the undergirding moral and spiritual values and commitments – is the true measure of lasting greatness.” – Billy Graham
- What is integrity?
 - Honest or fair
 - He is a man or she is a woman of integrity
 - Whole or complete
 - The integrity of the building would be compromised in an earthquake
 - “Integrity means that if our private life was suddenly exposed, we’d have no reason to be ashamed or embarrassed. Integrity means our outward life is consistent with our inner convictions.” – Billy Graham
 - Very simply a person of integrity can always be trusted by everyone!
- Character and integrity of a person are the foundational building blocks of who you are
 - Every relationship, every action, every word, every situation that requires a decision are all impacted by your character and integrity
 - Even your relationship to God and your walk with Him
 - Integrity – who you are and what you do when you are all alone

READ – **Matthew 8:5-10** (also found in **Luke 7**)

- The centurion was a man of power
 - A professional soldier in the Roman army
 - Commanded a group of approx. 80 men called a centuria
 - A senior centurion commanded a cohort – approx. 480 men
 - He was an intelligent or learned man who had proven himself to be capable and trustworthy to lead while also, without hesitation, following the orders of his superiors
 - He would have in all likelihood been a man of integrity
 - But qualities did he exhibit, qualities that I can use in my life today, that caused Jesus to “be amazed”?
 - Only twice does the Bible say that Jesus was ever amazed
 - Once when he went to his hometown of Nazareth and he was amazed at their lack of faith (**Mark 6:6**)

- Amazed at the great faith of the centurion

1. **V 6 – He had compassion for his servant**

- a. The Bible does not say who the servant was but the centurion was certainly not required to care for him
- b. This is what the centurion combined with his faith to move Jesus to provide a miracle
- c. Paul in **Eph 4:32** instructs the church (of then and of today) to be kind and compassionate to one another
- d. Compassion replaces our desires and replaces them with the needs and desires of someone else

2. **V 5 – He asked for help**

- a. Asking for help, especially God's help, is an important first step that demonstrates humility
- b. The centurion had no reason to ask
 - i. He could have commanded Jesus to come with him
 - ii. He could have taken Jesus to his home by force
 - iii. He could have offered to pay Jesus
 - iv. Instead he humbled himself to ask for help
 - v. This was the first aspect of this man that I believed amazed Jesus
 - vi. His faith was greater than his pride or his position
- c. **Prov 18:12** - *Before a downfall the heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.*
 - i. Contemporary English Version - *Pride leads to destruction; humility leads to honor*

3. **V 6 – He was honest with the condition of his life**

- a. Many people create beautiful or different pictures of their lives that are, in fact, not reality
 - i. To save face with others
 - ii. In order to perpetuate the lie of their own lives
 - iii. To cope with a difficult or unbearable situation
- b. The centurion, because of his humility, was willing to present a less than perfect picture
- c. If we cannot be honest with God, or with ourselves, we will never understand the importance of being honest with the people in our lives – including our brothers and sisters in the Lord
- d. **John 1:1-5** - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

- e. The only way we can be that light is if we are honest about who we are and our need for Jesus in our lives every day

4. **Vv 8-9 – He know not only what Jesus was but who He was**

- a. The centurion would have been very familiar with Jesus as they would have been monitoring all of the religious activities and leaders to help maintain control
- b. The Romans did not think, act, or believe as the Jews did
- c. The Jews and Christians would endure great hardships in the 2nd and 3rd centuries under Roman leaders like Marcus Aurelius, Septimius Severus, Decius, Valerian.
- d. The centurion knew who he was dealing with but it was his faith that enabled him to speak with full confidence, with full humility knowing that all that Jesus had to do was say the word – and Jesus was amazed!

Do we speak and act and live like we know who Jesus Christ is?

Am I willing to show myself in humility to others for the sake of showing them Jesus in me?

What impact can God have through me in someone else's life because I am a man or a woman of character and integrity?

READ – Butch O'Hare