

The Effective Word of God

Gospel: Matthew 8:5-13 (AV): *And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeking 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 marvelled, 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.*

"Lord,
I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof:
but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."

The Lord Jesus was very impressed by the faith of this pagan Roman Centurion. Jesus exclaimed to His

followers (some Jews and his disciples) saying: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Jesus said to the Centurion: "Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, [so] be it done unto thee." And his servant was healed at that same hour.

The Centurion was not mistaken when he said to Jesus, "Speak the word only." The word of Jesus, "Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, [so] be it done unto thee" was enough to heal the servant. The word of God is always effective. In the Scriptures, this word conveys action. In the Book of Genesis God said "Let it be," and His word was translated into immediate action, and everything was created. The word of God is different than the word of men. The decisive word of God bears all power to create and execute. "He said and it was done, He ordered and it was created."

The question is, "Is the word of God always effective?"

The word of God carries the potential and all the power to execute an action. It is effective with all material creation. With man, however, it is subject to man's freedom. It was easier for God to create the whole universe with one word than to forge in a single man an appropriate disposition toward God.

Man is a free being. In his freedom, he can refuse to follow God's word, making it ineffective. By the word of God, creation was made, but this word is subject to the response of man, and its fate depends on man's free will. If God extends His holy hand toward man, and man retrieves his hand, than God would not be able to do anything. God is a loving Father and He respects the

freedom of man. He educates man and raises him through His loving care, and never by coercion. The word of God is a commandment for creating. He commanded and it was created. With man, however, the commandment is just taken as an advice.

This event occurred in the series of works and miracle done by Jesus after His Sermon on the Mount, that is after he dropped in the ears of His followers the divine words and new commandments. Christ proclaim Himself as a new lawmaker or as a teacher of morality... Christ taught and worked. People believed in Him through His words and actions. He taught by both, words and works. God is able and he is much more than a skilled teacher. His words are always for doing. For this reason, when Christ was performing miracles he asked before every miracle, "Do you believe?" or "Do you want?" In case man does not believe or does not want, the will of the Lord is not enough for action to be done. The will of the Lord is able to act, but it does not work without human permission. The way of the Lord is seeking to find the positive answer of human belief, and not enforcing the divine commandment.

This human acceptance to the good will of the Word of God appears in a moment in life and we call it "faith."

Faith is the channel, which captures the waves of the effectual divine forces. The works of God with humans begin depend on their faith in Him.

The human belief in God appears in different forms in life. The true faith that Jesus loved, however, was the one of the Centurion. His faith is characterized by a true sign of belief in God. What is the uniqueness of

the Centurion's faith that led to the healing of his servant by Christ's command?

The unique characteristic that distinguished the Centurion was what he said "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof" before asked Jesus to "Speak the word only." This is the authentic disposition of man's belief in God. It is the feeling of unworthiness. We believe in one truth but this truth is like a coin with two sides. One side is God's love and care, and the other is our brokenness and unworthiness. We are not bound to a God of duties. We believe in a God to whom we are unworthy to ask forgiveness. Our God is not only a just God, but He is also full of loving kindness and long-suffering. He does not want the death of a sinner, but prefers that he repents and returns to Him.

Our God is not our employee and the servant of our needs. We have offended His love by forgetting our unworthiness. If we carry the faith of the Centurion, he will give us righteousness and forgiveness. Our God is the God of mercy and grace.

So, in humility, our faith calls upon the divine love. Without having this humility, we will end up looking at God as our servant and not as our Master. Jesus did not find a comparable strong faith in the whole Israel. This event, however, is calling us to be on the likeness of this faith. We believe in God whose love and our love are pulling us towards Him, and we have neither right nor courage to come towards him without this love.

Lord I am not worthy. This is the prerequisite attitude of true faith in our loving God. With every prayer we should attach this phrase. In front of God we are unworthy. Our faith in our unworthiness leads us to the

true knowledge of God. Humility is the beginning of faith and its base.

O Lord I am not worthy, but knowing your immense love, I cry, "Speak one word only."

Amen.