

Orders Are Orders

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Sometimes we ask God to help us, but we struggle to believe that He will. It's not all that unusual—in fact, Jesus dealt with it constantly, and a lot of His teachings deal specifically with our belief (or lack thereof) in God's ability. He rarely seems surprised when He meets yet another person who simply won't trust Him.

When Jesus began His ministry, He chose the city of Capernaum as His home base—perhaps because the people there never really learned to believe. Jesus once said to them, "And you, Capernaum, who think yourself exalted up to heaven, shall instead be brought down to hell: for if the miracles, which I have done here, had been done in Sodom, it would still be here today. But in the day of judgment, Sodom will find more mercy than you!" (Matt. 11:23-24).

*And yet FIVE of Jesus's disciples—Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John and Matthew—all came from that area. There **must** be something we can learn from that!*

*Clearly, lack of belief was something Jesus expected during His ministry. But the Bible tells us about one man whose faith—and whose understanding of **why** he had that faith—DID surprise Jesus, and that was something which rarely ever happened!*

The story is told in both Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10.

It hadn't been long

since Jesus finished the Sermon on the Mount.

The people who had listened to Him preach were amazed

because Jesus didn't just quote other people

the way the teachers and scribes did.

No, Jesus spoke to them like a man in charge—

a man with the right to give commands

and to have those commands believed and obeyed.

Many of the crowd who had listened to His sermon

followed Him down the mountain

and back to Capernaum,

down near the Sea of Galilee.

And when Jesus arrived, He found a Roman officer waiting for Him.

"Lord, I have a young servant who is in great pain," he said.

"Would You please heal him?"

"Of course," Jesus said. "I'll come right now."

But the officer stopped Him.

"That won't be necessary, Lord," he said.

"I am too unimportant for You to leave Your work here.

All You need to do is say the word right here, right now,
and I know my servant will be healed.

For You see, I am a man who serves under the authority of others above me;
they command and I obey them.

I have soldiers who serve under my authority;
I command and they obey me.

And even the slaves in my house follow my orders."

When the Roman finished speaking, Jesus just looked at him,
His eyes wide with amazement.

Then He turned to the crowd following Him and said,

"In all My travels around the land of Israel,
I have never seen a man with this much faith!

Listen to Me, all of you!

There are many people who are not from Israel—
people who you think God doesn't care about—
who will come from all over the world

to join Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in God's kingdom!

But there will be many Israelites—
the very people for whom God made His kingdom—
who will not be allowed to join them
because they will not believe in Him and obey Him."

Then Jesus turned and smiled at the Roman soldier.

"Your servant is healed. Go, with My blessing."

The Roman soldier thanked Him and left.

And the Bible tells us that his young servant was healed that very hour,
just as the Roman soldier had expected.

Belief isn't some magic spell that makes God act when we say the words.

It isn't some kind of wishful thinking,
or just hoping for something good.

Real belief comes when we understand—when we KNOW—
that when God says something,
we can count on the truth of what He says.

Because no matter how things may look,
God always has been and always will be in charge.
And when we act on that knowledge, He can act in our lives.