

# Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

By Ken Woodley

Jesus has just finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people and he enters Capernaum. A Roman centurion with a very ill slave sends emissaries to Jesus, pleading for the healing of his servant.

Jesus, of course, responds immediately, walking toward the centurion's home. Before he arrives, however, the centurion sends friends who deliver this message on his behalf: "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; therefore I did not presume to come to you. But only speak the word, and let my servant be healed."

That is deep faith.

*Only speak the word.*

Jesus is amazed by the depth of the centurion's faith. "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith," he declares. And the centurion's slave is immediately healed.

That faith seems superhuman. If Jesus were on his way to our house, who among us would tell him to stop and simply "speak the word?" I'm really not sure I could do that. If someone I loved were ill I'd want Jesus to lay healing hands upon them.

My favorite version of this story is in the eighth chapter of Matthew. In this telling, the centurion comes up to Jesus himself and seeks healing for a servant who is paralyzed and, the centurion tells Jesus, "in terrible suffering." Jesus replies, "I will go and heal him" but the centurion says, no, don't do that because "I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word and my servant will be healed."

*Just say the word.*

The centurion has complete and utter faith and it is grounded in the everyday mundane details of life. "For I myself am a man under authority," he tells Jesus, "with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus hears this, Matthew tells us, "he was astonished" and he tells the centurion, "'Go! It will be done just as you believed it would.' And his servant was healed at that very hour."

Throughout the Gospel, Jesus clearly emphasizes the role that faith plays in healing. Jesus repeatedly tells us that faith is the key that opens many doors.

There are times when life knocks our faith off balance and we stumble. But those stumbles—after we regain our spiritual footing and continue on our journey—make our faith real.

Each of us, however much we may doubt it at times, has the faith of the centurion. Think about it. Jesus is not going to walk through Appomattox today or tomorrow. We're not going to find him on Main Street or in tending to some clean-up in aisle five at the grocery store. All we have are Jesus' words. Our faith, just like the centurion's, is based completely on what Jesus said. He's not going to knock on our door and come inside our homes, is he? Or isn't he?

When we take Jesus at his word, when we have faith in what he has spoken, that faith has the effect of bringing Jesus into our homes, opening our doors and windows to the Holy Spirit, and then anything is possible.

Sometimes it can be a good thing, when we pray, to remember the centurion and to simply tell Jesus, "You just said the word, you just spoke the word. I read those words you spoke in The Gospel and that Good News is real."

When we do that, Jesus is not only in our homes. Jesus is in our hearts, too. Within us, truly, just as he promised.