

Miracles of Jesus 12-05-20b

We pick up our study now in the miracles of Christ. We're going to be addressing miracle number 10, which is the healing of the centurion's servant. I have just a few concluding observations on the healing of the man with the withered hand.

Jesus is in the synagogue on the Sabbath, and the point of focus is this man with a withered hand. He's kind of like the elephant in the room in the sense that initially he's not acknowledged, but the Pharisees know he's there. Jesus knows he's there, and they are watching to see if he's going to heal this man on the Sabbath, and they are hoping that he will.

They're hoping for a healing. Why? So that they can attack Jesus for it on the technicality that he's done on the Sabbath. We look at this and we think, this is just so beyond the pale.

Who would think this way? Me, you, we do this, we're made out of the same stuff. We're cut out of the same cloth. It isn't that this exists in these people's hearts, it's that they did not look for it, identify it, and eradicate it.

It's in our heart just as much as it is in theirs, and the only thing that will separate us from them is for us to go looking for this and ask God to cut it out, to expunge it, to regenerate us, to renew us, to cleanse us in the operational sense, in the daily life sense. We are made out of this. Don't be looking at these guys and saying, oh, what kind of a guy is that? That's us.

This is a picture of us. It's also a picture of the nation of Israel. And at the first coming of the Lord Jesus, he came into his own, and his own received him not.

And that's the understatement of the year. They crucified him. Well, Jesus is challenged by the onlookers with the question, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? And it's real interesting to line up the three accounts we have of this.

You'll see the cross-references in your Bible, I'm sure. It's in Matthew chapter 12, verses 9 through 13, Luke chapter 6, verses 6 through 10, and here in Mark chapter 3. And depending on which gospel you read it from, the question, obviously there was a discussion. If you put these side by side, there was a discussion.

Because in Matthew chapter 12, it says, he entered the synagogue, and behold, there was a man with a withered hand, and they asked him, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? In Mark, he said to them, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill? And they were silent. In Luke chapter 6, the scribes and the Pharisees watched him to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath so that they might find an accusation against him. But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man who had the withered

hand, come and stand here.

And Jesus rose and said to them, I ask you, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or do harm, to save life or to destroy it? So in Matthew, they ask him, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? In Mark and Luke, he asks them, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm? Well, both things happened. There was an extensive discussion while the man is standing there. Jesus has him stand up.

Here's the man with the withered hand, just to make the point. And then there is this back and forth. They ask questions, Jesus asks questions.

There's apparently an extended discussion that is just summarized for us here. But Jesus knew their intentions, it tells us in Luke. And piling these together, he commands the man to arise, we have this from Luke, step forward, which we have from Mark, and stand before them, which we have from Luke.

And he says, in Luke, which of you would not rescue his sheep if it fell into a pit on the Sabbath? This is a part of this discussion that went back and forth. How much more valuable is a man than a sheep? Well, there's a tough one. In Matthew, he asks, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill? He then flatly states, therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

He has cornered them and forced them to acknowledge and admit it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. He has established that point. Well, this is what inflames them.

This is what incenses them and the Lord Jesus. As often happens in a debate, everybody kind of gets their blood up a little bit because it tells us, and if you're back in Mark, after he finally makes the point, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill? This is the summary. They know it has been established that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath, so they are silent.

They have no more arguments. But as you know from the famous saying, you have not converted a man because you have silenced him. And you can take away a guy's every argument, every logical prop, and he's still just glaring at you from the corner like a wounded bobcat, unwilling to acknowledge the truth because he's not interested in the truth.

He's got a different agenda. Now, look at verse five. When he had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts.

You can be angry and be grieved at the same time. And this word for anger, there are three primary words, three words we're going to look at anyway for anger in Greek. One of them is thumos.

And whenever I think of thumos, I think of termite. It's like a flash. It just suddenly rears

up.

You're just kind of, you just have a flash of anger. A lot of times you don't even realize it's coming, but somebody cuts in front of you in traffic. Maybe you're listening to your favorite song, singing along, and all of a sudden somebody just swings in front of you and slams on his brakes.

And you're instantly angry, thumos. This is a combustion of anger that happens all of a sudden, thumos. Second word is orge.

Orge is a slow burn wrath. Orge is an abiding anger. Anytime I think about this injustice, anytime I think about this situation, I am unhappy in an angry sense.

I am angry at the loss of Christian values in our country. I am angry at the maltreatment of good people and at the extolling and promotion of bad people. I am angry at what the government has done to our economy.

I am angry at the settlers and the profiteers who have taken advantage of our economic woes to aggrandize themselves at the expense of the rest of us. I am angry at people who abuse the healthcare system. I am angry at these things.

And you see what I mean. This is not, I'm not inflamed and throwing things through a window. This is an abiding wrath, an abiding strong, strong disapproval.

The third word is parorgizmos. Orge is still in there, but this is parorgizmos. And this is exasperation.

This is a loss of patience. Something has quickly built to a point where you just, that's all I can stand and I can't stand no more, as Popeye would say. You know, this thing just, it ramps up and it reaches a point where you say, all right, thus far and no farther.

I have had enough. I am up to here. Parorgizmos, and that para alongside anger.

It's anger that almost makes you beside yourself. You just, all right, stop this. Well, the word used here when it says Jesus was angry, you might try to guess and figure out which one it is.

It is orge. This is the abiding strong disapproval of a situation, of an existing condition. Jesus is angry at their hardness of heart as God has always been angry at hardness of heart.

Go back to your Old Testament scriptures and Jesus sees the manifestation of it here. He looks at these people and their argument in favor of not healing someone on the Sabbath, not being willing to acknowledge this point when it has been laid out by the greatest teacher who ever lived, the son of God himself has pointed out God's opinion. God who authored the law, by the way.

God whose intentions are reflected in the law is explaining the law to people who claim to be defending the law and they're just about to explode because they don't want to acknowledge it. And Jesus is angry at that orge. He has an abiding wrath at this attitude.

By the way, you have these words and I wish we had time to go there over in Ephesians chapter four, verse 26 and following, all three of these words show up in that context, 26 and through 31 in Ephesians four, be angry and sin not. What do you think the word is for anger there? Be angry, but don't sin. What word do you think is anger there for 26 of Ephesians, orge? Okay, you can be deeply disapproving.

You can be angry at these abiding conditions and situations and so on, but don't sin. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath. Different word.

Wish we had time to go there and explain which one is translated how, but I'll lose time. So, by the way, in 4.31 of Ephesians, when it says put away wrath and anger, one of the things we put away is thumos. Don't let yourself be victimized by that explosive anger, that instantaneous conflagration of wrath.

Put away wrath. Well, Jesus is angry. Why? He is grieved by the hardness of their hearts.

This is porosis. This is insensitivity. Here's the word of God being expressed.

The principle of the word of God taught by the incarnate word of God standing right in front of them, and it cannot penetrate their hearts. Why? Not because God didn't predestinate them, because they choose to reject. This is a choice.

They choose, they reject. So, and as I pointed out, Jesus says, stand up, come forward. Nothing wrong with that.

He says, stretch out your hand. As with most of his miracles, he doesn't create a big Hollywood production. It doesn't build to a crescendo, and it isn't like David Copperfield or any of these other guys would do a magic trick.

Okay, now the big reveal. We pull the curtain away and look, his hand is whole again. Hey, applause, pass the hat.

Jesus says, stretch out your hand, and when he does it, they get to looking at his hand and it's fine. He can't stretch out this. We've all seen people that have had a birth defect or some abnormality, a paralysis that causes the tendons to draw up, and I saw a comedian recently who has got palsy, and he stands up on stage and delivers comedy, and he talks about his palsy and makes that a part of his presentation, but he's palsied.

His hand goes off in a weird direction, and he'll exaggerate his movements for comedic effect and talk about what his child says about him and so on, and it's an interesting approach to comedy. I couldn't quite decide what I thought about it because it just kind

of takes you aback a bit, but we've all seen this. Well, and so Jesus says, stretch out your hand.

Well, he's kind of like, that's insensitive. You want him to show, maybe he's got it under the fold of a garment. You know, maybe he's kind of, you know how people do, they hide it.

I used to have a teacher that only had nine fingers because he had one yanked off when he was baling hay. So he would stand around with his hands in his pockets, and he would do it like this. He would put his ring fingers in each pocket, so it looked like he was just hooking them there, but there was no finger on one of his hands, and it was just a little bit of a camouflage, a little bit of a hiding, and Jesus says, stretch it out.

Let's all take a look at your hand. Oh, how insensitive. But when he stretches it out, it moves, and they get to looking, and somehow it's just a perfectly great arm.

The musculature is not only restored. The twisting and deformation is not only eliminated, but he's got full control. The things that you learn by experience as a baby and how to control a thing is all wired into his brain.

I mean, this is a profound miracle. You don't just hang the meat back on his shoulder. It's everything that's inside his head, all of the sensory skills and things.

I mean, this man could probably play the harp or something. He's completely restored, and he's got the mental attachment and all of the programming that goes with it instantaneously. Well, this just, we can't allow this to go on.

These people immediately go meet with the Rhodians, try to figure out how to assassinate Jesus, how to destroy him. So these people have come to the synagogue. They have discoursed with the Son of God, but this kind of obedience is only fruitful when it is properly motivated.

It's not enough to be at the synagogue. It's not enough to converse with the Son of God. What is your heart? What's your goal? What's your purpose? What's your motivation? And these people walking away saying, I'm a defender of the law, and I'm obeying the law.

This is how I justify myself. See, God says, obey the law and you'll be blessed. I'm obeying the law, I'm going to be blessed.

You're defying the Son of God. You're trying to destroy the Lord of glory, and you think you're going to be blessed? On what planet is this going to happen? Evil motivations render outward obedience worthless. What man of you having a sheep in trouble on the Sabbath wouldn't rescue it? Not a man.

Jesus is going to make this point in other Sabbath day healings, isn't he? The threat of harm, and Jesus knows what's in their hearts. He knows that they're going to construe this. He knows they're going to leave and plot against him.

It doesn't keep him from fixing this withered hand. Jesus knows that there's going to be a cost. He knows there's going to be a penalty.

He knows that these men are going to use this as an occasion against him. He doesn't shrink back. He doesn't say, well, tell you what, meet me out back after the service when the Pharisees are going to get this hand fixed.

I just don't want to do it right here because let's try to make everybody happy. Well, let the Pharisees be happy. I didn't heal on the Sabbath until they were gone, and just meet me later and we'll take care of this.

Jesus doesn't back away because it makes a point. By the way, healing, when it comes from God, is immediate and complete. Immediate and complete.

There is no question. Modern day, quote unquote, healing does not meet this test. Again, you have not converted a man because you have silenced him.

Or as Jesus put it, if they will not heed Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even though one should rise from the dead. Remember Jesus telling the story of the rich man in Lazarus? There is no sign that will convert or convince someone who does not want to be converted and convinced. Those of you that had any kind of debate experience with atheists and people of a different persuasion, you know this.

There's no amount of fact. There's no amount of logic. There's no amount of truth that will convert a man who is bent on his own view.

Even miracles did not convince those who rejected Christ. They're watching. They know he can do miracles.

They're saying, let's see if he'll do one of these miracles on Saturday so that we can accuse him. The miracle is a given in their mind. It's not, can he do the miracle? Let's see if he'll do one.

For all we know, they ushered this withered man, the hand guy up there close. Let's see if he'll heal him. We'll get him.

We'll get him. Finally, hardness of heart is often wrapped in the robes of religious zeal. See this all down through history.

See it in various religious organizations, both Christian and others. Religious zeal is often a mask for extreme hardness of heart. And it is a self-deceit.

It is a self-vindication and justification. We want to examine ourselves and look for this kind of falseness to ourselves. Because if we can fix the deceiving of ourselves, we won't be trying to deceive others.

Well, much more you could say that just scratches the surface. A lot of these, when we cover these miracles, it's really, as I said on the break, it's a chance to just touch on some things that are really fruitful for meditation and further contemplation. But we move on now to the 10th miracle, which is the healing of the centurion's servant.

Once again, as with the healing of the withered hand, we're in the Galilee area, specifically Capernaum this time. You find it in only two gospels. Mark doesn't talk about this.

We have Matthew and Luke, kind of interesting. They always say, well, Mark in priority and Matthew and Luke borrowed from Mark. Well, Mark doesn't talk about this, but Matthew and Luke do.

So turn with me to Matthew 8, verse 5. Your parallel, if you want to put your finger there or stick a piece of paper in, is Luke 7. But in fact, let's look at it in Luke. Let's look at Luke 7 as our primary passage. Luke 7, verse 1. Now, when he concluded all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum.

Certain centurion's servant who was dear to him was sick and ready to die. So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to him, pleading with him to come and heal his servant. When they came to Jesus, they begged him earnestly, saying that the one for whom he should do this was deserving for he loves our nation and has built us a synagogue.

This Gentile Roman centurion is a proselyte. He's certainly a supporter of the Jews and Judaism. Jesus went with them, and when he was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying to him, Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof.

This man is sympathetic to the Jews. He understands their customs and laws. He knows that there are Jews who will go all the way around Samaria just because those people are half Gentile.

And he doesn't want to put Jesus in the awkward position of coming into a Gentile's house. And so he gives him this opportunity to demur, to not go in. I do not even think myself worthy to come to you.

Not only should you not come under my roof, I didn't even want to make an issue. This man is so forward-thinking. He says, look, I'm a Roman centurion.

If I come to Jesus out there in public, it's going to force Jesus to address this thing. Well,

what about the Gentiles? He's surrounded by Jews, and I don't want to invite him to come under my roof, because then people are going to say, well, you went into a Gentile and ate with him. You think even after the day of Pentecost, when Peter gets in trouble, oh, you've been eating with the Gentiles, and he quits.

And so the centurion thinks ahead. And now you think about this. This centurion has this servant or son, we're not real sure which, but we'll go with servant.

But he evidently thinks of him as a son because he's so concerned over him that he's willing to contact Jesus to see about having him healed. But in the midst of his distress, in the midst of this extremis and this young man who's evidently on his deathbed, this centurion is still thinking about the protocol, about the tact, about the implications and what kind of position it will put Jesus in. It tells you a lot about the centurion that he is thinking about the Lord Jesus and what would be best for the Lord Jesus to not have to be seen in public confronting these issues.

And he says, I don't think that I'm worthy to come to you. Just say the word and my servant will be healed. Now, what town are we in? Capernaum.

Where has the news spread from Cana when the nobleman's son was healed at a distance? This centurion listens to the news. He's heard the talk. He knows who Jesus is.

He knows that he can heal and he knows that he can heal at a distance. And that's good enough for him. He says, I don't have to see it.

I trust the accounts. And if Jesus can heal at a distance, then he can do it for me. And he just takes us all on faith.

Say the word, my servant will be healed. I am also a man placed under authority. And the man has reasoned this out.

People might question, well, is it just coincidence? And he says, no, I think it's probably true because if you've got authority over disease, authority is authority. Caesar can give a command and they're gonna obey it in the army in Gaul or off in Brittany or wherever they might be. They don't have to come to Rome and see Caesar face-to-face to get their orders.

Orders can be transmitted. Authority invisibly extends to the limits of its purview. So he says, I'm under authority.

I have soldiers. I say to one, go, and he goes. Another come, and he comes.

To my servant, do this, and he does it. When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him. And he turned around and said to the crowd that followed him.

Now notice, this is something that Jesus could have kept under wraps. He didn't have to

make an issue, but he speaks to the crowd and he says, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not in Israel. And those who were sent returning to the house found the servant well who had been sick.

And Jesus ends up not going. Apparently, Jesus didn't meet the centurion. What's very interesting about this is if you turn quickly over to Matthew 8, verse 5, there are a few interesting variations in the account or different details that are given in the account.

When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him pleading with him. Oh, contradiction, the Bible is inaccurate. I just got through reading in Luke that servants and friends were going back and forth and the centurion said, I'm not worthy to come into your presence.

My house is not worthy for you to come under its roof. Everything was done with go-betweens. Here in Matthew, and it is manifestly the same episode in Capernaum after these sayings.

By the way, the context of this, which we don't have time to really look at, in Matthew 8, what is Matthew 5-7? You should know this, like 1 Corinthians 13, love chapter and all that. What is Matthew 5-7? The Sermon on the Mount. In Luke, after he had finished these sayings, the miracle is put in the context of teaching, just as we saw the paralyzed man up at Capernaum.

There's teaching involved and when you see faith, there are references to teaching because the faith is in the truth that Jesus represents and that he communicates. So, Jesus entered Capernaum. It says, a centurion came to him, pleading with him saying, Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.

And this, as you may remember, is my favorite explanation of the angel of the Lord passages in the Old Testament. They are the new King James and others like to capitalize angel and then there's many, it's a large number of people who are persuaded that the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is the pre-incarnate Christ. Here's my problem with that.

If it's an angel that you can see, how is that not incarnate? He ought to be see-through. He ought to be a spirit. He ought to be a beatific cloud of glory, a voice came from the cloud or something.

If it's an angel standing there, in some cases, sitting for some time, you remember the parents of Samson and the whole, we're gonna make a meal and the angel ascends in the smoke of the, there for some time. If the angel of the Lord is the pre-incarnate Christ, why doesn't he just say, hi there, I'm the pre-incarnate Christ? But they say that he is because he speaks in the first person on behalf of God. I will not let you go until you bless me, Jacob says to the man he wrestles with all night.

They say, well, it's the pre-incarnate Christ. Jacob wrestled with Jesus himself. If he's wrestling, got a hold of him, putting chokes and bends and got his knee up behind his neck, they're wrestling, they're contending, they're sweating, they're rolling around on the ground and the guy finally twists Jacob's hip in a way that cripples him for life.

Is this not incarnate? So why would you say pre-incarnate? Then Jesus' incarnation is not the first one. What about the first chapter of Hebrews? God spoke in a lot of different ways in the Old Testament, but in these latter days, he has spoken to us by a son, the Lord Jesus incarnate. It's the angel of the Lord.

Look at this. The centurion came to him pleading with him. These are the representatives of the centurion.

This is the ancient day telephone. It's a telephone. It just has legs and ears and lips and it moves.

It's not an electric device, but it's the telephone. Centurion makes a phone call. And coming out of the earpiece, Lord, my servant is sick.

Can you heal him? It's the servants talking. It's the centurion talking. And Jesus speaks to the servants who run back and give his reply to the guy.

It's just a telephone. You don't make an issue out of the telephone. You don't make it a capital T telephone.

The servants are not the centurion, but they are so mirroring and communicating what the centurion says that it is as if the centurion himself is there. And that's the Matthew. It's a commonplace.

You find this in some of the classic stories of ancient literature. And so-and-so said, you know, like Herges said to Aeneas, behold, this and that. Well, it's a servant.

They're sending messengers back and forth, but he says to him, he says to him. Messengers are not to be thought of. They're just an intermediary.

They're like the phone. So dreadfully tormented, Jesus said, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said.

And the centurion anticipated that Jesus would say, I will come. And he said, when he says he will come, because what I hear of him, he's probably gonna be gracious enough to come. You tell him I'm not worthy that you should come under my roof.

And by the way, as a servant, you can tell him that I didn't feel, it isn't that I'm demeaning him by only sending a servant and not coming in person. I don't consider myself to be worthy, which is why I have sent you, my servant, to do this speaking on my behalf. And that's what's over in Luke.

Speak a word, my servant will be healed. And then once again, you have this issue of authority. I was telling Ken on the break, one of the things you could do with these miracles is put them in a chart and say, all right, what is the context? Is the teaching of the word of God mentioned or not? Another aspect, another facet of it is, are there opponents in the periphery or not? And what is their, do they initiate? Are they spoken of beforehand? And are they spoken of after? And what is the change? Are they the same? Are they different? Do many marvel or do they go away and plot to kill him? Another is authority.

In almost every miracle, there's an authority over creation, authority over demons, authority over disease. The centurion says, I know you've got authority. You've got all kinds of authority.

And one of your authorities is to speak a word and my servant will be healed. Recognition of Jesus' authority. It's one of the expressions of faith.

Point of application. People of faith respect authority in all of its manifestations. If you're in authority, you respect that authority and you don't abuse it.

If you're under authority, you respect that authority and you don't abuse the people holding it. I could give you copious illustrations from the life of George Washington, who easily could have started this country as a military dictatorship. And because he was a man of principle, when given opportunities, when pushed to the brink, he said, I will not act until Congress, this screwed up Congress that appropriated him no money, was sitting in Philadelphia feasting and there was food falling off the tables while his men did not have shoes, did not have clothes, were half naked in the winter, no bread for three days, no meat for a week.

And Congress is in Philadelphia, literally there's food falling off the tables. George went there to try to talk to them and he was so shocked, he could hardly keep his composure at the difference in the opulence and the waste in Philadelphia and the degradation and poverty and men were starving and freezing to death in his army. And he pleaded with these men and they would not act.

And he could have easily said, you know what? I'm just gonna take charge of this thing for the sake of my men, for the sake of the country. This Congress is hopeless. The Articles of Confederation are hopeless.

He was a man of principle and he said, I cannot act until Congress authorizes. And he worked within the system. He respected authority because he was a great man of faith, great man of God.

Anybody that tells you George Washington was a deist is at best uninformed and at worst is just an outright liar. They just don't know what they're talking about. Get a good

biography of George Washington, incredible man of faith, never got a victory that he didn't attribute to Providence, never had good weather, never had anything beneficial happen that he didn't get down and thank God and tell his men to thank God.

Providence has smiled on us. But he was also very private about his own personal faith. This man recognizes authority.

And so Jesus says in Matthew, assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel. And he goes on to say here in Matthew, I say to you that many will come from East and West and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness.

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Men like the centurion, Gentiles, Old Testament faith, Uriah, Naaman, Rahab, Ruth will sit down at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And native born, I can trace my descendancy right back to Abraham, will be cast out.

And then Jesus said to the centurion, go your way as you have believed, so let it be done for you. The healing is proportional to the man's faith. The man's faith was great.

The servant is instantly healed. The servant was healed that same hour. Great points of interpretation and application for us.

We tend to think in physical terms. We think the problem is physical. The solution is physical.

When it comes to the Lord Jesus and he looks at the paralyzed man coming down to the roof, he recognizes that the problem is spiritual. The problem is sin. And he takes care of the root, the source.

Once the sin is eliminated, the paralysis is easy. And Jesus points that out. Here he sees the faith in the man's heart.

Whenever Jesus sees faith and acknowledges faith, the most wonderful, most powerful miracles take place in the presence of that faith. And you remember, he will go to his own country and can do no great work there because there's so few people that believe. Says he could do.

It isn't that his power was limited. There was no occasion. There was no opportunity within the framework of the plan of God where there is no faith.

God is not going to act because God limits himself. Just like George Washington had great opportunity, had great power, but he limited himself. He said, I am only gonna act within these parameters.

God has said, I will only act on behalf of people of faith. Where there is no faith, I'm not

gonna act. And Jesus could do no great work there because of their lack of faith.

Here's a centurion. He's a Gentile. Jesus says, I'm only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

In the presence of faith, hey, we're not sticking on points of the law here. We're not invoking Sabbath traditions. And it was a tradition.

Nobody said you couldn't heal on the Sabbath. Nobody said you couldn't pick up your bed and walk on the Sabbath. Scan the Old Testament.

Is there anything that says you can't pick up a bed and carry it on the Sabbath? No, this was a human accretion, a human addition, a human extrapolation. It's not in the law. And they were ready to kill Jesus over it.

Well, we want to be people of faith. We want to be people who are susceptible to, who are qualified for God's grace and God's healing, providing, blessing power. And the centurion figured that out.

And he is going to have a seat at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And all of these Pharisees are going to be out in Timbuktu waiting to get the word via Pony Express on what's going on in Israel, in the kingdom. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the powerful ways that it expresses to us your plan, your purpose, your calling to us, the opportunity that we have through your grace and through your provision to be cleansed, to be healed, to be enabled, to be empowered, to be motivated, to shine as lights in the midst of a perverse generation. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will impress these things in our hearts, help us to see their pertinence and application individually as we live the life that remains to us on this earth.

We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.