

Simple, not Easy

- The Centurion of Capernaum is a worthy figure for us to contemplate on this Memorial Day Sunday.
 - > Let us remember him as a soldier, a soldier far away from home.
 - > He did not create the conflict surrounding him, and he did not author the policies which dictated his imperatives.
 - > Yet, he strived to make the best of a difficult situation.
 - > According to the gospel account, he built the very temple that Jesus most often visited during his earthly ministry.
- Through him, let us remember the men and women who have served our country with honor and dignity; and especially those who have crossed the bar.
- As the Centurion discovered, so have many:
 - > In the midst of the horrors of war and conflict, it is yet possible to make a positive difference.
 - > Even among our enemies, when we move past the dictates of the powerful and the elite, it is possible to respect and even revere the common, everyday person.
- To serve with honor...To make a difference...
To respect and love even our adversaries.
May we remember all who have strived to be human even in the most inhuman of circumstances.
- The Centurion reminds us that the answers are simple to most of our conflicts, our challenges, and our dilemmas. The answers are simple. Simple, not easy.
- Enlisting with the Roman army was simple, but certainly not easy.
- Rising to the rank of Centurion was simple, also. Show valor, maintain discipline, and make good decisions. Simple, not easy.
- Learning to love the Jewish people and to respect their depth of faith and earnest piety? A simple matter of looking past the prevailing Roman culture and recognizing that it WAS possible for religion to be spiritual and authentic. Simple, but not easy.
- Moving beyond self to embrace not only the adversary but the slave, the lowly, the powerless. Simple, but not easy.
- So many of the choices in our lives are simple. So simple that almost anyone can describe the steps:
 - > Want to lose weight? Eat less, eat better, exercise more.
 - > Want better friendships? Don't always talk about your medical procedures.
 - > Obsessed with money or material indulgences? Spend less, be more generous.
- What keeps us from taking simple paths?
 - > Sometimes perseverance is difficult to maintain and sustain. Certainly we can surmise that a man of substance such as this Centurion was a man of determined perseverance.
 - > But today, Jesus marvels at this Centurion—and not for his perseverance!
 - > Jesus holds him up as an example for our faith!
- You see, faith is comprised of knowledge, belief, and trust. As in Jesus' day, most of us have no problem with knowledge or belief. Where we struggle is trust. Trusting the Lord is simple, but not easy.
 - > We want to be in control.
 - > We don't wish to be vulnerable.
 - > We are prideful and self-absorbed.
 - > We resist granting full authority beyond ourselves.
- Jesus was probably frustrated regularly. “What else can I do?” “I've made everything as simple as I can!”
- So, imagine how sweet and melodious were the words of the Centurion when relayed to Jesus!
To the ears of our Savior, the Centurion was saying:
 - > I have studied the Scriptures, Lord—I have knowledge.
 - > I have worshiped and felt God's presence, Lord—I believe.
 - > But beyond even knowledge and belief, Lord—I trust.
 - > This situation is not all about me, or my household or my good works.
 - > Lord, I relinquish all authority to you.
- On Memorial Day Sunday, Lord, may this Centurion help us to remember all who have chosen paths that were simple, but not easy.
 - > Those who served with honor.
 - > Those who made a difference.
 - > Those who were able to transcend terrible circumstances.
- May this noble example remind us also to live by faith: A faith made up not only of knowledge and belief, but a faith marked by trust.
- Trust. Trust in the Lord. Choose to live under the authority of the Lord who loves you.
- It won't always be easy. Just simple.

Luke 7:1-10

- 1 After Jesus had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum.
- 2 A centurion there had a slave whom he valued highly, and who was ill and close to death.
- 3 When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, asking him to come and heal his slave.
- 4 When they came to Jesus, they appealed to him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy of having you do this for him,
- 5 for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us."
- 6 And Jesus went with them, but when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to say to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof;
- 7 therefore I did not presume to come to you. But only speak the word, and let my servant be healed.
- 8 For I also am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it."
- 9 When Jesus heard this he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, he said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."
- 10 When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.