

# TRUST: Unbelief vs. Belief (15 of 43)

(Luke 7:1-10)

“Would someone please just tell us the truth?” This statement came from my lips multiple times during the Covid 19 pandemic. In August of 2021, Florida was in the midst of a third wave—this time, with the dreaded Delta variant. Combined with pneumonia, it took a toll and wreaked havoc on several of our church members and their families.

My challenge throughout the crisis was the same as yours—who to trust—who to believe. For me, when a discrepancy existed regarding information, I sided with the front-line workers—not the politicians or petty bureaucrats jockeying for position and power.

There was no shortage of drama for the dilemma’s duration. The CDC changed their tune more times than a fiddler on a hot tin roof. Going back to the beginning, we were instructed that wearing a mask wasn’t necessary and wouldn’t protect us. Then, months later, it was mandated to wear one—everywhere. At one point, the media reported that a government agency was recommending that vaccinated adults wear their masks inside their own homes when their children were present. Huh? (I’m sure I wasn’t the only one who found that a bit odd—if not a massive overreach!)

It didn’t help that many of our elected, national representatives went back and forth on their views. It was remarkable that science changed based on who was occupying the White House. In the early stages of the pandemic, several hospitals and nursing homes weren’t telling the truth regarding the cause of individual deaths. This was because they were receiving more money for Covid 19 related deaths. Very sad. All of this still disturbs me because my trust and faith is grounded and rooted in truth. When agencies and agents or industries and individuals lie, it can be difficult to determine a confident course of action. Likewise, in the arena of intimacy, belief and trust are crucial elements.

Ponder your relationships for a moment. When these elements of belief and trust are absent, so is intimacy. Throughout your life, you’ve probably admired individuals with the spiritual gift of faith, even though consciously you may never have considered that individual having that specific gift. Instinctively, you knew they were unique. These Christians are the ones who continue to believe even when the deck is stacked heavily against them. They persist with forward progress even when the next step is obscured. They persevere in prayer when skies are gray and appear threatening. No matter the circumstances, these believers seem able to throw caution to the wind, believe God for more, trust He’s got the situation handled, and regard His plan as unfolding perfectly.

Because faith’s foundation is established upon trust and confidence, those with a large amount of faith tend to have enormous trust. As faith grows, more trust is harvested. As we’ve all come to realize, relationships can put this to the test. At times, we encounter intimacy difficulties because faith, trust, or belief is damaged or broken.

We’ve experienced this whenever a great measure of faith turns sour. This severance usually occurs through specific, unrealized expectations. It can happen frequently with other human beings, but it can also happen in our relationship with God.

Has there ever been a time when you just *knew* God was going to accomplish something specific—but then, He didn’t? In your mind, it was like He just dropped off the grid—like going AWOL. That’s a spiritual gut-punch that’s really uncomfortable to live with. It doesn’t feel good for however long it lasts. When we experience relational moments like these, with God or with others, we have to get through it and grow out of the disappointment. Truth be told, you may still

be in the process of working through a disappointment today.

When this happens, what has gone wrong? Is it that we just don't have enough faith or that our faith is frail or weak? Were we just caught up in a wave of wishful thinking, having checked all sense of reality at the door? I don't think so. So, how can we protect our heart and mind from getting too far over our emotional skis and suffering grave disappointment when it comes to trust? I believe the answer rests in whom (not what) we actually place our trust, belief, and faith.

*Today, we examine Luke 7:1-10 to see how a centurion demonstrated emotional intimacy through his trust in certain individuals, including Jesus.*

Luke 7:1-2:

After he [Jesus] had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. <sup>2</sup> Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him.

*The centurion had trust in his servant.*

Shortly after the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus went back to His headquarters in Capernaum. He most likely was sharing a house there with his mother, brothers, and any unmarried sisters. It was in this town where a centurion for the Roman government, a commander responsible for 100 troops, interceded on behalf of his servant.

This was an oddity in a world comprising of 50% slaves. Masters didn't typically care for servants. When a slave died, owners replaced them with another purchased off the slave block. However, this military occupier had an uncommon heart—one that was tender and unsoiled by the authority and power he possessed.

What was it about this servant that held this centurion's belief, value, and trust? Luke doesn't specifically tell us. It may have been his ABILITIES. It was common in the Roman world for slaves to have greater gifts than their masters in many areas of life. It may have been his CONDUCT or his display of RESPECT. It could have been a host of things—maybe a combination of reasons—but for whatever it was, this soldier greatly valued this servant. So much so, it was cause for the centurion to experience anxiety when the servant fell ill. This warrior obviously understood the value of an individual life—even that of a slave. This servant was so dear to him, the centurion humbled himself and sent a personal request to Jesus. This servant was worthy and possessed the centurion's trust.

Luke 7:3-6:

When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. <sup>4</sup> And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, <sup>5</sup> for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue." <sup>6</sup> And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof."

*The centurion had trust in the elders and his friends.*

When this commander found out that Jesus was in his city, he petitioned Jewish elders to mediate on his behalf. Quite possibly, these elders had previously presented him with evidence of Jesus' healing power and miraculous abilities. To entrust the elders with such an important request would require confidence that they too cared as much for the present need—his servant's life.

The Jewish elders would not disappoint. They found Jesus and shared their opinion that this officer was worthy of help. They gave evidence of the centurion's unconditional love for the nation of Israel (using the word "agape"). He had used personal funds to build their synagogue. This wasn't just common brotherly love ("phileo"). He had genuine concern for Jewish people. He willingly cared through generous action. This commander seems profoundly impacted by the sincere faith of a simple people in the God of Israel.

When the centurion realized that the Jewish elders had been so successful that they were actually bringing Jesus to his home, the officer sent word, through friends, that he didn't want Jesus troubled by coming to his house. These friends would have been in the best position, the ones sharing the most intimacy with the centurion, to convey his message with confidence. Knowing the customs of the day, the Gentile soldier was aware that having Jesus come under his roof would cause the Messiah to become ceremonially unclean. He also knew that coming to his home was unnecessary to accomplish his request. Isn't it wonderful to have friends who can share your heart with Jesus? The elders and friends were worthy and possessed the centurion's trust.

Luke 7:6-10:

And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. <sup>7</sup> Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. <sup>8</sup> For I too 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 servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." <sup>9</sup> When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." <sup>10</sup> And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

*The centurion had trust in Jesus.* We can see his faith in several directions.

*The centurion had trust in Jesus as "Lord."* "Lord, do not trouble yourself." The centurion addressed Jesus with the rightful authority He possessed. Jesus is not just Savior, He is also Lord—Lord of the earth (Revelation 11:4), Lord of heaven (Acts 17:24), Lord of the harvest (Luke 10:2), Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8), Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8), Lord of peace (2 Thessalonians 3:16), Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15), Lord of life (Psalm 42:8), Lord of all (Acts 10:36), Lord of the living and the dead (Romans 14:9).

An understanding of the deity of Christ comes from evidence in what Jesus says and accomplishes. There was enough evidence that supplied this soldier with ample proof that Jesus was the Messiah and could handle his request to heal his servant.

*The centurion had trust that Jesus was the God of everyone.* Faith in Jesus was not limited by nationality. The religious and cultural framework would not stop this centurion from working within those limits to trust Jesus with his petition. He knew Jesus, the Messiah, had been sent for all people, Jew and Gentile alike.

*The centurion had trust in the power of Jesus' spoken word.* "Just say the word and my servant will be healed." This soldier demonstrates a remarkable, intelligent faith in Jesus. His belief was so unique that Jesus had not found it anywhere else in the nation of Israel. Jesus didn't need to be physically present to heal the servant because His providence, power, and presence, have no earthly environmental limits.

*The centurion also had trust that everything submits to Jesus.* When this commander of men used the illustration that the soldiers under him must obey his spoken word, he proclaimed that Jesus has rightful authority over every aspect of life, death, health, demons, and everything else. It was quite the statement of faith in the first century, and two thousand years later, in the twenty-first century, it's still profound. Jesus was worthy and possessed the centurion's trust.

So, how do we build this message into intimate living with God (and others)? I want to encourage you to truly discover the reasons your trust and belief is placed in God (and others).

When it comes to the Lord, intimacy begins and is built when we trust Him as the Promised Messiah—God in the flesh. Believing this moves us to accept His Word. This, and the Holy Spirit, is our power and fuel for living the life He came to give us—life to the full—the abundant life which includes intimacy with Him.

As all must submit to Jesus, (in this life or the next) there's NOTHING ELSE that can claim

victory over our lives—not cancer, addiction, sin, shame, grief, disappointment—nothing! Victory, complete victory is found in trusting Jesus—trusting His voice, His words, His sacrifice. He’s totally worthy of our trust because He’s never lied to us, nor would He ever. He always has and always will accomplish His promises. He’s dependable, unchangeable, unflappable, and intimacy is possible because of WHO HE IS!

He’s worthy of your complete trust in every area of your life. Be honest with yourself. In what areas does He have your complete trust and which ones are you still struggling to give to Him?

When it comes to others, we must become worthy of people’s trust. Intimacy is possible when we become like Jesus—truth tellers, available, sincere, and, well, Christ-like in our attitudes and actions. Intimacy will also require placing belief and trust in others. This is risky, as we know. We’ve all been hurt previously when a breach of that trust has occurred.

Because our human to human relationships involve us—mistake prone and fallible beings—when brokenness occurs, we have a choice to make. Live with the chasm and pain or seek forgiveness and healing. The pursuit of intimacy encourages us to make an attempt toward restoration and reconciliation. It’s not easy but it’s helpful when your root faith and confidence rests in the God-man Jesus, in His Word, and in His power.

Earlier I alluded to who (not what) we place our faith in is the key to having intimacy in life. So, what about all those disappointments we have? There’s a Scripture I want you to remember.

Romans 5:5: (NKJV)

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

This verse has helped reign in unrealistic expectations and disappointments. When I have hoped and had faith in the wrong things—in circumstance or in other people’s behavior—I’ve been disappointed. But I’ve never been disappointed in the love of God or the Holy Spirit. When my trust and hope has been firmly rooted in Christ, I’ve never been disappointed.

Jesus has proven over and over again that He is worthy of our trust. I would think you have several other individuals in your life who have proven that they too are worthy of your trust, although in far lesser degree than requiring a cross and empty tomb.

May we become a person worthy of the Lord’s trust. When we do, intimacy will certainly follow.