

GUIA DE ESTUDO

SAA Alumni Sabbath - "The Centurion's Sermon," with Pastor Matthew Rajarathinam - May 16, 2026

Matthew Racharatnam

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A Better Story of Faith

The sermon begins with a flood story: a man says, "I know God will see me through," refuses a canoe, refuses a rescue boat, and refuses a helicopter—only to learn that God had sent him help all along. The preacher uses that humorous image to set up a stronger biblical example: the centurion in Matthew 8, whose faith is not passive waiting but humble, active, and intercessory trust in Jesus.



My son, I sent you two boats and a helicopter.

– God's unexpected help

The centurion's posture: humility before authority

The centurion approaches Jesus with a posture of clarity and humility: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof." The preacher emphasizes that this is not false humility or insecurity. The centurion knows who he is and, more importantly, who Jesus is. He does not try to manage the moment, negotiate terms, or pretend to be equal with Christ. He comes empty handed, and yet he still believes Jesus has real authority. His confession—"only speak the word and my servant will be healed"—shows that he is not asking for proximity alone but for power. The sermon presents this as the foundation of Christian faith: "I am undeserving and in need of help, and Jesus is capable, and I must give my all to him unconditionally."



I am undeserving and in need of help, and Jesus is capable, and I must give my all to him unconditionally.

– The heart of saving faith

Faith begins before the request

The preacher insists that faith does not start with a bold request; it starts with surrender. The centurion understands authority because he lives under authority himself—he knows what it means to say "Go," "Come," and "Do this." That is why he trusts that Jesus can heal from a distance. The sermon uses Job 42:2 and Psalm 37:5 to show that trust in God's power and timing is central: real faith does not micromanage Jesus. Instead, it says, "God, I submit to you in your way, in your time."



Faith doesn't begin with the bold request.

– Faith and initiative

Discuss the centurion's humility

1) Why do you think the centurion begins with "Lord, I am not worthy"? 2) In what ways does the sermon distinguish humility from insecurity? 3) How does the centurion's understanding of authority shape his confidence in Jesus? 4) Where are you most tempted to manage or control the way Jesus answers your prayers?

REFLEXÃO**Examining your posture before God**

Ask yourself whether you come to Jesus trying to explain, control, or negotiate—or whether you come with open hands. The centurion did not try to impress Jesus with status as a Roman officer; he simply acknowledged need. Reflect on the preacher's point that faith releases control and rests in who Jesus is. Are you willing to say, as the sermon puts it, that you are undeserving, but Jesus is able?

APLICAÇÃO PRÁTICA**Practice humble dependence**

Bring your needs to Jesus the way the centurion did: with honesty, humility, and trust in his word. Instead of insisting on your own timeline or method, pray specifically for Jesus to act in his way, in his time. The preacher's examples remind us that this means refusing to micromanage God and choosing to submit to Christ's authority, even when we cannot see the outcome yet.

The pursuit of faith: moving toward Jesus

The sermon's second major lesson is that faith moves. The centurion walks straight to Jesus, against the crowd, and asks for help. The preacher then widens the picture with other people who pursued Jesus in different ways: the woman with the issue of blood touched the hem of his garment; Bartimaeus cried out loudly; Zacchaeus climbed a tree. Different personalities, different levels of confidence, but the same movement toward Christ. The sermon quotes from Christ Object Lessons: "The blessing of God will not come unbidden." Faith must be sought. It requires cooperation: God works and man works.



The blessing of God will not come unbidden.

— Faith must pursue

PARA REFLEXÃO**How do people move toward Jesus?**

1) What do the centurion, the woman with the issue of blood, Bartimaeus, and Zacchaeus have in common? 2) Which of those examples feels most like your own way of approaching Jesus? 3) Why does the preacher say that faith responds to pursuit, not perfection? 4) What might it look like for you to move toward Jesus this week instead of waiting to feel ready?

REFLEXÃO**No more waiting to feel worthy**

The preacher names a common spiritual delay: waiting to feel worthy, knowledgeable, or "over that one thing" before coming to Jesus. Reflect on where you have been postponing obedience. Have you been standing still when faith should move? The sermon says Jesus responds to pursuit, not to perfection, and that even if the path is not a straight line, Jesus hears you, sees you, and you are not too much for him.

APLICAÇÃO PRÁTICA**Take one concrete step toward Christ**

Choose one specific way to move toward Jesus like the centurion, the woman with the issue of blood, Bartimaeus, or Zacchaeus. That might mean praying honestly instead of staying silent, reaching out for help, confessing sin, or bringing a burden to Jesus without delay. The point is not the form of movement but the movement itself. Faith does not remain parked on the street; it goes toward Jesus with whatever faith it has.



Jesus hears you, Jesus sees you, and you are not too much for Jesus.

— Jesus is approachable

The purpose of faith: intercession for others

The sermon's third and sharpest point is that faith is not only personal; it is purposeful. The centurion does not ask Jesus to heal him. He asks for his servant, who is lying at home paralyzed and suffering greatly. That detail matters. The preacher contrasts the centurion with the rich man in Luke 16, who had a needy man—Lazarus—at his gate but never let that suffering move him. The difference is not simply knowledge versus ignorance, but compassion versus indifference. The centurion crosses boundaries to bring another person's pain to Jesus. The rich man stays inside his comfort.

PARA REFLEXÃO**Who benefits from your faith?**

1) Why does it matter that the centurion came for his servant and not for himself? 2) How does the rich man in Luke 16 serve as a warning against indifference? 3) What does the preacher mean when he says faith matures when it begins to love? 4) Who in your life is currently in need of your intercession?

REFLEXÃO**Faith that carries someone else's burden**

Reflect on the question the sermon repeats: "Who benefits from your faith?" Is your faith mainly about your own breakthrough, comfort, or peace, or does it carry the names of other people? Think about the preacher's examples: a servant still sick, a child struggling, a friend bound, a neighbor hurting, a student overwhelmed, a coworker in darkness, a church member hiding behind a smile, a leader trying to keep it together. Faith at its highest expression is intercessory.

APLICAÇÃO PRÁTICA**Pray beyond yourself**

Make your prayers broader this week. Put actual names before Jesus, as the centurion did for his servant. Pray for the sick, the overwhelmed, the hidden, and the burdened. Ask God not only for what he will do for you, but for what he will do through you and for others. Let your faith cross the room, cross the street, and cross the gate the way the centurion crossed the cultural boundary to reach Jesus.



Who benefits from your faith?

— The question that exposes purpose

Jesus marvels at faith that is humble, active, and loving

The preacher closes by saying that the centurion never preached a sermon, never had a pulpit, and never had an audience, yet heaven leaned in because his life preached through posture, pursuit, and purpose. He came low, he came moving, and he came carrying someone else's need. That is why Jesus stopped and marveled. The sermon leaves the listener with a final appeal: may we have the same kind of faith—faith that bows low, moves toward Jesus, and intercedes for others.

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A prayer for centurion faith

Lord Jesus, teach us the faith of the centurion. Give us humility to know that we are undeserving and in need of help. Give us courage to move toward you instead of waiting in place. And give us love to carry other people's burdens to your throne. Make our faith active, obedient, and intercessory. Let us trust your word, submit to your authority, and bring others into your care. Amen.