

THE BIG IDEA: The life that amazes Jesus is the life that is aligned with Jesus.

The Take-Off

What would you have to see or hear in order to say it was amazing? What captures you like that?

The Grand Canyon did for me. After joking about saying “wow” when we saw it, that was literally all I could say.

Would it be an illusion? A picture? Would it be something a loved one said to you? About you?

The word amazing is used quite a bit to describe God, right?

The most popular hymn of all time is Amazing Grace, and who wouldn’t agree that any grace that can turn a rebellious slave trader into a passionate preacher has to be amazing?

But in our passage this week, we actually find something that amazes Jesus.

Luke 7:9 says that Jesus “was amazed at him,” and that makes me curious - what marks the life that amazes Jesus?

That’s what we want to answer this morning, but a little background before we do.

The focus of this story is on a centurion, which means he’s a Gentile and a commander of 100 soldiers

He’s a man’s man, no stranger to authority - stick that in your back pocket for later

He’s a nice man - he valued his servant (v. 2)

He’s a religious man - probably a God-fearing Gentile - who helped build a synagogue (v. 5)

He’s a patriotic man - loves his nation (v. 5)

And to that extremely impressive list, we have to add this: he was the only man in scripture to amaze Jesus, and so I think he’s got something to teach us about what the life that amazes Jesus looks like.

I see 3 things. I’m sure there’s more, but we’ll go with these 3:

1. It’s a life oriented around grace (His works, not mine)

- a. Look at the centurion’s request: he’d heard of Jesus and sent elders to ask Jesus to come. Period.
- b. Look at what the elders said: this man deserves to have you do this.
- c. Um, no.
- d. Religious people are all about their works earning God’s favor, but the life that amazes Jesus is grace-oriented and understands that grace means we’ve done NOTHING to earn ANYTHING!
- e. The religious guys were keeping score - he’s patriotic and helps build churches (sounds very Republican!)
- f. But not the centurion. He understood that he had done nothing to deserve Jesus’ presence.
- g. Is your life oriented by grace? Or do you keep reminding Jesus of all the things you’ve done and the reasons why you deserve something from him?

2. It’s a life anchored in truth (His words, not mine)

- a. This man, who didn’t deserve Jesus in his home, sent word to stop him, and said 4 words that are another hallmark of the life that amazes Jesus: “But say the word”
- b. In the Greek, that phrase literally means, “but say in a word”
- c. Think about that! There is more power in one word from Jesus than thousands from man!
- d. What do we know about the power of God’s word?
 - It is living, active and effective (Hebrews 4:12)
 - It produces faith in us (Romans 10:17)
 - It equips and trains us (2 Timothy 3:16)
 - It builds us up (Acts 20:32)
 - It is truth that cleanses us (John 17:17)
- e. This centurion understood that Jesus’ words had power
- f. His life was anchored by truth and he recognized that Jesus had the ability to change things with his word
- g. Do you? Is your life anchored by truth or are you like the majority of church goers who say they want to live a life that pleases God (90%) and yet rarely read his word consistently (only 20% read the Bible daily)?

3. It’s a life submitted to authority (His way, not mine)

- a. This is where we see the final, powerful hallmark of the life that amazes Jesus
- b. It isn’t just the life that understands his grace or that believes he has the ability to do what he says
- c. It’s the life that understands his authority
- d. Look what the centurion said: “I myself am a man under authority”
- e. He understood spiritual authority, which has nothing to do with force, and everything to do with choice

- f. Authority is all about being properly aligned
- g. When it comes to authority, alignment is everything
 - Americans spend 12 billion dollars a year on chiropractic care
 - Why? Because if you're not aligned physically, you experience pain
 - The same is true spiritually, and this centurion understood that
- h. He knew a simple truth: we were designed to be aligned, and if we aren't, it leads to all kinds of problems.
- i. He knew that Jesus had the authority to do what he said, and so he aligned himself with the word of Jesus
- j. Now, think about areas where we often DON'T align ourselves with the authority of Jesus
- k. I'll give you 2 to get you started
- l. Relationships
 - Trusting Jesus and his instructions more than our feelings
 - He/she isn't really seeking God's will wholeheartedly, but you don't know him/her like I do!
- m. Finances
 - Sure, the Bible's clear that I should set aside my offering before anything else, but I'll just give God what I have left, if anything.
 - I know the Bible says to bring the whole tithe (the FIRST ten percent) to the storehouse (Malachi 3:10), but I've split it up in lots of different places and for lots of different people!
- n. But the centurion didn't do that to Jesus. He didn't tell Jesus what to do, or interact with Jesus based on what he felt he'd deserved or earned
- o. He simply aligned himself with the authority and power of Jesus' word

The Landing

What area of your life is "sick and about to die?" (v. 2)

What word do you need Jesus to speak, and will you submit that area of your life to his word?

Just like you'd go to the chiropractor to straighten yourself out, let's spend some time aligning ourselves with his word

After all, the life that amazes Jesus is the life that is aligned with Jesus.

Let's pray.