

- They could come to Jesus, because they were the seed of Abraham.
- They could come based upon the promises of God's Word.
- They could come because Jesus was "one of them".

They had many avenues by which they could lay a legitimate claim upon Jesus.

This is also the case with Christianity. Often we come to Jesus, based upon His promise. Or we come based upon our adoption into the family of God. Or we come based upon the fact that He bids us to come. All of these things are legitimate, but when we realize that all of these are based upon **Jesus Christ and who He is**, they become secondary.

Our approach to Jesus must be that of one who has no right to approach Him; as a dog (the Canaanite woman) or as one not worthy to have Jesus under our roof (the Roman centurion). If we see ourselves in this light, and yet we approach, that will be "**Great Faith**".

Why? Because our legitimate response to a **Holy God** should be one of dread terror; however, because of Jesus, we come in spite of who we are. We come only on the merit of **Who He is!**

Faith that is based completely on Who Jesus is, and has no reliance on who we are is "**Great Faith**"!

- "**Great Faith**" is not based on the fact that we are Christians (God's "Chosen People").
- "**Great Faith**" is not based on the fact that we are adopted into God's family.
- "**Great Faith**" is not based on our faith or belief.

"**Great Faith**" is indivisibly based upon our "**Great Savior**"!

Compare what Jesus considers to be "**Great Faith**", with what is paraded as "Great Faith" today! Jesus did not say to the seventy who had healed the sick, and cast out demons that they had great faith. He rebuked them for rejoicing in these accomplishments, rather than rejoicing that, because of Him, their names were written in the Book of Life. He did not ascribe "Great Faith" to His disciples. On a number of occasions, He rebuked them and said, "Oh, ye of little faith"!

Today Christians tend to ascribe "Great Faith" to the healing evangelist, or to those that embark on large building projects. The one who considers himself unworthy to have Jesus enter his home, yet comes to Jesus, is not recognized as a man of faith. Instead he is exhorted and instructed to know who he is in Christ. He is told that having such "low self-esteem" is to discount the work of Christ. The woman who responds, "Truth, Lord: but dogs like me eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table", she is said to be in need of inner healing. She needs release from her past wounds, and needs to have an improved self image. But, we must study what Jesus says about "**Great Faith**", and use that as our guide.

The keys to possessing "**Great Faith**" are in the Bible. We simply must have the courage to believe what the Scripture teaches, even if it flies in the face of contemporary wisdom! After all, God uses the foolish things of this world to confound the wisdom of the wise.

In conclusion, let's all choose to be "foolish", and humbly come to **Jesus**, for this is "**Great Faith**" that pleases God.

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KEYS TO
POSSESSING

*GREAT
FAITH*

By: Robert W. Dallmann

"When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

(Luke 7:9)

The subject of this paper, as evident by the title, is how one has "**Great Faith**". The approach that we will take is to look at biblical examples of "Great Faith". Due to the brevity of this work, we will examine specifically those to whom Jesus acknowledged as having "**Great Faith**".

There are only two people, recorded in Scripture, to whom Jesus ascribed the words "**Great Faith**". Accounts of these people are included in the insets. The first is of the Roman centurion; and the second is of the Canaanite woman. Please take a moment to read their stories.

KEYS TO POSSESSING GREAT FAITH

By studying these chronicles, perhaps we may learn what they had that caused Jesus to remark about the abundance of their faith. May it be, that we can find out what hinders our approach to Jesus, and prevents Him from saying that we have **"Great Faith"**.

1. The first key that we find, is that they both came to Jesus. This seems as though it ought to be self evident, but many never come. Think about it, how many other people in that area were sick, or vexed with a devil, but did not come to Jesus. They did not believe that He could help them. How many of your neighbors have great needs, but will not come to Jesus?

2. A second key is that they both had critical needs, that they knew only Jesus could resolve. In actual fact, we should constantly look to Jesus as our source in all things. But it seems likely that we will only move in **"Great Faith"** at a time when we are in desperate need. Notice that in both stories the word **"grievously"** is used to describe the need. This is why God allows us to face terrible circumstances, so that our faith may be exercised and grow.

The Roman Centurion

Matthew 8:5-13

"And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, ⁶And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. ⁷And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. ⁸The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. ⁹For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. ¹⁰When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. ¹¹And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ¹³And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour."

4. A fourth key is that they were seeking Jesus on behalf of someone else. In the centurion's case, he came to Jesus for the cause of a sick slave.

5. Another key, which goes along with the third one, is probably the least understood in today's Christianity. Both of them readily acknowledged their utter unworthiness before Jesus. Jesus offers to go with the centurion to his house, and heal his servant, and the Roman says, **"I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof..."**

3. The third key that emerges is that they were both foreigners. A Roman soldier, and a Canaanite woman. They were not God's "Chosen People". They could not come to Jesus with any claim upon Him. They were not of the seed of Abraham. They could only come because of who Jesus is, not because of who or what they were! They had no legitimate claim.

Until we learn to approach God, not based upon any claim that we think we have, but when we come based on who He is, then we can have **"Great Faith"**. If we come to Him because He is God, then our faith is founded upon the unchangeable, Solid Rock whose name is Jesus Christ! That is the source of **"Great Faith"**!

The Canaanite woman agrees that she is but a dog! Jesus calls the woman a dog, and she says, **"Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."** She did not argue with Jesus, nor was she offended, she simply acknowledged the fact that she is nothing, and **Jesus is the "Master"**.

Jesus proclaims that such **"Great Faith"**, He has not seen, not even in Israel! In light of this, it would be difficult for a person of Israel to possess **"Great Faith"**.

The Canaanite Woman

Matthew 15:22-28

"And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. ²³But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. ²⁴But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ²⁵Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. ²⁶But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. ²⁷And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. ²⁸Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."