

## Matthew 8:5-13

<sup>5</sup>When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him<sup>6</sup>and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress.” <sup>7</sup>And he said to him, “I will come and cure him.” <sup>8</sup>The centurion answered, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup>For I also am a man 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.” <sup>10</sup>When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, “Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. <sup>11</sup>I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, <sup>12</sup>while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” <sup>13</sup>And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you according to your faith.” And the servant was healed in that hour.

### REFLECT & DISCUSS

#### Context

Jesus is fresh off “the mountain.” In Matthew 5 - 7 Jesus gives his most famous sermon: the sermon on the mount. As soon as he comes down from the mountain, he heals a leper who was a social outcast because of his disease. Then Jesus encounters the Centurion of our passage: a Roman

foreigner, an agent of war, a symbol of an occupying force, and a non-Jew.

#### Big Ideas

- **Amazing Jesus:** a man of great authority leverages none of it.
- **Outsiders show us the way in:** only when we step outside our well-worn categories do we see how artificial and confining they are to God.
- **Love transforms us inside-out, but only after it follows Christ outside-in:** we are only truly changed when we accept and move toward what is beyond us.

#### Reflect

1. Read the scripture passage carefully and slowly. What word or image stands out to you? Why?
2. Why do you think it would be strange, even disturbingly shocking, for a Roman soldier to be lifted up by Jesus as an exemplar of marvelous faith?
3. Who counts as a “foreigner” today? How could our faith--and the love of Jesus--guide us in paying attention to, caring about, and responding to “foreigners”?
4. Share a story or memory about a transforming or holy experience with a “foreigner”.
5. What spiritual responsibility do we as individuals or we as church have to “foreigners” today?