



60<sup>th</sup> Year

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## THE FAITHFUL CENTURION

### Training towards the correct faith with words and works

The Lord from the beginning of His public earthly activity, had as His basic concern, the guidance of people in the correct faith toward His person. Pedagogically He was guiding people to the understanding of the truth that before them they did not have a simple person, but God himself, who became man for their salvation. So for this reason, as the evangelist Matthew informs us, in the beginning the Lord did many miracles, in order to draw people close to Him. After a multitude of people gathered around Him, He ascended to a mountain of Galilee, where He made his famous Sermon on the Mount. After the end of the speech the people were amazed by His words, because He taught them with authority, and not as their customary teachers. Truly, in His sermon on the Mount the Lord was speaking as befits a God, and not as a simple person, even a holy person. He himself appeared bearing on His own new Commandments, with which He was fulfilling and completing the Mosaic law. He was not saying "God is giving you these commandments", but "I say to you be doing thus", identifying and making himself equal with God. Also, He presented himself as Judge of the universe, something which is an exclusivity quality of God.

Subsequently, after He finished the speech and went down from the mountain, He performed many exceptional miracles. With these He proved in action that which He had revealed in His words, in other words, His divine quality. The evangelist Matthew narrates these miracles to us in the 8th and 9th chapter of his Gospel. Through these, the Lord proved in action that His word and will are almighty, that He is the Lord of irrational creation, that He forgives the sins of people, that He has full authority over the angelic powers, that He is the Lord of life and of death, and many other qualities of His divine nature. The miracle of today's Gospel passage is the second, in order, of the miracles which the Lord performed after His sermon on the Mount.

## **The great faith of the centurion**

The centurion revealed with his words and behavior that he understood and accepted the divine quality of the Lord Jesus. Simultaneously, he also expressed his deep humility. The basic reason for which he did not allow the Lord to come up to his house was the feeling of his nothinglikeness before the Lord Jesus. And nevertheless, in the Gospel according to Luke, we are informed that he was very pious and charitable. This shows that the more piety someone has towards God, all the more he is humbled. And the more he feels his sinfulness and mortality, so much more the noetic eyes of his faith are open.

So thanks to his humility and piety the centurion could see more clearly than the others, the divine power and authority of Jesus. So for this reason, he also believed unshakably that one simple word of the Lord has huge power. At the Lord's word distances are wiped out and immediately obey, the illnesses like submissive servants also leave in order to deliver the person from the chastisement. Understanding furthermore that this authority springs from Jesus himself and not from some superior of his, he asks Him not to pray and beg God, but simply to give a command for his servant to become well.

This great faith of the centurion Jesus praises and proclaims. He projects the centurion as an example of correct faith, worthy to be imitated. He does this, in order to guide the others as well into the correct faith towards His person, something which was absolutely necessary for salvation. On the contrary, those who approach them with the idea that they have before them simply a teacher sent by God or a good teacher, as Nicodemus for example in the rich youth, he scolded for their disbelief and made them question,, in order to correct their mistaken judgment.

## **The sons of the kingdom**

Abraham believed in God and was justified. The centurion believed in Jesus Christ and received a distinct honor and praise and was numbered with Abraham in the kingdom of the heavens. This occurs, because the God of Abraham is none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only true God. So whoever of us in the Church believe in the Orthodox manner in the Lord Jesus belong to the people of God. We are the Israel of God and have Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as Forefathers. Let us preserve this great faith as the apple of our eye, doing works of repentance, so that we are not cast outside into the darkness of delusion and of impiety together with all those who don't believe and don't confess the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Archim. P. K.