

Shia LaBluff was causing a disruption during an intermission at a Broadway performance when he yelled, don't you know who the bleep I am? Alec Baldwin, you knew he had to make the list, right? [7 : 16] I mean, if there was going to be a list, he's going to be on it. He was cited for riding his bicycle the wrong way in Union Square in New York City, and he responded by saying, bleep this, this is bleep, don't you know who I am?

Of course, he didn't say bleep, all right? We're making this church appropriate, all right? When her credit card was declined at Banana Republic, Faye Dunaway said, quote, don't you know who I am?

I'm Faye Dunaway. And finally, at a Korean spa, when Margaret Cho was shown disapproval because all the tattoos she had, she said, quote, don't you know who I am?

I'm Margaret Cho. Don't you know who I am? It's the phrase, it's the mantra of the narcissistic and the entitled.

And let's be honest, we've picked on some celebrities, but celebrities are not the only people that have this mindset, amen? I read about a 23-year-old man who was flying first class from Seattle to Beijing.

[8 : 28] 45 minutes into the flight, he decides that he's going to open the emergency exit door. When the flight attendants tried to stop him and did stop him, he screamed, don't you know who I am?

I can get you all fired. Turned out, he was only a family member of an airline employee. I read about a married couple.

You're going to love this one, last example. A married couple who contacted one of the guests that was at their wedding to inform them their gift was, quote, not generous enough, close quote.

Evidently, the couple was given a \$100 check, and when they sent the message to this guest, this is what they said, and I quote, We are surprised your contribution didn't seem to match the warmth of your good wishes.

In view of your position, if you want to send an adjustment, it would be thankfully received. Like, oh no, you didn't just say that, right?

[9 : 49] Entitlement. Entitlement. Can I get a witness tonight? Is it not everywhere? Everywhere we see entitlement.

On airplanes and boardrooms and small towns and politics and churches and relationships and homes. It's based on race and age and position and wealth and status.

People demand attention and benefits and free health care and education for all and a premium starting salary the moment I get out of college. I mean, after all.

Don't you know who I am? Don't you know who I am? Don't you know who I am? Don't you know who I am? And all of this is because we live in a merit-based society. Think about it. Who gets in the best school?

Well, the one with the best grades. Who gets the most playing time? It's the one that has the most talent. Who gets the most attention? It's the one that's the most beautiful. Who gets the upgrade to first class?

[10 : 53] It's whoever has the highest status. Who gets the biggest piece of dessert? It's the one who's most behaved. I love that pic. Right, poor kid? Who is it that has the most influence?

It's the one with the most power or money. We see this all around us in our culture. And come in here for just a moment, Faith Family. If we are not careful, yes, you and I will slip into an entitlement mindset.

In fact, so strange is it to find someone who doesn't feel a sense of entitlement, that if you actually meet someone that's truly humble, that's truly unassuming, that genuinely and gladly takes the lower seat, do they not stand out above all the rest?

That is exactly what happens here in Luke chapter 7. Here in this passage that we just read, Jesus performs a miracle for a man who is the needle in the haystack.

He's the diamond in the rough. He's the rare find. His view of himself, and listen, his posture towards others, I want you to think about this, is so different.

[12 : 22] It's so unique. It's so strange. Jesus marvels at him. Now you wrap your brain around that.

Jesus marvels at this man. Look at verse 1. After he'd finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum.

Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him. When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him the elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant.

But when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, He is worthy to have you do this for him, for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue.

The first kind of main idea in this passage is what you might call the regular perspective. It's the perspective everybody has. It's the mindset that everybody lives with.

[13 : 29] Or you could even call it what amazes the council. It's the thing that amazes these Jewish leaders. The story here centers around a Roman centurion.

Now we know immediately from that a few things about this guy, just historically. Obviously he's a Gentile. He's Roman. He oversees a legion of Roman soldiers.

So he's a man with great authority. He's a high-ranking member in society. He's likely very wealthy. The text even seems to indicate that he paid for the synagogue.

Like he paid for the thing to be built. That's impressive. We also know here that he's friendly towards the Jews, which in this context, a Roman centurion being a friend or in good standing with the Jews was very, very strange.

He has everything going for him. He has a good life. He's the who's who of society. But he has a servant that is sick to the point of death and is in need of a miracle.

[14 : 43] And so like probably many others we've seen in this series, he's heard of Jesus. And so he sends these leaders of the Jewish council to Jesus to persuade him to heal his servant.

Now, what I want you to notice here is when these council members, when these Jewish leaders come to Jesus, notice the basis for which they make the request.

Look at me, faith family. This is a word for American culture. It is a word for our own hearts. Are you with me tonight? Say amen. Look at the basis of which they argue the request.

Verse 4 again. When they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly saying, He, that is this centurion, is worthy to have you do this for him.

He loves, here's the reasons why he's worthy for you to do this. He loves our nation and he's the one who built us our synagogue.

[15 : 49] In other words, Jesus, you should perform this miracle for him. You should do this request for him because he deserves it.

He's entitled to it. Look at everything he's done for us. Don't you know who he is? I mean, he's big time.

He helped us build the synagogue. I mean, he's been going to the church for 30 years. He gives more money than anybody else. He may not be Jewish, but Jesus, he's as close as they come. You really got to do it for this guy. He's entitled. I mean, if there was ever anybody that deserved a miracle, it would be this man.

Are you with me? Do you see the basis for which they're arguing? Which I think, come in close. This is the perfect illustration. Not only, listen, how entitlement works in society, but how entitlement works spiritually.

[16 : 57] Don't act all spiritual tonight. You know good and well, and listen, I have too. We have approached God with this kind of mindset.

You know, God, you really ought to answer my prayer. I mean, after all, look at everything I've done for you. Look at how much I've served you. Think about all the time I've put in at church.

Think of all the ministry I've supported. Listen, I may not be perfect, Jesus, but be honest.

Guaranteeing this successful surgery, making sure my children are safe, giving me the job I really want.

I mean, that can't be too much to ask. I mean, after all, don't you know who I am? Don't you know what I've done for you? This is the spiritual merit mentality.

And every one of us, I dare say, has struggled with it at one point or another. It goes like this. Notice it on the screen. Like, we think that there's a spiritual bank account out there, and our good works are making deposits in that bank account, so whenever we're in need, whenever we need a miracle, whenever it's time to offer up a prayer, we just cash it in.

[18 : 18] Isn't that how it works? Isn't this a merit-based system? Oh, this is so often how we approach God.

But let me tell you, faith family, that the entitlement mentality, the entitlement mentality, the entitlement mentality is not only unbiblical, it is satanic.

You said, well, that's pretty strong language. Yes, and I intend it to be so. Because what is at the heart of entitlement? Look at it. Say it with me.

Me. What's at the heart of entitlement is that I am placing myself at the center of everything. I am the center of the universe.

I am what matters most. My calendar runs the cosmos. Don't you know who I am, God? Don't you know how important this is?

[19 : 19] And the reason why I say it's satanic is because that sense of exalting self is at the heart of Satanism. I mean, real Satanism.

Like all the way back in the Garden of Eden, Satanism. There was a story some time ago in the Chicago Tribune about a man named Jamie. Jamie was in a custody battle for his children because his ex-wives did not want their children to grow up in the home of a Satanist.

Jamie had a upside-down cross hanging behind his bed in his room. He also had an upside-down cross that formed the letter T in the word Satan tattooed on his body.

But Jamie insisted that he didn't worship the devil. He didn't even believe there was a devil. And so at his hearing, when they called in leaders, listen, they called in leaders of the Church of Satan to testify at Jamie's hearing, this is what one of the witnesses said, and it's so true.

Quote, Satanism is the world's first carnal religion. Satanists aren't devil worshipers. We see Satan as a symbol of pride, liberty, and individualism.

[20 : 41] Listen, the upside-down cross represents our belief in the opposite of humility. Close quote. Satanism is the exaltation of self.

Satanism is when you put yourself at the center of everything. Is that not what caused the fall? It is the heart of pride. And it is wrapped up in that entitlement mentality. Now, take that mentality, the entitlement mentality of the Jewish leaders, and compare that to the perspective of the centurion.

I've set all that up because I almost want your breath to be taken away in the way it is for Jesus. Because when you see the basis for which the Jewish leaders argue why this miracle should be done, it makes this look incredible.

Verse 6. So Jesus went with them. And when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, Lord, do not trouble yourself.

[21 : 51] Watch. For I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. Therefore, I did not presume to come to you, but say the word and let my servant be healed.

For I, too, am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, go, and he goes. To another, come, and he comes. And to my servant, do this, and he does it.

Here's the second idea. This is the rare perspective. This is the unheard of. This is, again, the needle in the haystack. This is what amazes the centurion here.

This mindset that very few people seem to have. Notice a couple of observations of the humility that this centurion has.

At least three. Number one is, you note the care he has for his servant. I point that out because in this historical context, servants, and I mean this literally, servants were treated like furniture.

[22 : 56] What do you do when your furniture goes bad? You throw it away. And then you get what? A new one. Right? It's old, and so we throw it out, and we go and get a new couch, or we go and get a new chair.

That's exactly what you would do with servants in this context. They were not treated as people. They were treated as objects.

And once you are no longer good, we throw you out, and we get a new servant. Here's my point. Add to that that this man, given his stature, his status, he probably has several servants.

Here's my point. The fact that this man, this Roman centurion, cares about a servant is remarkable. It is unheard of in this context.

Number two, you notice his disregard for status. He has not let his status go to his head. In other words, what you don't get from him is what the Jewish leaders say.

[24 : 02] He doesn't say, Jesus, I deserve this. Don't you know who I am? I've earned this right. He doesn't say, you know, I paid for the synagogue, and so you better come heal my servant.

I did for you, you do for me, right? That's Tennessee English, right? This is a merit-based system, but that's not how he approaches Jesus.

He doesn't regard his status as anything of value. Thirdly is notice his lack of significance. Again, the Jewish leaders argue on the basis of worthiness, but this man acknowledges his unworthiness. And how many of you have ever, like, be honest, you've invited somebody over to your home that you thought would say no, and they said yes? Yes, anybody that ever happened to you?

You invited them over because, you know, they're going to say no, and they said yes, and you're like, oh, snap, I've got to clean the house, right? Hide the beer, the pastor's near. It's like, I've got to get ready, get this place straightened up.

[25 : 11] Like, I really didn't think this was going to happen. This guy gets word that Jesus is actually coming to his house, and he's like, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. I can't have him in my home.

I'm not, I'm a Gentile. I don't have any significance at all when it comes to Jesus. This man cares for his servant.

He does not regard his status as important. In fact, he sees himself as having no significance at all. Why? Why? Why?

Why? Why does he view himself this way? Does he need to go on Dr. Phil and get a self-esteem makeup? Like what, you know, does he just need a better image of himself? Why is he so, have this unworthy feeling?

Well, why does he think, listen, why does he think that Jesus can heal his servant from a distance? Now, we've already seen that Jesus can do that before in some of the other miracles that we've looked at.

[26 : 23] But there's something deeper in this passage that this man understands, and it's found in verse 8. Look at it. Look at me, faith family.

This man knows how authority works. When I say jump, you say how high. He knows how authority works, which means this.

Notice this on the screen. This man with authority understands he is a man under authority. Jesus has a greater authority, a far greater authority that this man, that makes this man feel unworthy, and yet at the same time makes him feel confident that Jesus only has to say the word, and his servant will be healed.

He has a firm grip on reality, and it is refreshing. Amen? Have you ever been around somebody, don't point, that has no clue about reality?

Right? This man has a firm grip on reality. I remember reading about a little boy took his baseball and bat out into the yard, and he declared for the entire neighborhood to hear, I'm the greatest hitter in the world.

[28 : 03] And he threw the ball up and swung and missed. Strike one. He's all sad and dejected, picks the ball back up, says, I'm the greatest hitter in the world. Throws it up, swing and miss, strike two.

Totally discouraged, really upset, picks the ball up again, throws it up. I'm the greatest hitter in the world. Swings and misses. Strike three.

And he puts his head down and he goes, wow, I am the greatest pitcher in the world. You like that? You like that? Isn't, I mean, but isn't that true? Like, we so shape our own reality. And we always tend to put things in a light that makes ourselves look good.

Because we feel like that we're more worthy than we actually are. Not this man. This man has a firm grip on reality.

[29 : 05] He fully understands who he is in light of who Jesus is. You with me? The greatness of Jesus, the authority of Jesus has put this man in his place.

There is no entitlement here. There is no deserving. There will only be grace if Jesus chooses to heal. Verse 9. When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him.

And turning to the crowd that followed him, said, I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. Here is what amazes Christ. The real perspective that we are to live by. Stop and think about how one of the consistent themes in our series on the miracles of Jesus has been people astonished at Jesus.

Have you noticed that? I mean, going all the way back to the book of Mark and other passages that we've looked at, it's constant. People are astonished and marveling at what Jesus does.

[30 : 21] Here's just a few examples. Mark 1. Jesus teaching in the synagogue. They were astonished at his teaching because he taught with one that had an authority unlike the scribes.

Casting out a demon, they were all amazed. So they questioned among themselves, what is this? A new teaching with authority? And he commands even the unclean spirits. And they obey him.

At the healing of the paralytic, it says, He rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, We never saw anything like this.

After Jesus walks on the water in Mark 6, it says, He got into the boat with them and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astonished. Are you with me?

The emphasis in all of the miracles are people astonished at Jesus. But not in this one.

[31 : 27] In this one, it's Jesus marveling at a man. So much so that he will sit back and say, Even in all of Israel, I've never found one like this.

Oh, that Christ would say that. In all the American entitlement culture, there are a people that don't buy into that nonsense.

And they live with a sense of gratitude and unworthiness before God in light of who he is. Oh, that God would marvel at us in the same way that he marvels at this man.

In fact, the only other time in the Scripture where Jesus marvels at someone else is in Mark 6, where he marvels at someone's unbelief.

So marveled is Jesus at this man's faith. Look at verse 10. And when Jesus, and when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

[32 : 46] He performed the miracle. He healed the servant. And the question that we have to ask is, Why did Jesus do that?

And the reason you have to ask that question is because of the basis on which the Jews brought this situation before Jesus in the first place.

Are you with me? Why did Jesus heal this servant? Well, it is not based on race. Jesus does not do this miracle because the man is white or black or anything else.

The man's race had no entitlement whatsoever. You and I are living in a culture where so much of the entitlement discussion is centered on race, critical race theory, intersectionality, things like that. Let me tell you here tonight, even if it gets me in trouble, your race or your ethnicity entitles you to nothing in the kingdom of God.

[33 : 51] Nothing. I don't care what color you are. I don't care what ethnicity you are from. It matters zero in the kingdom of God. For in Jesus, there is no longer Jew or Gentile, male nor female.

We are all one in Christ. I may get to preaching. All right. The miracle is not performed based on this man's race.

Second, it is not based on his status. Jesus doesn't say, oh, it's a centurion. Well, I better do this. He doesn't marvel at this man's status.

It's not based on relationships. Well, I guess if the Jews are asking, then I better do it. I didn't know that you were friends with Larry.

I didn't know that you were in good relationship with so-and-so. Oh, well, then, yeah, I marvel at all the people that you know. He doesn't even do it based on generosity.

[34 : 53] I mean, let's assume that what the text means is that he did pay for the synagogue. Maybe he just built it. Maybe he paid for the building of it. We don't know. But it's interesting that this kind of thing in American culture gets a building named after you.

Right? Doesn't it? You pay for the synagogue. You build it. There's at least a statue outside or a plaque on the wall, and Jesus doesn't give a rip.

I don't care how much money you've given to build the synagogue. I don't care at all if you built it with your own hands. It's... Your generosity doesn't pay your way into the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is not for sale. And listen, while I am genuinely and deeply grateful for your generosity, faith family, it does not buy a vote in the kingdom of God.

For blessed are the poor in spirit. Theirs are the kingdom of God. Why does Jesus perform this miracle?

[36 : 05] Here it is. It's based on humble faith. What makes the Messiah marvel is not this man's race and not this man's status and not how much this man has done.

He marvels at a man who has no confidence in himself, but has all confidence in the person of Jesus Christ.

And I mean come in right now and let that enter into your heart. What marvels the Messiah has always been and will always be, say it with me, faith.

What does Hebrews say? For without faith it is impossible to please God. You want to marvel Jesus? You want him to be amazed when he looks at your life?

I guarantee you it will have nothing to do with your bank account. And it will have nothing to do with who you know and whose friends you are. It will have nothing to do with how impressive your resume is.

[37 : 14] It will be the fact that you trust him. And that you have come to recognize his authority is so great that he makes whatever authority you have in this world look like nothing.

To the point that you bow your knee and acknowledge your unworthiness before him. You don't say, hey Jesus, do you know who I am?

You say, Jesus, I'm amazed at who you are. So much so I believe. That is what marvels the Messiah.

And this faith family is the miracle of Luke 7. And you say, what? You failed the miracle test, Pastor. I mean clearly the miracle is the healing of the servant.

Right? I mean isn't that what you, if I ask you, if we did pop quiz and I said, what's the miracle in this passage, wouldn't you all say it's the healing of the servant?

[38 : 21] And I'm not denying that that's not a miracle. But I'm actually arguing it's not the main miracle. And do you know why I'm saying it's not the main miracle?

Are you ready for a little hermeneutics one-on-one, Bible study one-on-one? Listen, pay attention to a passage and what the author is emphasizing the most.

It's not as complicated as sometimes we, this is not like a secret code that we got to crack. Does Luke spend more time on the healing of the servant or this man's faith?

This man's faith. In fact, the whole structure of the passage is look at the basis for which the Jewish elders or leaders are arguing for the miracle. And look at the miracle.

And look at the man. And look at how Jesus marvels at his faith. And then it's almost like at the end, oh, and then they returned to the house and his servant was well.

[39 : 22] You're actually not intended in this. This is why I told you it was going to be different than the other ones. You're not intended to marvel at the healing of the servant primarily, maybe secondarily, but not primarily.

You're to step back like Jesus and say, here's the miracle. Notice it on the screen. It takes a miracle not to base your life on merit.

A life that isn't lived based on what you do and a life that is entirely lived based on what Christ can do, that's the miracle.

A life that lives by faith is a miracle. Because left to ourselves, we're going to make ourselves the center and we're going to fill our spiritual bank account with as many good works as we can and try to cash them in in the hospital waiting room.

And that is not the gospel of Jesus Christ. And that is not how his people are to think or to live. And so we're to see, I think, the primary miracle here is the miracle of this man's faith that is uncommon even throughout Israel.

[40 : 44] No one, Jesus says, has the kind of faith this man has. You with me? What's some takeaways? And then we'll wrap it up.

Oh, wow. I went a little long. Oh, well, here we go. Number one, quick takeaway and we'll be out. Faith family, I speak this to you and to me as your pastor.

Make sure your life is not aimed at the wrong target. Make sure your life is not aimed at the wrong target. You say, what do you mean? Here's what I mean. If we're honest, most of us are focusing our lives on building a fortune, building a family, building fame, having friends, having fun.

And I'm telling you the life that matters is the one that's being built up in faith. Are you listening to me? Many of us, and it's easy to do it, are living our life focused on completely the wrong thing.

Man, if I could just build a synagogue, my name would be in lights. Be the Dr. Wes Feltner synagogue for important people or whatever, right?

[42 : 06] And I'll be somebody. God will be proud. Don't you know who I am? And God looks at that and says, you're just like the world.

And you'll get to the end and see that that synagogue will crumble along with everything you've built your life on. But the one who builds his house on the rock and lives the life of faith will stand. Don't aim at the wrong target, faith family. Our life is to be not a life of entitlement, but a life of faith. Number two, I want to say a lot here.

I don't have time, so I'm going to probably speed through this. But make effort to pull the weeds of self-importance from your life. Make effort to pull the weeds of self-importance from your life. There was a study I looked at. David Brooks in his book, *The Road to Character*, mentions it. Get this. I'm just going to mention it quickly. I've got to wrap it up. He said this, quote, Between 1948 and 1954, psychologists asked more than 10,000 adolescents whether they considered themselves to be a very important person.

[43 : 34] So during those time frames, 48 to 54, only 12% of adolescents said they thought they were very important. The same question was asked again in 1989.

How much increase do you think there was? 80% of boys and 77% of girls said, yes, I think I'm a very important person.

That was in 1989. I don't even want to know what the numbers are today. I mean, it's like 150%, and I'm a snowflake, and everybody needs to follow me on Twitter.

I mean, it is insane. But what does the Scripture teach us? 1 Peter 5, 6. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility towards one another.

For God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble. Proverbs 16, 5. Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord. Be assured he will not go unpunished.

[44 : 35] This is a word for me. This is a word for you. You and I need to make effort to pull the weeds of self-importance out of our life.

Amen? How do we do this? Again, I'm going to just fly through these. First, I would encourage you to study the attributes of God. Nothing will humble you more quickly than realizing who God is. I mean, that's really what's happening in this text. I know what authority is like under me, the centurion says. Your authority is even far greater. As he begins to understand who Jesus is, his life is put in perspective.

Notice this on the screen. Here's kind of what I mean. It's hard to say, don't you know who I am when you truly know who he is? Amen? Good luck sticking your chest out when you begin to understand the greatness of God.

So if we want a little decrease so that he might increase, get to know who God is. Secondly, think often of the cross. Think often of the cross.

[45 : 49] You can't be arrogant as you look at God dying for your sin. Yeah, you are so incredibly righteous and deserving that God had to die to save you.

The cross has a way of humbling us. And then thirdly, look for practical ways to intentionally put others first. Look for practical ways to intentionally put others first.

It's hard to make much of self when you're intentionally serving others. Here's the last kind of application and takeaway tonight, and it's this.

Know that Jesus has authority over your hopeless situation. Know that Jesus has authority over your hopeless, and I put that in quotes because it feels hopeless, but it's never hopeless when God's involved.

Amen? It's never hopeless when God is involved. Not only did the centurion get his own life right, he got Jesus right. He understood that in my desperate situation, Jesus is all I need.

[46 : 58] And I hate to be rushed at this point because I really want to take just a moment to say, I don't know where some of you are at in feeling hopeless, and some of you are in a situation where you feel like there's no way out.

I don't know how I'm going to get through this. And I want you to be encouraged by God's word tonight that, again, there is no hopeless situation when you factor in the power of Jesus Christ. The centurion of Luke 7 is not the only centurion that comes to the right conclusion about Jesus. How many of you remember when Jesus was dying on the cross, that there was a man who got it right?

He was a Roman centurion. And he looked up at Jesus and he said, Truly this is the Son of God. In other words, don't you know who he is? Don't you know who he is? Faith family, when we by faith come to see who Jesus is, we'll never be able to live a don't you know who I am kind of life.

[48 : 12] Because the cross reminds us that of anything, I deserve to be separated from God. I deserve hell.

But praise God, he does not love us based on what we deserve. And that's a miracle that should marvel us all.

Amen? Amen. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.