**Sermon Notes- Sunday 7th March**

**‘What makes God marvel?’**

In all 4 Gospels there are over 30 occurrences of the word, ‘amazed’. Can you identify some of those occasions when this word is used? Most of them are with reference to the crowds *being amazed* at Jesus, but in this passage today it is Jesus who is himself amazed (or as another version describes it, ‘marvels’).

Read Luke 7:1-10

This event recorded in Matthew and Luke, illustrates the inclusive nature of the Kingdom Jesus proclaimed. Not only does it reach beyond the chosen people to the gentiles, but it also is found amongst the hated, feared and despised Roman occupying force in the person of this Roman Centurion.

* What do you find to be remarkable about this man? (his relationship with his servant, the Jewish elders, and the exercise of his power?).
* What do you notice about the contrast between what the Jewish elders say to Jesus (‘He deserves…v4) and what the centurion communicates through the 2nd delegation (‘I do not deserve…’ v6).

Our society today has a strong sense of deserving certain things, a sense of ‘entitlement’ (access to services, a certain standard of living, etc) and advertising slogans reinforce this.

* Which product uses the strap line, ‘Because you’re worth it’?
* Do we exercise a sense of ‘entitlement’ in our expectation of what God should do for us? We might say, ‘I deserve that you do this for me because I have given up so much for you’.
* How does that attitude contrast with that of the Roman centurion?

Because of his own rank and position, the Roman centurion understood *authority*. He also saw authority in Jesus – an authority that was of another dimension (over sickness and demon possession and nature). Based on this understanding of authority he could have complete confidence in Jesus – ‘only say the word and my servant will be healed’.

* Do you have that same confidence in the authority of Jesus? Where would you like him to ‘speak the word’ for you today (over your health, finances, job, relationships?)
* Why did Jesus react with such amazement v9?

The centurion ‘saw’ a reality in Jesus that even the religious amongst the Jewish people (who had the law, the prophets and the scriptures) failed to see v9.

This event has been given us in scripture to inspire our faith.

* How might your faith today overflow to touch the life of another person (just as that of this Roman Centurion has overflowed to touch and encourage us)?
* How is God, through his Holy Spirit, speaking to you in this scripture today?