

# Luke 7:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

## Analysis

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**And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this.** The elders' *axios estin* (ἄξιός ἐστιν, he is worthy) presents human merit-theology—they argue the centurion deserves healing because of his good works. This stands in stark contrast to the centurion's own confession (verse 6-7) that he is unworthy. The Greek *parakalein* (παρακαλεῖν, earnestly begged) shows their intense advocacy.

Ironically, the elders misunderstand grace—they present works-based worthiness while the centurion exhibits faith-based humility. Jesus responds not to the centurion's supposed merit but to his remarkable faith. This previews Paul's doctrine: salvation is 'not of works, lest any man should boast' (Ephesians 2:9), but through faith alone.

## Historical Context

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Jewish leaders advocating for a Roman military officer reveals the centurion's extraordinary impact on Capernaum. His benefaction to the synagogue and fair treatment of Jews had earned genuine respect, despite representing occupying forces.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How do you approach God—based on your worthiness and works, or on His grace and mercy?
2. Why is it significant that Jesus responded to faith rather than to the arguments about the centurion's worthiness?
3. In what ways might you be tempted to base your access to God on your performance rather than Christ's finished work?

## Interlinear Text

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οἱ δὲ παραγενόμενοι πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν παρεκάλουν  
G3588 **And** when they came to G3588 **Jesus** they besought  
G1161 G3854 G4314 G2424 G3870

αὐτὸν σπουδαίως λέγοντες ὅτι Ἄξιός ἐστιν ὁ  
him instantly saying That worthy he was for whom  
G846 G4709 G3004 G3754 G514 G2076 G3739

παρέξει τοῦτο.  
he should do this  
G3930 G5124

## Additional Cross-References

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**Revelation 3:4** (Parallel theme): Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

**Matthew 10:13** (Parallel theme): And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

