

The Centurion's Servant

Once there was a very important soldier. He was a commander in the Roman army and every day he gave orders to his soldiers.

"Clean your boots and be on parade at six o'clock in the morning," he would say, and at six o'clock in the morning all his soldiers would be standing to attention waiting for him to come and inspect them for shiny boots and polished armour and sharp swords.

"Now go on a twenty mile run," he would say, and all his soldiers would set off on a twenty mile run no matter whether they wanted to or not!

So each day the commander gave his orders and each day the soldiers did what they were told to do. After all, he was the commander and they were only the soldiers.

The commander would always wear his commander's uniform. His armour was the shiniest, his boots gleamed, his cloak was brilliantly colourful, his shield sparkled and his sword was the sharpest you have ever seen. He looked very impressive as he walked around giving his orders.

Now and again they all had to go and fight a battle. They would all get in lines and wait for the commanders order.

"Charge!" he would shout, and the soldiers would run toward the enemy and fight. The Commander knew that whatever he said, his soldiers would do.

One day though, someone told the commander about a man called Jesus.

"You can order people about," they said, "But this Jesus, well he's amazing. He can order the wind and the waves. He can say one word and people who are ill get better. He's even been known to bring a dead person back to life just by saying, get up! In fact whatever Jesus says seems to happen!"

"Wow!" said the commander. "This Jesus must be amazing, he must be a real commander."

Now the commander had a servant; a man who had been his friend for many years. One day his servant fell ill. They called the doctor, but he got worse and worse no matter what they did for him.

"Its no good," said the Doctor. "I'm afraid he's going to die."

The commander was very upset, when suddenly he remembered Jesus. He sent an order to his soldiers, "Look everywhere," he said, "and find this man Jesus." So they did, and it wasn't long before the message came that Jesus was not far away; just in the next town.

The commander ordered his fastest horse to be saddled and in no time at all he was on his way. He rode like the wind, galloping all the way and he arrived in the town to see a large crowd of people surrounding a very ordinary looking man.

"Can this be Jesus the great commander?" the commander thought to himself. "but he looks so ordinary! He has no shining armour or gleaming boots or colourful cloak like commanders should have? Surely he can't be such a special person? Surely he can't be the powerful commander they all say he is."

He went up to Jesus.

"Are you Jesus?" he asked.

"Yes," said Jesus.

The commander looked at Jesus. Although he did look very ordinary there was still something very special about him, very special indeed. The commander looked into Jesus eyes and straight away he knew that they were the eyes of a commander. A really really really powerful commander.

"My servant is sick. He's going to die," he said, "please help him."

"I'll come and see him," said Jesus.

"But," said the commander "you don't need to do that. You are a commander like me. All you need to do is to say and it will be done. Just like I tell my soldiers what to do each day."

"Well," said Jesus, "you're right, and you're very clever to believe such a thing. Alright, when you get home your servant will be well."

The commander said: "thank you," and without hesitation rode off again, back towards his home.

"He will be well. He will be well. He will be well. He will be well, " he said to himself all the way. And when he got home his servant was at the door to greet him looking healthy and happy once again!

"When did you feel better," he asked him.

"Oh about 3 o'clock," he said, and the commander realised that this was exactly the time at which Jesus had said that he would be well.

"Wow!" said the commander. "This Jesus is the greatest commander ever!"

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