



**Sermon Notes: "From Pagan to Promise"**

*Matthew 8:5-13*

9.14.25

**THE SCANDAL:**

Gentiles won't just be servants at the table; they'll be co-heirs of Abraham's promise, sitting as full family members with the patriarchs of the faith!

**LESSONS OF AMAZING FAITH:**

**1. Faith transcends background.**

- Your background doesn't disqualify you from God's kingdom; it positions you to help others find their way in.

**2. Amazing faith will come from unexpected places.**

**3. The Kingdom Feast is radically inclusive.**

- God's kingdom is bigger than your assumptions, broader than your comfort zone, and more diverse than your dreams.

**A PASTORAL WORD:**

There's a huge difference between religious entitlement and authentic faithfulness.

---

**So What?**

- Your background isn't a liability - it's a launching pad.
- Keep being amazed by Jesus.
- Are you ready for a kingdom that looks nothing like you expected?

**ICEBREAKER:** *Share about a time when someone you least expected surprised you with their kindness, wisdom, or faith. What made it so surprising? How did it change your perspective about that person or situation?*

**For Study, Reflection, Discussion:**

1. Review the sermon notes from Sunday. Was there a particular point that stuck with you? *What* was it and *why* did it resonate with you?

**READ: Matthew 8:5-13**

2. The Centurion was a pagan Roman soldier - everything Jews were taught to hate. Yet Jesus said he had more faith than anyone in Israel (v. 10). Why do you think Jesus was so amazed by this "impossible source" of faith? What does this teach us about where God looks for faith today? (See also Genesis 12:3, Galatians 3:26-29)
3. Jesus announced that Gentiles would come from "east and west" to sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the kingdom feast (v. 11). To Jewish ears, this was scandalous. Why was this declaration so revolutionary? How does it challenge our assumptions about who "belongs" in God's kingdom? (See also Isaiah 25:6, Revelation 7:9)
5. Jesus painted a picture of radical diversity at God's kingdom feast - people from every background sitting together as family (v. 11). How does this vision challenge or encourage you? What would your church community look like if it truly reflected this diversity? (See also Acts 10, Romans 4:16)
6. The pastoral word distinguished between "religious entitlement" and "authentic faithfulness." For those raised in church, how do we guard against taking our faith for granted? What's the difference between being familiar with Jesus and being amazed by him? (Compare with Mark 6:1-6 where Jesus was amazed at their lack of faith)

**Deploy:**

**This week's deployment:** Pray for someone you never thought would be interested in faith and look for opportunities to show them kindness. If you are able, intentionally connect with someone newer to faith or from a different background. Let your story encourage someone who might feel disqualified.

**Don't Forget:**

- Life Groups and Sunday Schools!!
- Operation Christmas Child – Shoebox packing parties, Oct 5 & Nov 9<sup>th</sup>, 2 pm
- All Church F.U.N. Night Pumpkin Carving and Chili Contests! Oct 12<sup>th</sup>, 5 pm

**Prayer:**

Jesus, thank you that your kingdom is bigger than we imagined!  
For those who feel like outsiders - remind them there's a place for them at your table. For longtime believers - keep us humble and amazed by your grace.  
Help us see the people you're working in that we might overlook. Make us bridge-builders who welcome everyone.  
Thank you that faith matters more than background. Give us faith that amazes you.  
In Jesus' name, Amen.