



# WOODLAND HEIGHTS

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CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## Good News in a Divided World Part #4 – Does God Care? Hope for the Hurting

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### Small Group Discussion Guide on Matthew 8:5-13

#### Woodland Heights Christian Church Core Value Connection

This sermon on John 18:33–38 aligns with the core value of a Biblical Worldview at Woodland Heights Christian Church. We believe that in a hurting and restless world, God's people must learn to see suffering, sorrow, authority, and hope through the lens of Scripture rather than through fear, despair, or cultural confusion. A Biblical worldview teaches us that Christ is not distant from human pain, but sovereign over it, compassionate in it, and worthy of our deepest trust as we walk through the valleys of life.

This message answers the deeply personal question, “Does God care?” by pointing us to Jesus in Matthew 8:5–13, where a Roman centurion brings his desperate need to Christ and discovers the authority, compassion, and faithfulness of the Savior. It challenges us to move beyond general belief in God and into humble, obedient faith that trusts the Lord in the middle of fear, suffering, uncertainty, and sorrow.

#### Section 1 – ENCOUNTER

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##### Observing God's Word

Imagine a man of rank, power, and military honor stepping out of the crowd with a burden no title can fix. He is used to giving orders, commanding soldiers, and carrying influence, yet now he comes as a desperate servant with a hurting servant at home – paralyzed, suffering terribly, and beyond the help of human strength. In that moment, the centurion discovers what every hurting soul must eventually learn: authority, money, status, and strength cannot heal the deepest needs of life, but Jesus can.

Matthew 8:5–13 is God's answer to the person at the graveside, the hospital bed, the lonely dorm room, and the quiet place where the heart wonders, “Does God still care about me, right here and right now?” In these verses, Jesus does not merely acknowledge pain from a distance; He steps into the need, praises humble faith, and reveals that His authority extends over suffering, disease, and even eternity itself.

Let's start our study by anchoring ourselves in Scripture. Read Matthew 8:5–13 (ESV) as a group, family, or an individual, letting God's Word sink in.

##### Core Questions

- What do you notice about the centurion's words and faith in this passage? Why is this relevant?
- What key words, phrases, or themes stand out to you in Matthew 8:5–13?

- What do you learn about the heart of Jesus, the authority of Christ, and the nature of genuine faith?

## Section 2 – EXPLORE

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As we dig deeper into Matthew 8:5–13, we discover that this passage is not merely about one miracle in Capernaum; it is a window into the heart of Christ for hurting people. Jesus had just come down from the Sermon on the Mount, and now in this busy town on the shore of Galilee, He meets a Roman centurion—an unlikely man of faith from an unlikely background. This soldier was a Gentile, an outsider, and part of the occupying force, yet he came to Jesus with humility, urgency, and bold trust.

The sermon frames this text around three promises of hope for the hurting, reminding us that Christ meets us in the valley, that His authority is complete, and that unwavering faith is never misplaced when it rests in Him.

**The Big Idea says it plainly: “Never Forget that a Humble Faith in Christ Makes Molehills Out of Mountains.”**

### **Promise #1 – The Principle of Unfailing Love: Christ Meets You in the Valley When You Seek Him in Humility (Matthew 8:5–7)**

The centurion comes to Jesus with what the sermon calls an urgent request. He does not approach casually or with arrogance; he comes as a man whose servant is lying paralyzed at home and suffering terribly, and he lays the need before the Lord with humility and desperation. The sermon notes that the word “appealing” carries the sense of earnestly calling for help, like a desperate parent in an emergency room pleading for a child’s life.

What makes this moment even more striking is Jesus’ immediate response: “I will come and heal him.” Here we see the unfailing love of Christ—a Savior who is not annoyed by desperate faith, not distant from suffering, and not reluctant to move toward the one who seeks Him in humility.

- What does the centurion’s urgency teach you about how to bring pain, fear, and sorrow to Jesus?
- Why is it significant that Jesus responds so quickly and compassionately to this man’s need?
- How does Lamentations 3:22–23 strengthen your confidence that God’s mercy is still new in your present valley?

### **Promise #2 – The Example of Absolute Trust: Your Humble and Obedient Faith Moves Mountains (Matthew 8:8–9)**

The centurion replies, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed.” This is one of the clearest pictures of humility and faith in the Gospels. The sermon emphasizes that the centurion understood what many religious people missed—when Jesus speaks, reality changes.

This man believed that Jesus cared and He had complete authority over all of creation. merely that Jesus cared, but that Jesus had complete authority. The sermon connects this to the broader truth of Scripture: the same Word that said, “Let there be light,” is the Word the centurion trusted to bring healing into a home in Capernaum. Humility always precedes God’s blessing, and absolute trust rests not in feelings or outcomes, but in the power and authority of the Savior.

- Why do you think the centurion felt unworthy, and how does that humility deepen the beauty of his faith?

- What does it mean in practical terms to trust that when Jesus speaks, reality changes?
- Where are you being called right now to stop managing everything yourself and simply trust the authority of Christ?

### **Promise #3 – The Model of Unwavering Faith: Christ Honors True Faith and Reveals Eternal Realities (Matthew 8:10–13)**

Jesus marvels at the centurion’s faith and says, “with no one in Israel have I found such faith.” The sermon notes how striking this is: the Lord praises the faith of a Gentile outsider while exposing the unbelief of many who were religiously near but spiritually far. This becomes not only a miracle story, but a warning and an invitation.

- Why do you think Jesus praised this centurion’s faith so publicly and strongly?
- What warning do verses 11–12 give to people who assume they are spiritually safe without real faith in Christ?
- Which model best describes your life right now: unwavering faith or unbelieving familiarity?

## **Section 3 – EMBRACE**

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### **Applying God’s Word**

Go deeper into the Word of God by applying what you’ve learned to your life today. Reflect on these action steps and discuss how you can live out the truths from Matthew 8:5–13.

#### ***Bring Your Valley to Christ***

Identify one area of pain, grief, anxiety, or uncertainty where you have quietly wondered, “Does God care about this?” Write that burden down and bring it before the Lord in prayer this week, following the example of the centurion who laid his need before Jesus with urgency and humility.

#### ***Trust the Power of His Word***

Choose one promise from Scripture that speaks into your current pain, fear, or sorrow, and meditate on it daily. The sermon emphasizes that when Jesus speaks, reality changes, so spend time each day reading God’s Word and asking Him to shape your response through truth rather than fear.

#### ***Intercede for Someone Who Is Hurting***

The centurion came to Jesus not only for himself, but for someone else who was suffering terribly. Think of one hurting person in your life – a friend, neighbor, family member, or church member – and bring them before the Lord in prayer this week. Consider reaching out with a note, a call, a visit, or an invitation to worship so they know they are not forgotten.

#### ***Memorize and Reflect***

Memorize this verse this week and reflect on how humble faith in Christ turns mountains into molehills – not because the trial is small, but because the Savior is great. Share with your group how this truth challenges or comforts you in your present season.

**Matthew 11:28** (NLT) – Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”

## Closing Challenge and Prayer

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The question “Does God care?” is not answered with a shallow slogan, but with the compassionate authority of Jesus Christ. In Matthew 8:5-13, the Savior meets a desperate man, honors humble faith, and proves that no valley is too deep, no burden too heavy, and no distance too great for His power and mercy. As a group, pray for one another to bring every hurt honestly to Christ, to trust His authority fully, and to live with unwavering faith in a hurting world.

- Prayer: Father, thank You that when life hurts and my heart begins to ask whether You still care, You answer me through Your Son. Thank You for showing me that Jesus is not distant from suffering, but full of compassion, power, and authority. Teach me to come to you with humility, urgency, and trust. Help me believe that when You speak, reality changes, and when You move, no valley is wasted. Use my life to carry the hope of Christ to others who are hurting. In Jesus’ name, Amen.