

The Opposite of Faith

Sunday, July 19, 2026

KEY PASSAGES

Luke 7:1-10 (NIV)

When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." So Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

FIVE KEY POINTS

- 1 Doubt is not the opposite of faith.** The little woodpecker doubts that peck at you now and then come with faith rather than against it. When they show up, the father's prayer in Mark 9 fits: Lord, help me overcome my unbelief.
- 2 The opposite of faith is control.** When we try to fix a health scare or a fraying relationship on our own steam, our faith is in us and our effort, not in the one who deserves it.
- 3 Faith gets real when you hand the situation over.** The centurion doesn't ask Jesus to come and manage things. He says just say the word, and lets go of a situation he was used to controlling.
- 4 God often won't fight you for control.** When we insist on running things ourselves, he often lets us have our way. It is when we finally give up control that he steps in and acts.
- 5 What your faith rests on matters more than how strong it feels.** Put it in Jesus and it holds, because he is the one who won't let you down.

STORIES & ILLUSTRATIONS

The rocket sled off the back of a truck. A stunt crew called the DD Squad worked out the physics: run backward off a moving truck at the same speed it is going forward, and you land clean. One of them strapped into a rocket sled and did it at 80 km an hour, and nailed the landing. Believing the physics is one thing; betting your body on it is what made his faith real.

Taking his hands off the wheel. He traded a 2015 Corolla for a 2026 with lane-assist, and the first time the car steered itself down the bypass it felt wrong to let go. Sometimes he would fight it, flicking the signal to pull over for new potatoes while the car pulled back into the lane. He used it to picture the tug-of-war we get into with God over control.

The aunt who turned it around. A young seminary student rushed to his dying aunt's side, desperate to know she had trusted her life to Jesus, but she kept waving him off. On his last day he finally asked, Auntie, do you know Jesus? Without opening her eyes she turned and said, the important thing is that Jesus knows me.

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902-894-4721 · info@charlottetowncrc.org · charlottetowncrc.org

Created by Levi Ewald