PART 1

THE MESSIAH

Above and Below

We are now entering the part of the story we refer to as "The Messiah." It is the story of Jesus that is found in the four gospels. As we continue to look at the overall theme of TRUST, we want to learn from a remarkable encounter Jesus has with a Roman centurion. Jesus says that he has "not found anyone in Israel with such great faith." As a soldier, this centurion well understood the concept of authority. He had people above him and people below him. Jesus was impressed because the centurion brought humility in his relationships with those above him and he brought responsibility in his relationships with those below him.

Scripture: Matthew 8:5-13

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Reflection:

Questions:

1. What does the "corporate ladder" mean to you? Are you climbing the ladder currently? Are you looking for the ladder? Are you afraid of heights?

2. What is your understanding of "communism"? In what way is this social and political system at odds with the idea that we all have someone "above" and "below" us?

3. Jesus shared life with some incredible men and women of faith. Why do you think he was so profoundly struck by the faith of this centurion?

4. With those "above" us, we are to bring humility. What might that look like for you? What does it mean to bring humility into our relationship with Jesus Christ?

5. With those "below" us, we are to bring responsibility. What might that look like for you? How can you build trust with those who see you as an authority?

6. Read Matthew 8:11. When we take communion (which is not to be confused with "communism"!), it is referred to as coming to "the table." When we come to the table, we are all equal – whether Jew/Gentile, rich/poor, old/young. Do you feel you have a good balance of "above," "below" and "equal" in your relationships?