



Sunday, September 13, 2020

Sermon #17 from the Book of John

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“The Faith of a Nobleman”

John 4:43-54 (King James Version)

Welcome to everyone here in person or listening via media or FM signal today; you’re as much a part of our gathering as if you are seated in the sanctuary. We’re continuing our series in the Gospel of John and will finish Chapter 4. This is another step in the biography of the life of Jesus Christ and His ministry through the eyes of His great disciple, John. He lived the longest of all the disciples; most died young as martyrs. In the last letters he wrote, I John, II John, and III John he called the Christians to whom he wrote “little children” because he was so old he earned the right to call them children. I’ll set the stage for where we pick up today with this account of Jesus’ ministry.

Last week we finished a three sermon study on the “Woman at the Well.” At the beginning of Chapter 4, Jesus and His disciples are traveling from southern Judea up to Galilee. They were called by God to travel that distance of about 80 miles from one location to the other. Most Jews did not go straight up from Judea to Galilee; they took a westward or eastward course and then converged in Galilee avoiding the area of Samaria. The Samaritans were half-Jew/half-Gentile and Jews did not want to associate with them; there was a mutual hatred among the two groups. Jesus and His disciples walked straight through Samaria to the city of Sychar where He had a “divine” appointment with a woman, but she did not know it. He met her at Jacob’s Well and brought her to the knowledge that He is the Son of God, the Savior. If you remember, she was an outcast in her community and came during the noontime when no one else would be around. After she accepted Him, she ran back to Sychar to tell everyone what happened. Through her witness, many people of Samaria were saved that day. By the saving grace of Jesus Christ, it shows us that no person is outside the reach of His love. Jews may have hated the Samaritans, but God loved them!

Two days later Jesus continues north towards Galilee and arrives at Cana of Galilee where He performed His first miracle—turning water into wine at a wedding feast. We read: ⁴³Now after two days he departed thence and went into Galilee. ⁴⁴For Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. ⁴⁵Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast. ⁴⁶So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him and besought him that he would come down and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸Then said Jesus unto him, **Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.** ⁴⁹The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. ⁵⁰Jesus saith unto him, **Go thy way; thy son liveth.** And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. ⁵¹And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. ⁵²Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. ⁵³So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. ⁵⁴This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.”

So Jesus met the woman at the well and many residents at Sychar; then traveled to Cana which completed the 80 mile journey from down south in Judea to Galilee. Why did He move from Judea into Galilee? Look at verse 44. In Judea Jesus was ministering in Jerusalem; He performed great miracles there. People saw these miracles and witnessed God’s power and yet they refused to let them point that this is the Son of God. Interesting—this is Jerusalem—Jesus spent time

in the temple there; Bethlehem, where He was born, was only five-and-a-half miles away. He was in His home country but the people who saw and marveled at His miracles would not accept Him in that place at that time as Savior. They looked at Jesus like He was some kind of magician, so He did not find honor in His own country. Because of the unbelief He found in Judea, Jesus said I'm going to travel back to Galilee where people will hear Me, see the miracles, and see Me as the Son of God. Very important: Jesus is going back to where people will receive Him as Savior. Because of unbelief in the hardest of hearts is why Jesus made this trip. His greatest miracles are performed where people's deepest faith will be. This is important for us today, church! This is a principle that's still alive and at work in the church of the living Lord Jesus Christ. God will use, bless, and increase the territory where the people's faith is the deepest. God is going to create the greatest miracle through the people of God who believe in Him the most, who trust Him in the deepest way. We want to be that people of deep faith through whom Jesus will work because we believe in what He'll do through us. We trust Him, follow Him, believe Him, and proclaim Him as the Son of God and the Savior.

We're going to be protected, safe, and take every precaution we possibly can; we're going to be wise and disinfect, etc. but we cannot live in fear of a virus. Faith always outweighs fear! If fear gets a foothold, ministry stops right then, right there. Being scared or fearful is not going to keep us from doing the ministry the Lord Jesus opens to you and me. When Jesus comes back to Galilee, He gets a great reception and meets faithful people. He's seen as the Son of God coming into town, and then He meets a nobleman at Cana. We're not really sure what "nobleman" means—perhaps a town official or a man of great means highly respected. Remember, he is not from Cana; he's from Capernaum about twenty miles away. Scripture does not say if he's Jew or Gentile. He had heard about Jesus, His ministry, and His miracles. Somehow he knew Jesus was coming to Cana or was already there. This nobleman walks twenty miles from Capernaum to Cana in order to meet Jesus. Why make such a trip? Because he had a son at home dying from a fever. This nobleman knew only Jesus could help this situation—not the doctors. Look at verse 47. The King James translation says "besought"; others say implore or beg. The Greek word for besought is "ero'ta"—meaning he asked Jesus over and over again to please come to Capernaum to heal his son. Parents, we understand his heart. If we have a child who is very sick, we're at the feet of Jesus asking for His help. Read verse 48. Jesus is not rebuking or rejecting this man. He says many people have seen Me for miracles, for the healing power of God but they won't believe who I am. They can't see past the miracles, but My goal is for you to see the power of God in a miracle and see past the miracle that I'm the Son of God, that I'm the Savior of God. Not only can I heal the body, I can heal the heart and soul. I can forgive sin. See past the miracle of who I really am. A miracle is not an act of magic; it's an act of the power of God. See His power in Me, His Son. He asks the nobleman—do you believe? He continues to beg Jesus to please go with him; please walk the twenty miles to my home in Capernaum. Jesus simply says "Go home; your son lives." Read verse 50. The word believe in this verse is the entire centerpiece of the whole account of Jesus' life. The nobleman believed; he saw past the miracle to believe this is the Son of God—the only one who could do the healing. Then, he stopped begging. He's relieved and calmed down—my son lives—Jesus said it and it happened.

The nobleman started for home but didn't make it that same day; his trip goes on into the next day. As he's traveling, two or three excited servants come from his house and meet him saying "Your son is living!" The fever broke and he became well about the seventh hour yesterday; by the Jewish clock that's about 1:00 pm. Read verse 53. The father believed at the exact moment that Jesus said your son is going to live is the exact moment twenty miles away when his son's fever broke, he sat up, and felt better and better. Have you ever had the experience as a believer that you prayed or asked God for a request and you knew the exact moment He answered it? Do all of us have that realization of when He took care of that need or request? I've seen those kinds of miracles on a regular basis for a lot of years. I'm so thankful that there have been so many times when I've gone to a hospital or someone's home and I'll be met by a family member who said we prayed today that you could come. Here you are at the exact moment we prayed and wanted you to come!

In the course of my regular routine when I visit I realize this is the exact moment I'm to be at that hospital room or home. I believe every single one of us lives on a divine time table. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we follow Him and He takes us exactly where we need to be at exactly the right time! You and I have no knowledge of that; it's His divine time table, and He puts us where we need to be. I truly, completely believe we live on His time table and not our own when we trust Him in faith. It's still a principle we live by. This nobleman believed Jesus as the Son of God; believed him as Savior. He went home, and Scripture says he led his whole family to Jesus as Savior. Jesus never went to his house in Capernaum; He spoke the word twenty miles away and the son was healed! The whole family was saved by the witness of the nobleman. We have to remember we live by the same principle—our faith in Christ goes out into the world. We don't just close the doors here; we go out to take the gospel, the witness, and the representation of Jesus Christ out of this church and into the world. We want Jesus to be seen, just as the nobleman wanted Jesus to come to his house. You and I, two thousand years later, take Jesus where we go and represent Him there. It's the gospel of Christ living in us that the world needs to know. Our faith in Christ goes into the world; we are vessels to carry Jesus to the world. We take Him where He needs to be this week. The nobleman's son physically lived; it's interesting to note his family eternally lived. Yes, the son was healed but by the presence of Jesus Christ, the entire family was healed of sin.

I want to explain a word in today's passage, verse 54. This was not the second miracle of Jesus' ministry. In John Chapter 2 Scripture tells us Jesus brought forth many miracles in Jerusalem. John is saying this is the second miracle He brought in Cana of Galilee. First one—water to wine; second one—healing of the nobleman's son.

Let's look at those two miracles: The first when Jesus changes water into the finest wine at the wedding feast. His mother comes and tells Him they're out of wine—can't you help them? He simply gave the word to the servants who filled the water pots; it was right at His hand. The second miracle occurred twenty miles away. Jesus spoke, and the miracle happened. John's gospel teaches us here that the Lord is concerned for every need no matter what the need is, and His power is available to reach any need, anywhere, at any time because He has the authority over time and space. He can meet any need in your life and mine. He will minister the need of your child or grandchild sitting right beside you. He will minister to you if you lift up the name of a missionary halfway around the world; He'll bless that person you may not know. He can answer any prayer, any time, and any way He so chooses. Jesus *always* answers prayer. His answers might not always be according to our will or how we think they ought to be answered; we're very imperfect and our knowledge is not perfect but we know His answer will always be right, it will always be timely, and always right for the long term. I believe prayer is the most powerful tool we have at our disposal—a direct connection with Almighty God. It's been said prayer can do what God can do.

The Lord teaches us in order to see His miracles, His work, His power we need to ask. In John 16:23 Jesus says "...**Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.**" The primary word is ask. One of the problems with prayer (and it's mine too; I'm not pointing fingers!) is that we don't use it enough. We're not on our knees enough, not in our prayer closets enough. I pray as a church collectively we'll be pray-ers and will go to the Lord in prayer, lay every need at the feet of His grace knowing He'll take care of us. Listen, friends, we know this is an awesome prayer of God in the passage above. What greater promise could ever be made? "You ask; I will answer." That's one hundred percent true by the truth of the Bible—we ask and it will be answered one hundred percent of the time! The Bible assures us we can utterly trust the Lord in prayer. He is absolutely and always listening. Every prayer is answered according to the will and plan of God Almighty.

Here's my charge to us, church! **We need to pray every day!!** I don't mean "Thank you God for the trees and the grass"—I mean prayers that lay our hearts at His feet where our needs are. Pray for those things in our lives we know

need the power of God to affect, change, heal, and give direction. We're to pray for the sick, the lost. Most of us (myself included) have someone in our lives who needs Jesus as Lord and Savior. I want us take a lesson from the nobleman—ask every day over and over and over again for the salvation of that loved one. The nobleman asked Jesus over and over “heal my son.” The Lord loves us to ask, and He promises He will answer. Never give up on prayer! Just ask. Sometimes we have to ask over and over. Pray for God to keep your children and grandchildren safe. I pray every day for my two grandsons to be protected from the lies of this world. I pray You will surround them and engulf them in Your love, grace, and protection. Allow them to hear the truth of Jesus Christ as little boys growing up. When they start school, Lord, protect them and lead them always in Your truth. Help me, Lord, to instill in them Your truth. If you've ever needed to pray these things for your children and grandchildren, it is today! Our country is under a tremendous siege of lies. Pray! Ask for protection over and over! Pray for the United States to come back to God! All of us know how our country has walked away—removing His name from the courthouses, taking His prayer out of the classroom, removing Him from almost every institution. Pray for the restoration of worship of God in our country. We're headed in the wrong direction, but there's still a blessing coming for our country. Why? Because there's a remnant of people willing to pray. We need to be those people praying for the salvation of our country and leaders, especially in light of the upcoming election. Pray for God to work and act through His people in this country. Pray over and over until we see the answer just like the nobleman did. Pray in His name; never pray outside His name! He tells us “Ask the Father through Me, and I will answer.” I'm calling us today for a recommitment of daily, heartfelt prayer where you ask for the needs that you have, on behalf of others, on behalf of our country. Ask over and over for God's healing. As we seek Him, He promises to answer. My prayer is that we'll commit ourselves to prayer—myself included. Let's commit to not leaving out the most essential part of our day.

If you're here today and have never received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, you don't have to walk twenty miles to reach Him. He's waiting for you; He's right beside you. He's ministering to you. He's “wooing” you. He's calling you to know Him as Lord and Savior. Just say “Yes” to Him; give Him your heart, your life. Say Lord, I believe I'm a sinner but by the old rugged cross and empty tomb, You gave Your life that I might live. I want You; I need You, and today I accept You. Make that public. Will we commit to prayer? Will we give our lives and hearts to the Lord anew?

Let Us Pray: Our Father, our God, thank You for these moments. Thank you for the example of the nobleman. We don't know much about Him but we know this: He asked for Jesus over and over about the healing of his son. Ultimately he was saved and took Jesus to his own family. Help us who are believers, Lord, to believe in prayer and to exercise it every day. Help us as we walk out in this world to take Jesus with us as representatives, as witnesses, as Your people showing the gospel to those who need You. Bless that one who needs You as Savior right now, this moment—just a little walk down the aisle, not twenty miles, or kneeling where they are at home. Bless them as they say “Yes!” to you. Amen.