

Transcript

The Jesus Story - Healing the Nobleman's Son

Reading from John chapter four verse forty three. We have been looking at the Life of Jesus, and when we arrived at John chapter four we found the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well.

After a very successful two day visit to the town where she lived, we read that Jesus then moved on to Galilee. We find this in verse forty three. Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. This is where we find the second miracle of Jesus recorded in John's gospel: the story of Jesus healing a royal nobleman's son.

During His ministry, Jesus performed more than 40 miracles; these included healing the sick, changing the natural elements of nature, and even raising people from the dead. Now, a miracle is described simply as an event that occurs outside the bounds of natural law. Today I would like us to look at the second miracle that Jesus performed in Cana. We find this in John chapter four and verse forty three:

43 Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee.

44 For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honour in his own country.

45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.

46 So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.

Now, here is the simple overview of what happened. While Jesus was preaching in Galilee a nobleman, that is a royal official, from the city of Capernaum approached and begged Jesus to come heal his dying son. Instead of going to Capernaum, Jesus told the nobleman to go back home. His son would live.

The nobleman "took Jesus at his word" and returned home to find his son well. The fever had gone at the same hour Jesus had said he would live.

Now this man had travelled all the way from Capernaum to see Jesus. This would have been a journey of over twenty miles. This tells us this man loved his son. It also tells us that he believed that Jesus had the power to heal his son.

Well, that is the brief outline of the story. What I would like to do now is to look a little closer and see just what we can learn from this.

We pick the story up in verse 45:

45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.

In Samaria Jesus has just enjoyed an overwhelming success, but Jesus finds that the people in Galilee are much different than those he met in Samaria. He had not performed any miracles in Samaria yet many had believed in him.

The Galileans in today's story welcome him not because he might be the Messiah but because they had witnessed his activity in Jerusalem.

In today's story Jesus returns to Cana after travelling around Samaria and it appears that the people in Galilee needed to see miracles before they would believe.

46 So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.

47 When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

This is where we are introduced to the three main characters in the story.

The nobleman: the identity of this nobleman is not known. From the term itself we find that he was not himself a prince or a ruler but an officer or steward of a ruler. Since he was stationed in Capernaum, it is very likely that he was a Jew who served as an officer in Herod's court.

We can say that this nobleman was a man in a position of authority and honour, and that he came to Jesus in Cana because his son lay sick in Capernaum. Again, we are not told the type of sickness that the son suffered but it must have been serious.

Then we have the sick son. We learn in verse 47 that this boy lay at the brink of death. This was not a sudden illness, but one that had lingered, leaving the boy in a severely weakened condition. Nothing could be done from a medical point of view to save this son from certain death. His disease had taken control of him and death was inevitable.

Out of desperation this nobleman hurried to Jesus who he recognized as the only hope for his son. When we read the surface story concerning the part that the son played in this incident, if we are not careful we can miss some very valuable lessons.

The third character we see is Jesus. When the nobleman involves Jesus in his problems he finds that his son; his greatest problem, becomes his greatest blessing. The son of a royal official was sick with a fever.

Even though this boy's father was a very important man there was nothing that could be done to make his son well. The son was so sick he was going to die. The father was seriously worried about his son and he needed to find someone to help him. Maybe the teacher, Jesus, could help.

People were saying that Jesus was travelling from city to city teaching people about God and performing miracles. Some said that Jesus could even make sick people well. When the royal official heard that Jesus was in the city of Cana, the boy and his father lived in the city of Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee so it would take all day to get to Cana.

But this was so important that the distance did not matter to the father. He set out right away so that he could go and get Jesus. If Jesus came to his house he could make the boy well again.

This story of Jesus healing the son of a nobleman serving in King Herod's court may

be brief, but it is loaded with spiritual information helpful to growing our faith and our relationship with Jesus.

To really see the big picture here we need to see this problem, first of all from the father's viewpoint, and try to understand just what he was going through. This nobleman would by now have used every means that money could buy to restore this boy's health, but money was not the answer. The sickness was getting worse, so much so that the nobleman's son lay at the point of death.

There is a lesson we need to be constantly reminded of. The rich are just as open to sickness as the poor; no amount of money can lift any man beyond the reach of trouble. They may be able to shut out debt and destitution, but they cannot shut out care, disease, and death.

To the father, all that he could understand is that this child's is about to die, the bible tells us very clearly: for he was at the point of death.

When we see how the father handled this situation, there are some very valuable lessons to be learned. He must have known of Jesus' reputation as a miracle-worker, so he left his son at Capernaum and came to ask for Jesus' help in his desperate plight.

Just try for one moment to put yourself in this father's place. He is a very influential rich and powerful man. He has all that anyone could wish for, but he has a massive problem. He has a child that he loves dearly who the bible describes very clearly as being; at the point of death. His power, money and influence is no help. This child is going to die.

When we look closely at this situation this child is a real heart-breaking problem. But the man's urgent need shows that he has faith of a kind in the power of Jesus to help. This man came with the passion and urgency of a father with a sick child who was at the point of death. A problem like this certainly concentrates the mind.

The position, wealth and the extravagant court life was now empty and useless this all was now. The thing that consumed this father most The cries of his son with a raging fever!

This is the first lesson that we learn. Where do we go when we have a problem we cannot handle? This father found the answer.

47 When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

The nobleman pleaded, with Jesus to come to Capernaum and heal his son. This father laid aside all rank and authority and in humility recognized his need for Jesus to heal his son. Humbly he addressed Jesus:

"Sir, Sir, come down before my child dies!"

We need to look at just who this father is. The father in this story was not a peasant nor a fisherman of Capernaum, but a court official who worked for King Herod.

Another thing that we need to keep in mind is that Cana and Capernaum were about

twenty miles apart. In all probability this court official walked this distance on foot, which again would reveal how seriously he considered the ministry of Jesus to be.

There could be no more improbable scene in the world than an important court official rushing twenty miles to beg a favour from a village carpenter. This father swallowed his pride. He was in need, and neither convention nor custom stopped him bringing his need to Jesus.

If we want the help that Jesus can give us then we must be humble enough to swallow our pride, and not care what anyone else may say. This man was willing to surrender himself to the spiritual facts before him. Once he heard the great stories of Jesus turning water into wine and healing people of their diseases, he put his ego aside.

The other sign of strong faith we see from this loving father's determination is how he responded after Jesus tested him with this interesting rebuke in front of others.

48 Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

Jesus says this out loud. "Unless you see signs and wonders you will never believe."

But this was not a rebuke. It was merely a test of what was in the nobleman's heart. It was a test of his faith. And the nobleman said to Jesus:

"Sir, come down before my child dies."

In Jesus' previous words, it seemed that He discouraged the nobleman from asking for a miracle. Yet the nobleman's request shows a proper understanding that Jesus did not intend to discourage asking for miraculous help, but to discourage those who were seeking only the miraculous.

The nobleman did not appeal to Jesus on the basis of his noble status but on the basis of his son's great need. Coming before Jesus as a great and important man would gain him nothing. He urged no merit, but pleaded the misery of the case.

When Jesus talked about the people of Galilee not believing without signs and miracles, He was most probably speaking to the crowd around him, because, this man's belief in Jesus was obvious.

50 Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives."

So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. This nobleman simply would not allow himself to become discouraged. The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

50 Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives."

So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.

We read in the Bible: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The nobleman asked no questions and needed no further proof. The word of Jesus was enough. "Your son lives."

This is the amazing thing, when Jesus spoke the word, the fever left the boy, and he was healed. In verse 50, we see the man's faith growing. He exercised what faith

he had, and the Lord gave him more. Jesus sent him home with the promise: “Your son lives.” The son had been healed without any miracle or visible proof. The man believed the word of Jesus and started for home. That is faith in action!

As he was now nearing home, his servants came out to meet him with the happy news that his son was well. The man was not at all shocked by this announcement. He had believed the promise of Jesus, and having believed, he would now see the evidence.

The father inquired of the servants as to the time when his son got better. Their answer revealed that the healing was not gradual, it had taken place instantly. Verse 52:

52 Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.”

53 So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives.”

There could now be not the slightest doubt about this wonderful miracle. At the seventh hour of the previous day, Jesus had said to the nobleman in Cana, “Your son lives.” At the very same hour in Capernaum, the son had been healed, and the fever had left him.

From this the nobleman learned that it was not necessary for Jesus to be physically present to work a miracle or answer prayer. This should encourage all Christians in their prayer life. We have a mighty God who hears our requests and who is able to work out His purposes in any part of the world at any time. The nobleman himself believed, and his whole household.

It is obvious from this and similar verses in the New Testament that God loves to see families united in Christ. It is not His will that there should be divided families in heaven. John takes care to record the fact that the whole household believed.

The point is that when Jesus spoke the word, the fever left the boy, and he was healed. “Go your son lives.

This story of Jesus healing the son of a nobleman serving in King Herod’s court may be brief, but it is loaded with spiritual information. Information that could help us in developing our faith and in our ongoing relationship with Jesus.

This father did not plead that the boy was of noble birth, that would have been the wrong way to approach Jesus; Nor, did he describe what a lovely child he was, that would have been a poor argument; but he pleaded that he was at the point of death.

His extremity was his reason for urgency, the child was at death’s door. Therefore his father begs that another door may be opened and, that is the door of mercy may open.

Jesus severely tested this man’s faith, forcing him to believe in Jesus’ word alone and not in any outward demonstration of the miraculous. Signs and wonders from God are obviously a good thing, but they should not form the foundation of our faith. We should not depend on them to prove God to us. In themselves, signs and wonders cannot change the heart.

“Go your way; your son lives.”

Despite the test, the man took Jesus at His word and departed, the nobleman demonstrated that true faith is simply taking Jesus at His word. “Your son lives.”

Jesus did not use any dramatic effects in this healing. Many people want to see dramatic effects in God’s work, and sometimes God provides them. Real faith may see and accept the outward demonstration of the miraculous but does not insist on it.

The nobleman discovers that his son is healed and finds out when it happened. The proof of this miracle was plain. When Jesus proclaimed the boy healed, he was in fact healed, and in a demonstrated way. According to the nobleman’s servants, this happened “yesterday at the seventh hour.”

This meant that the nobleman took his time returning from the meeting with Jesus in Cana, back to his home in Capernaum. His leisurely pace was a demonstration of faith. In fear, the nobleman rushed from Capernaum to Cana; in faith, he walked from Cana back to Capernaum.

“The nobleman was so sure that that his child was alive and well, that he was in no violent hurry to return. He did not rush home as fast as he could in case what Jesus had promised had not happened and he needed to get another doctor. This nobleman, calmly and leisurely travelled back home, confident of what Jesus had said to him had happened.

And he himself believed, and his whole household. The miraculous power of Jesus developed greater faith in both the nobleman and his household. He believed before, but now he believed more. His faith was deepened by his personal experience of God’s power.

Genuine faith is not an emotional feeling but an informed belief. The Jewish royal official asks Jesus to come and heal his son, the desperation in his voice: “Please! I’m begging you! Help him!” Jesus doesn’t rebuke him. He doesn’t turn him away. He simply says, “Go, your son will live.”

What does the official do? He believes. He trusts Jesus, and his trust is more than an emotional response to Jesus. His trust is based on something concrete. It was based on what Jesus said. This man wasn’t riding an emotional high. He was responding to the truth Jesus proclaimed. The words of Jesus are what created this man’s faith.

Genuine conversion happens at the moment when a person takes what the Word of God declares and turns from sin and trusts Christ. Those who are genuinely converted will continue to believe on Jesus Christ.

If you talk to some people who claim to be Christians, and you ask them how they know Jesus Christ has saved them, they point to a past decision. Yet, there’s no evidence in their lives they are actually believers. They are holding on to some experiences in their past. They base their hope on the words of a prayer or a religious experience from the past.

Authentic faith always continues. It doesn’t stop. It doesn’t give up. It doesn’t turn away. Genuine believers will continue to follow Jesus.

Authentic faith always continues; authentic faith is evident when we persevere in

believing and trusting Jesus Christ.

True disciples continue in their faith, growing more and more in their dependence on Jesus Christ.

Authentic faith is an actual commitment, An informed belief, and a growing dependence on Jesus Christ.

Being a true believer in Jesus Christ is more than just being able to point to some past event. The Christian life is seen in just how we live out our faith every day. For genuine Christians, faith begins each morning when our feet hit the floor. Faith goes to work and comes back home at night. Faith falls asleep with us.

For two thousand years the description of a Christian has been a believer. Not a believed but believer. Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your son lives.”

The man didn't stand there wringing his hands and wondering what to do next. He didn't beg Jesus to travel to Capernaum. He didn't ask for proof. He simply took Jesus at His word and departed. When he arrived home, he found that his son had recovered instantly the day before at the very moment when Jesus had spoken the word.

Faith is trusting God with your burdens, knowing that your prayers are already answered.

Now there's a simple definition of faith. It's simply taking Jesus at His word. We need to remember that Romans 10:17 tells us very clearly:

17 Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The official accepted this and went back home. This man “took Jesus at his word” this shows a compelling trust. He really believed that what Jesus said was true. Before reaching home he received the message that his son was well. He found out the exact hour that the boy was healed. This was the same hour that Jesus had said he was healed. The man went to Jesus with a burden and returned home to a blessing.

This miracle has everything to do with the faith of the nobleman. The fact that he immediately accepted what was said to him shows he believed. This miracle is all about this man's faith. Jesus confidently assures him that his son will live. The man took the first step to faith by believing the word of Jesus and acting on it. The sickness of this child had in the end brought great blessing upon his parent's house.

To those who love and believe God, God will bring good out of all their afflictions. All this, remember, hinged upon the son's sickness. If the nobleman's son had never been ill, his father might have lived and died without ever coming to faith! Affliction is one of God's medicines. By it He often teaches lessons which would be learned in no other way. Health is a great blessing, but sanctified disease is a greater. Paul found this through his “Thorn in the flesh”.

Prosperity and worldly comfort, are what we all naturally desire, but losses and crosses are far better for us, if they lead us to closer to the Lord.

Let us beware of complaining in the time of trouble. Let us settle it firmly in our minds

that there is a meaning, a needs to be, and a message from God, in every sorrow that falls upon us. There are no lessons that are as effective as those learned in the school of affliction. There is no commentary that opens up the Bible as much as sickness and sorrow.

The nobleman teaches us how to handle any problem. The first thing that he did was he went to Jesus and implored Him to come down and heal his son, then he believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. The result was that and he himself believed, and his whole household.