

THE NOBLEMAN'S FAITH (Jn. 4:46-54)

46 So 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. 47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea 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. 48 Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. 49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. 50 Jesus 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. 51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. 52 Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. 53 So 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. 54 This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.

So far, how many people has Jesus met in this short period in the early days of His ministry? ... He had met John the Baptist (1:29), at least five of the disciples (Andrew and John, 1:37; Peter, v.42; Philip, v.43; Nathanael, v.49), the bride, bridegroom and guests at the wedding in Cana (2:1-11), ... then to Jerusalem where He went into the temple and met and upset the moneychangers (vv.13-16). Some bystanders were 'taken' temporarily by His miracles (vv.23-24), before Nicodemus visited Him by night (ch.3). Then on His way back to Galilee, ch. 4:3 He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. 4 And He must needs go through Samaria. There He met the woman by the well, and the whole population of Sychar.

Back in Galilee, He made His way again to Cana where He had been a short time previously. ... He did not go to His home town of Nazareth. Instead, He went along to Cana ... v. 44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

The first miracle He performed was at the behest of a woman, - His mother; His second miracle, - also at Cana, - was through the pleading of a father ...

HEARTACHE v.47b,49

- * This was a βασιλικός, a nobleman, an man of high rank in the employment of a ruler ... and, such a person came to a carpenter!
- * Herod was a βασιλικός, ... James uses the word in 2:8, If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.
- * This was an important man in the community. He had servants (v.51), and he was a good and well-liked employer because his servants thought so highly of him they made the effort to meet him as he travelled home ... and He came from over twenty miles away in Capernaum for this meeting with Jesus.
- * What led this man to Jesus? He had a heavy burden upon His heart.
- * The authority he had as a nobleman was of no use to him in his dire need.

- * He walked all that way to meet Jesus because His child was dangerously critically ill and facing death.
- * I would imagine, - beyond any shadow of a doubt, - this man had already contacted all the best physicians in his area. I would imagine he had tried every remedy available to him in Capernaum.
- * He probably never would have thought of coming to Jesus, had it not been for his son's illness, ... but Jesus became his last hope!
- * When you study this passage you come to understand that God used something so drastic as the illness of this little boy to bring this man and his family to Christ. .. How often it is that God puts something in our way to change our direction and bring us to Himself! ... That was what He did here.
- * If you like, here is an example of *a little child shall lead them* (Is. 11:6). This man was brought to Jesus through his dying son.
- * How did he know where to find Jesus? ... He did not stop searching until He did! Is it not a work of grace that Jesus did not make Himself hard to find! ... This man was led to find Jesus, and he would not have returned home without doing so.
- * Indeed, the man had come from one direction, - from Capernaum, - and met with Jesus Who had come from the other direction, from Jerusalem. ... That man had travelled far, but Jesus had travelled even further!
- * You know, it does not matter where you are ... when, in the plan of God, He has for you to meet Him, you will!
- * This man did not allow his job to get in the way, or his position in society ... this man came to Jesus a *beggar*, but he went away *believing*. ... "I am going to look until I find Jesus. I am not going to stop until I meet Him."
- * The man had heard about Jesus, - he had never seen Him, they did not move in the same circles, - but someone told him, and he started looking.
- * *Who* would have told him? It doesn't say ... and it doesn't matter ... for what matters is that he found Jesus!
- * Telling someone about Jesus is a privilege for the child of God ... and we do not need to receive any glory, ... we fade into the background ... *we are speaking about Him*, and that is enough! ... "I once was a stranger to grace and to God, I knew not my danger, and felt not my load; Though friends spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree" ... This man heard about Jesus, and He did not stop until he found Him.
- * Sometimes it is as if Jesus is difficult to find. You are not saved, but you have been looking for Him for a long time. You have attended meetings, you have read His Word, you have even called on Him to save you, you have looked for Him ... but as yet, you have not found Him.

- * ... There is no such thing in the Bible as the Saviour Who does not want to be found.
- * Jesus is not evasive ... He is not trying to hide from you ... so, if you are looking for Him, come at it from another direction ...
- * *Where* are you looking for Him? Are you looking for Him in the right places? Are you looking for Him while you are still holding on to those things you should not be ... you will not let them go, and they are keeping you back? They are hindering you.
- * You want to come, but you are not willing to lay those things aside in order to meet with Jesus. You have got to let them go! ... *Mk. 8:36 what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*
- * This man that came to Jesus ... “nothing in my hand I bring, ... Helpless look to Thee for grace” ... *that is how you must come!* That is the only way.
- * I could go through a whole list of suggestions as to what is holding you back ... but, ‘at the end of the day’, *you know* what is holding you back.
- * Take another look at this man. ... He came to Jesus about his son, but Jesus confronted him about a more immediate need, - the state of his own heart.
- * Jesus understood what was happening. Yes, of course, the man was frantic over his child ... every second, every minute was precious. His little boy *was at the point of death*. ... “Jesus, I don’t have time to talk about me, I don’t have time to discuss this. My son is dying!” But so too was this man ... and he did not realise it! ... He was dying in his sin.
- * He did not recognise his *own* need of the Saviour! ... He was blind *and he could not see it!*
- * He did not know that *he* needed to be born again, and that *he* needed healing and cleansing of *his* own soul! You cannot bring hope to another, if you yourself do not possess that hope ... and this man was standing on the threshold as he met with Christ.
- * Here we see a ‘tiny flicker’ had been started in this man, and Christ was about to make it into a burning flame. Little by little, as ‘the fire was little more than a spark’, the Lord Jesus was working in the situation.
- * But there was still quite a way to go. The faith of the man was so feeble and weak, he reckoned Jesus would actually need to come to his house and do something with the young boy, in order for him to be healed, - his faith was so limited ... but the good thing was ... at least he was there, and he had faith!
- * “Jesus, if You come to my house, ... I have heard about You and what you can do, and if my boy is going to be saved from death ... You could be the One to heal him” ... *v.49 Sir, come down ere my child die*. ... He stood before the Saviour resolved not to go away.

- * He had no idea Jesus could heal his young son there and then, from that very spot! Basically, his faith had very limited understanding.
- * At that point, - Jesus knowing this, - instructed him, *v.50 Go thy way; thy son liveth.*
- * The man came to Jesus saying, *Come (v.49) ...* and Jesus responded by telling him to go ... *Go (v.50) ... Is. 55:8 my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. ... Faith is taking God at His word!*
- * This man was about to find out that Jesus *is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think (Eph. 3:20).*
- * In the midst of this man's **heartache**, we find the grace of God has begun to work in Him, and then we see him ...

HEEDING v.50

- * This man came with nothing ... and to many it seemed as if he was going away with nothing ... but this nobleman was going away with the words of Jesus ringing in his ears, *Go thy way; thy son liveth ... thy son liveth ... thy son liveth.*
- * At the very beginning, he could have sent his servants to Jesus ... but he himself needed to hear for himself the words of the Saviour ... *thy son liveth.*
- * He could also have pleaded, "Jesus, I am a man of means, come to my home" ... but he did not plead on the merits of who he was or what he had.
- * Under the circumstances, they meant nothing. He did not spend time telling Jesus how lovely a child his boy was, but the burden upon his heart pleaded with the Saviour, and the Saviour told him, *v.50 Go thy way; thy son liveth.*
- * Spurgeon was preaching to his congregation, and he used the analogy of the horse and its rider, "A horse does not want a dozen spurs to make it run. ... Yield to it, lest there should be need of a whip as well as spur to make you stir. If you are the Lord's chosen, you will have to come, and the more readily you do so the better will it be for you".
- * This man heeded the Saviour and went! ... Do you see what kind of faith it was? ... This was *practical* faith. Not until He believed Jesus by showing he was willing to go home did he really begin to believe his son would be healed.
- * He had come to Jesus on *his* terms, - "Jesus, come to my house and heal my son" ... but Jesus would only work on His terms, "You return home and you will find your boy healed". This nobleman had to trust Jesus.
- * There is no salvation without trusting in the Saviour ... and *He* does *His* work on *His* terms. We cannot tell Him what to do, or how He should save us. ... "What though I cannot know the way that lies before me? I still can trust and freely follow his commands. ... *I'm in His Hands. I'm in His hands:*

What'er the future holds, I'm in His Hands. The days I cannot see have all been planned for me: His way is best you see: I'm in His hands."

* Gently and gradually, that was the point to which Jesus led this man who had a deep **heartache** for his dying son. He **heeded** the Saviour and began on his way home.

* On his way home, ... he had to be on his way, ... he had to obey Christ, 51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. The **heartache**, the **heeding** ... and finally, the ...

HEALING v.51b

* *Thy son liveth.* ... Those were the words he wanted to hear from the lips of Jesus. That was enough for him.

* It is not the thoughts in your head that saves. It is not your efforts, - no matter how good they are, - that saves. It is not coming to church that saves. It is coming in repentance to the Saviour, asking Him to forgive your sin, and handing your life to Him ... "Jesus, take me as I am; I can come no other way". Jn. 6:47 *He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. ... 37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

* *Thy son liveth.* ... The man went home believing! He went home expecting to see his little boy waiting to greet him at the door.

* Even when the servants ran to him shouting *Thy son liveth ... Thy son liveth ...* he already knew it in his mind and heart *because Jesus had said it.*

* That is how faith works. We are not depending upon man's words or abilities, but upon what God can do.

* But even at this point, notice the way the nobleman phrased the question to his servants, *v.52 Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend.*

* The nobleman was expecting it to be a process that might last a few days, maybe even a few weeks, - so severe was the illness, - ... but the servants told him it was *yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him (v.52)* ... it was at the exact moment the Lord Jesus had spoken! ... "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me! ... How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed!"

* You see, at best, he expected a gradual improvement ... because that is the way it usually happens, - if it was going to happen at all. But the work of Christ far surpassed anything he had dared believe ... The great difference then was that Christ was in the centre of his problem!

* But let's also be careful to commend this man again. The servants told him it was *yesterday at the seventh hour* (1pm) his son was healed ... *yesterday!*

- * ... Now, the father could have walked the distance in less time than that!
- * If he had started off walking to Capernaum, he could have been home late that evening, or in the early hours of the morning ... but he obviously was not in the hurry he had been in when he first came to Jesus, ... why? ... Because Jesus had promised him, *Thy son liveth* ... and he was resting, satisfied and content in the promise of God!
- * He believed his son would be healed and, as a consequence, the anxiety left him when the peace of God reigned in his heart and soul.
- * When you trust Christ, whether you are a believer or coming to Him for the first time, - you must not make do with only 'half-believing' Him ... you must believe Him with your whole being ... for that was what this man did ... *v.53 and himself believed, and his whole house.*
- * ... At the *seventh* hour ... the hour of perfection ... Christ healed his son.
- * Jesus was in Cana, the nobleman's son was in Capernaum ... and yet the distance was no object to God's grace. Maybe you are praying for a loved one to be saved. You might not see them as often as you would like, and when you are talking to them you might not always get the opportunity you would like to talk about Jesus ...
- * It might even be that if you were to speak to them about Jesus you would get no more response than what the father received from this sick young boy.
- * Here, though, the story of this man teaches us distance is no obstacle, and absence is no obstacle, and even the deepest spiritual state is no obstacle. ... Christ can save from the 'guttermost' to the uttermost!
- * Like many of us here in this hall, we have loved ones unsaved, and I'm sure it would be your greatest desire to experience what happened in this home ... *himself believed, and his whole house.*
- * The husband, the wife, the son ... any other family ... and all the servants!
- * That is what I trust you are praying for ... and it can happen!
- * Imagine the father sitting down with his son ... this new life his son had received, and he tells the boy about his meeting with Jesus. And you can imagine the young boy, - sitting on his father's knee, eyes wide open and excited. The father would have told his boy Jesus said, *Thy son liveth* ... and you can hear the little boy on his father's knee, "I believe in Jesus too!"
- * What a precious experience it must have been ... and for the servants ... "We watched your son when you were away for those hours, and the nurse mopped his brow, and we watched him as the life was ebbing away from him ... And then, - at the *seventh hour yesterday*, something wonderful happened

* ... The boy opened his eyes, and he sat up in his bed, he put his legs over the side and he wanted to play, just as he had done before! ... Jesus worked a miracle, and we believe in Him too!”

CONCLUSION

* What a happy home! That was the happiest home, not just in Capernaum, but in the whole region of Galilee!

* Previously the Saviour had turned water into wine, but this miracle was even more precious, - He had given this young boy new life ... but He had also given that same new life to this whole household.

* It took a catastrophe to bring Christ into their circumstances ... May the Lord save us from such adversity, but nevertheless, we want to see our loved ones saved ...

* This man came from the completely opposite direction Jesus came from ... and yet Jesus met him.

* From eternity, God had decreed this man's meeting with the Saviour ... and you pray for your loved ones too.

* Don't give up on them being saved! Pray for them! Constantly bring them before the Lord.

* If you are not saved, you are in dire need of Christ to save you. It does not matter who you are or what you have done ... it is no obstacle to His grace.

* It does not matter what the devil is telling you. He might be telling you you're wasted and hopeless. He could be telling you Christ is not interested in someone like you ... Well, the devil is a liar ... and everything that comes from is a lie ... and he does not want to lose you to Christ.

* It is not that he loves you, - because he does not, - the devil does not know how to love, he cannot love. He does not want to lose you because he wants to deprive Christ of your soul, he wants you to live a most miserable life, and he wants you to suffer in hell forever, as he will suffer!

* Believe in Him today. ... It is foolishness to reject Christ and His offer of salvation.

* Believer, you keep on believing in Him, more than ever ... See the beautiful picture here of what the Saviour did for this whole household!

* May God answer the prayers of His people and, - in His wonderful grace, - spare us to see this miracle of salvation working, - to His glory, - in each of our own homes!