

JUNE 14, 2020

LESSON 2

# MIRACLES OF JESUS

## THE NOBLEMAN'S SON HEALED (JOHN 4:46-54)

### A Desperate Father

A royal official, who likely worked for Herod Antipas or the Roman government, was the beneficiary of Jesus' second miracle performed in Galilee (see John 4:54). This government employee, a non-Jew, hurriedly traveled 15 miles from Capernaum to Cana to find Jesus. He was desperate for Jesus' help because his son was on the verge of death. Jesus' fame as a miracle worker had spread, and this father had nowhere else to turn. He pleaded with Jesus: "Come down before my child dies."<sup>1</sup>

Upon hearing the desperate father's request, Jesus said, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." The pronoun "you" is plural, letting us know Jesus is not talking about just this man. Rather, Jesus is lamenting that people in general were transfixed on the miracles and would not embrace him as the Messiah.

You can almost hear the wheels turning in this man's head. "Well, Jesus, we've all got problems; you want people to believe...but that doesn't help me. Not today!" The father, his despair growing, pleaded with Jesus. "Sir, come down before my child dies." Having the man's full attention, Jesus then said to him, "Go. Your son lives."

Here is the quandary: The desperate father wants Jesus to come back with him to Capernaum and heal his son. But Jesus refused to go. The man "believed the word that Jesus spoke to him" and started off (v. 50). After all, what choice did the man have? Jesus had made it plain that he wasn't going to Capernaum with him.

While traveling back home, he was greeted by some of his servants. They excitedly told him about his son's sudden recovery. Elated, the father asked when he started to get better. When they told him, it



Excavations of ancient Capernaum. Many houses and shops have been identified. In the background is the Sea of Galilee.

<sup>1</sup> The father said to Jesus, "Come down," but we would say, "Come up" or "over." Cana is northeast of Capernaum, but lower in elevation. By saying "come down," the father is speaking conventionally. Watch for this as you read the Gospels. (Examples include Luke 2:4, 42, 51, which describe Jesus traveling from Nazareth to Jerusalem. See also Luke 4:31a.)

suddenly dawned on him it was at the exact moment Jesus had said to him, "Your son lives." At that moment, he believed!

### The Importance of Faith in Jesus

The Gospel of John has been popularly dubbed, "the Gospel of Belief." And that shouldn't surprise us because the concept of belief is used more than a hundred times in the Gospel of John. In fact, three times in this passage, the verb "believe" is used (vv. 48, 50, 53). Jesus performed this miracle in such a way as to bolster the man's faith in him.

His story also helps us to "believe that Jesus is the Christ" (John 20:31). It's not enough to just believe that Jesus can perform miracles. His miracles point to a greater truth: He is the Son of God.

### Jesus Loves Everybody

Jesus loves all people. But the purpose of his ministry was to focus on the Jewish people, not Gentiles (Matt 15:24; cf. Matt 10:6). Even though this man was a Gentile, Jesus still helped him, showing us an example of how Jesus loved all people.

It's interesting that Jesus lavished great praise on many Gentiles who had genuine faith in him, including a centurion (Luke 7:9), a Samaritan leper (Luke 17:17-18), and a Gentile mother (Matt 15:28). That's what he's looking for today as well. He wants people who have genuine faith in him, which is exactly what the father exemplified (John 4:53). Ultimately, Jesus came to heal people of their spiritual malady of sin. And this Gentile, as relieved as he was about his son, came to realize that Jesus was much more than just a miracle worker.

### We Must Start Where We Are

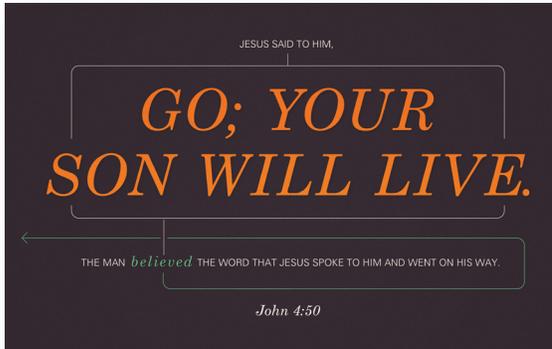
We're not all spiritual giants. We're not all pillars in the church (cf. Gal 2:9), at least not yet. But it takes starting where we are, right now. Did this government official face ridicule by other members of Herod's court? Perhaps, but that didn't stop him. Another obstacle in his way was the long distance. Notice he didn't send a servant on the 15-mile trek: He took the journey himself.

### We Risk Criticism

We today face criticism because of our stand for truth. We believe and serve Jesus, which means we go to church every Sunday and avoid engaging in sin, such as promiscuity, listening to certain kinds of music, viewing certain movies, or going to gambling casinos.

### Belief Takes Us To New Heights

When we accept the Gospel and truly live it, we experience forgiveness and peace. This can only happen because we allow ourselves to take the less-traveled road and trust in Jesus. That's because walking by faith leads us toward heaven.



We walk by faith,  
not by sight.

—2 Cor 5:7