

The Seven Signs of John: **Jesus heals an official's son John 4:43-54**

Introduction: Last week Jesus performed his first sign changing the water into wine revealing himself to the world, thanks to his mother's encouragement, as the true Lord of the feast who brings the wine of joy into a situation that would have resulted in lifelong disaster for a young newlywed couple in Cana at their wedding feast. The significance of this miracle, turning water into wine, was to show who he truly was, the Messiah, the Son of God and point to the fact that his message from God is credible. He revealed his glory and his five disciples believed in him. By believing in him the disciples had LIFE in His Name. He then travels to Capernaum before leaving for Jerusalem for the Jewish Passover where he clears the temple courts of unscrupulous traders and then goes on to perform many miracles so that the Jews at the Passover festival began to believe in his name- God Saves! Even one Jewish religious leader, a Pharisee named Nicodemus, who came to him in the dead of night and was told by Jesus that he must be born again. After this Jesus and his disciples go into the Judean countryside to baptising people gaining a much greater following than John his cousin. Such was his popularity that it attracted the attention of the Pharisees, so he left to return to Galilee. On this journey through Samaria he meets a woman at a well. In this encounter Jesus is able to tell her exactly what her current life situation was and offer her 'living water' that leads to Eternal Life, an offer which she accepted and then ran back to her community to witness to what Jesus has said making her the New Testament the first Apostle, messenger or what we could all evangelist. As a result of her testimony to the Samaritan locals in her community many of them came to meet and hear Jesus and believed in Him as the saviour of the world. Which brings us to our reading today Jesus' second sign as recorded by **John** in Chapter **4:43-54 [Read]**.

In my previous church ministry in one Sunday morning a lady whose husband was in hospital arrived late for the service at about 10:25am. We stopped the service in order to hear from her and found out that her husband's condition from 10am had been deteriorating and that he was not currently responding to medical treatment. We as a church began immediately to pray in faith for this man's recovery, healing and life. We as one called out to God in the name of Jesus for him to stretch out his

divine physician's hand, by his spirit, to turn this deteriorating situation around and heal this man. This woman headed off to the hospital after the service. And when she arrived to the ward and saw her husband she knew instantly that he had had a complete turnaround and was well on his way to recovering from what ailed him. And at what hour did this turnaround happen? It was so sudden that it was noticed immediately by hospital staff and recorded on his medical chart for his wife to see for herself and for all the world to know, 10:30am!

At that hour! You can imagine the great encouragement for us as a church family to know that God had performed this miracle at the time or the hour that we had prayed. It was great cause for thanksgiving to God and served to us a sign to trust in God and importantly to believe in Jesus as his Son, our Saviour.

Do you believe? Have you trusted God and put your faith in Jesus as his Son our Saviour? By believing you and I may have life in his name John 20:31. And if you're believing and living Life then you should relate as a believer to this saying I read the other day. It said. Don't go to Jesus as a LAST RESORT. Go to Jesus as your FIRST SUPPORT. Which is an important lesson that we learn from the Official in this sign of John today. Jesus is not the one you go to as your last resort because Jesus is your first support! Jesus is the ultimate 'Go To person' even if he's 32kms away on foot or by horse.

The royal official lived at Capernaum. He had a high ranking office, serving under King Herod. He may have even been related to King Herod. He was a rich and powerful Jew, and a man of great means and influence in Galilee but he had a problem. His son lay sick and dying. He had probably sought out the best physicians for help that money could buy but there was obviously nothing they were able to do for the boy. This high ranking official had exhausted all known human resources. There was nothing he could do, but sit at the bedside of his son, and watch him die. Up until this time he had probably lead a very privileged and good life for that day and age. But all the wealth, power and influence in the world was not going to save his dying son and there was nothing that he could do about it, until, he hears the news that the carpenter's son from Nazareth, the one who had turned water into wine at Cana, he'd returned from Judea and from performing all those

miracles at the Passover festival in Jerusalem that everyone who had attended and witnessed had been talking about in Galilee. And he knows instantly what it is that he has to do. It is better that he leave immediately to go and ask Jesus to come and heal his son from certain death, even if it meant risking his Son dying while he was gone than to sit around and do nothing. Jesus saves, Jesus heals. I need to do this now. So off he goes on his 32km journey to Cana. As soon as he arrives at just before one in the afternoon, he goes straight to Jesus through the people gathered along with his disciples to hear his teaching interrupting him. This wealthy and powerful official pushing his way through the crowd to fall at the feet of the carpenter turned Rabbi, stopping him in the middle of his teaching to beg him to come with him to Capernaum and heal his dying son. Everybody... watching, listening, waiting. They knew who this man, the official, was begging before Jesus in what was such a strange sight for them to witness. So what is Jesus going to say and do?

And the answer comes. Jesus looks at the man but speaks in a loud voice for all to hear, "Unless you people see signs and wonders you will never believe." Which Jesus knew was the general attitude of the Galileans who had welcomed him when he arrived in such a way that it was almost more like a rejection because to Jesus all they were doing was welcoming him there in order that they might see him perform more miracles. The miracles which were supposed to act as signs pointing to Jesus that he was the Son of God their Saviour. But all that they desired was to have the miracle maker meeting their physical needs and expectations, not the Messiah in their presence. Healings and wonders they wanted to see rather than in their own hearts experience the forgiveness of sins that only the Messiah could bring. Would this man, the begging official turn out to be just like the rest of the Galileans?

Jesus in this sign test's the official's faith. Was he just another person in Galilee wanting to see him simply perform another sign as a miracle man, a miracle maker or did he really have at least just a little faith to put in him and believe in him as the Saviour and Son of God?

"Sir" the official says, "Come down before my child dies." And the response, Jesus talks as a superior addressing, commanding and dismissing a servant, employee or slave, "Go, or you may go now, your

son will live.” So was he going to be like just any other Galilean? No he wasn’t. The conversation had ended. Jesus had spoken. His words were not hollow but words of power that exact divine healing, not just a forecast for a happy ending. “My son will live.” Says the official to himself and proves to Jesus and even the crowd if they could understand that he had taken Jesus at his Word by immediately turning away departing for Capernaum. The official obviously had to stay somewhere that night and I bet that he slept well knowing that his son would be alive and well when he got home the next because Jesus had said so. What relief he had experienced that day as he chose to believe and put his faith in Jesus and his power as the Son of God, Israel’s Messiah. He had trusted without reservation without seeing the evidence of the miracle. That would come after a good night’s sleep and completing the journey home. At least until he meets his servants on the way the next day who had come to find him and tell him the good news that his son was alive and well. And at what time did he get better with the fever totally and instantaneously leaving him? 1pm yesterday, his servants tell him, the exact time at which Jesus had said that his son would live.

Now just imagine the homecoming of the official. What kind of emotions must have been a part of his coming through the door that day! Can you picture the man embracing his son that when he left was dying and he didn’t know if he would ever see him alive again? Can you hear the shouts of excitement? Can you see the tears of joy? The Lord of the feast from last week has brought life to the son’s body and the wine of joy to the whole household. The miracle unfolds and for this whole household, including family, slaves, servants and employees, and points for them as a sign to who Jesus really is and what he has done. Then as the official, the head of the household shares about just how and why this miracle has happened we have the miracle of a household being won to Christ because each member choses to believe that Jesus is the Saviour, the Son of Good. The effect of this man putting his absolute faith and trust in Jesus was not only getting to witness the healing of his dying son, but, along with the *rest of his household/family, they all come to believe in Jesus as the Christ and receive life, but more than the physical life that the son had received, they inherited eternal Life. They were all changed forever by the power of faith for together they experienced the transforming power of faith which is Jesus’ power, his*

love and his grace and the joy and the peace of knowing that comes with it. So together they all got to share in experiencing and receiving the miracle of LIFE!

Application:

1. If you are saved, if you are a born again believer, Jesus has performed a MIRACLE in your life. And now you and I need to share it with others. The Official was excited about what Jesus had done for him. We need to get **excited** about what Jesus has done for us, as individuals, households and as a church. That faith and life will speak volumes to an unbelieving, untrusting, even unknowing world.

2. *In our own lives may we each learn to trust Jesus to do what's best for us. Don't go to Jesus as a LAST RESORT. Go to Jesus as your FIRST SUPPORT. We do this when in the first instance we will go to Jesus and when we do, we actually refrain from and stop trying to tell Jesus what to do, or even limit him by putting him in a box as though to speak. Jesus can and will do much more than you and I ever expected, if we will let him, by trusting in him to do what's best. By going to him in the first instance.*

3. When you pray, and give your need to Jesus, committing it to him, then let it be, rest in His promises. Jesus promised the official that his son would be OK. He had peace about it. He knew that Jesus had taken care of it when he took him at his word and departed. So should we because Jesus, although in heaven, knows our needs. He can speak his word from there, and just as in the case of the official, his word is power and will happen.

Conclusion:

Let's choose together as a family of faith to believe this today, knowing that as we do so, as we together put our trust in God by believing in his son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ as the Lord of all our lives and head of the church, we have LIFE in His name! And our church is made Alive today by his eternal Spirit. Something that we are to witness to by sharing with the world.

Let's pray...