

THE HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON

John 4:43-54

(John 4:43-54), "Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. {44} For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honor in his own country. {45} Then 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. {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."



Several years ago I received a phone call in the early morning hours from the **LOCAL HOSPITAL** across the street from the church where I pastored. The tone of voice instantly revealed the situation was desperate. Arriving in the dark of night, I parked my car and entered the hospital corridor through the emergency entrance. The mother stood at the other end of the hall weeping her eyes out. Once she saw me, she fell to the floor on her knees sobbing uncontrollably crying out the words, "She is gone. Andrea is gone. O God, she is gone."

ANDREA, her nine-year-old daughter, had just passed away. Earlier the previous day, Andrea had been taken to a doctor in a nearby town with a severe throat and sinus infection. She had been given medicine and sent back home after the doctor concluded her condition was not too serious. During the night hours she began gasping for air. Her mother rushed her to the local hospital and discovered her condition was much worse than had been previously diagnosed. She had acute viral pneumonia. Her little heart was beating so rapidly trying to get oxygen from her lungs to the rest of her body that she literally had a heart attack. She was only nine years.

I will never forget the expression of agony and desperation on that mother's face as she fell to the floor and cried out, "She is gone. Andrea is gone. O God, she is gone."

PERHAPS **THAT STORY MIRRORS** the agony and desperation the father in today's text experienced.

IN JOHN 2 Jesus ATTENDED A WEDDING IN THE VILLAGE OF **CANA** OF GALILEE where He performed His first miracle.

- (2:12) • *"AFTER THIS* HE WENT DOWN **TO CAPERNAUM**, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they CONTINUED THERE **NOT MANY DAYS.**"
- (2:13) • "And the Jews' **PASSOVER** was at hand, and Jesus went up to **JERUSALEM,**"
- (3:22) • *"After these things* came Jesus and his disciples INTO THE LAND OF **JUDEA**; and there he TARRIED with them, . . ."
- (4:3-5)• *"HE LEFT JUDEA*, and departed AGAIN INTO GALILEE. {4} And HE MUST NEEDS GO THROUGH **SAMARIA**. {5} Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called **SYCHAR**, . . ."

 - Samaria is where Jesus witnessed to the **WOMAN AT THE WELL.**

OUR TEXT

(4:43), "Now **AFTER TWO DAYS HE DEPARTED** thence, and went **INTO GALILEE.**"

(V. 44), "For Jesus himself testified, that **A PROPHET HATH NO HONOR IN HIS OWN COUNTRY.**"

- S **MUCH DEBATE** takes place regarding what "country" Jesus considered to be "HIS OWN."
 - WAS JESUS REFERRING TO **JUDEA AND JERUSALEM?**
He was born in Bethlehem, five miles south of Jerusalem.
 - WAS JESUS REFERRING TO **GALILEE?** Jesus grew up in Nazareth of Galilee.
- S **THE OTHER GOSPELS** seem to indicate **THAT GALILEE** was the place Jesus was referring to when He said "a prophet has no honor in his own country." Jesus was not able to do many miracles in Nazareth because the people would not believe in Him. The people of Nazareth also took Jesus to the brow of a hill to cast Him

off the cliff and kill Him (Luke 4:29).

- S **THE QUESTION THAT BEGS AN ANSWER** is, if Jesus was referring to Galilee, then why did Jesus go there? Why did Jesus mention this negative fact on His way to Galilee?

Perhaps Jesus was **PREPARING HIS DISCIPLES** for some difficult days that lay ahead. Perhaps Jesus was **DEMONSTRATING** that a prophet is not to determine the location of his ministry on the basis of difficulty. **SOMETIMES** God calls a person to minister in a hard location because people in that difficult place are ready to respond to God's salvation.

- S **GALILEE IS AN EXAMPLE.** Although Galilee was a difficult place to minister, it became the location from which many people placed their faith in Jesus as Savior.

(V. 45), "Then 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."

- S That text refers to the **PREVIOUS DAYS WHEN JESUS HAD ATTENDED THE FEAST OF PASSOVER IN JERUSALEM. WHILE THERE, JESUS HAD PERFORMED MIRACLES.** We know that He performed miracles for at least **THREE REASONS.** Consider the three reasons in chronological order.

(1) **JOHN TOLD US**

(John 2:23), "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, **MANY BELIEVED** in his name, when **THEY SAW THE MIRACLES** which he did."

(2) **NICODEMUS WAS FROM JERUSALEM AND HE SAID JESUS PERFORMED MIRACLES**

(John 3:2), "... We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for **NO MAN CAN DO THESE MIRACLES** that thou doest, except God be with him."

(3) **SOME GALILEANS** who had been at the Feast of Passover in Jerusalem had observed Jesus perform miracles.

(John 4:45), "Then 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."

S Jesus' miracles had God's designed effect in the hearts of some because they placed their faith in Jesus. But apparently some placed their faith in miracles, rather than in Jesus. They followed Jesus, but they followed Him for the wrong reason. That is apparent from two passages:

- (1) **(John 2:23-25)**, “. . . Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. {24} But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, {25} And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."
- (2) **(John 4:48)**, "Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

(MORE WILL BE SAID ABOUT THIS LATER IN THIS MESSAGE.)

WHILE IN GALILEE, JESUS MADE HIS WAY AGAIN TO **CANA** WHERE **(V. 46)**, “. . . There was **A CERTAIN NOBLEMAN**, whose son was sick at Capernaum."

FIVE IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THAT MAN:

#1. HE WAS A NOBLEMAN

(V. 46), “. . . And there was a certain **NOBLEMAN**, . . . "

- S The Greek word "**BASILIKOS**" (bas-il-ee-kos) means "**to belong to a king.**" A *basilikos* was associated with royalty. We are not told the manner of his relationship to royalty, but many have surmised he might have been **A ROYAL OFFICIAL** from HEROD'S COURT.
- S AS A *BASILIKOS*, THE OFFICIAL WOULD HAVE BEEN A MAN OF **power, influence** and **wealth**. We know he had **servants** (V. 51).

#2. HE WAS FROM THE CITY OF CAPERNAUM

- S Capernaum was located on the northern end of the **SEA OF GALILEE** approximately **20 MILES** from Cana.
- S The nobleman asked Jesus to "**COME DOWN**" to Capernaum because the Sea of Galilee was located **686 feet** below sea level. To leave Cana and travel to Capernaum was to "come

down.”

#3. HE HAD A SON

(V. 46), “. . . There was a certain nobleman, whose **SON** . . .”

- S THIS “SON” IS REFERENCED **FIVE TIMES** in our text.
- S **THREE TIMES** the *son* is call “**HUIOS**” (hwee-os’). It is difficult to determine age by use of this word. “**HUIOS**” is used to describe Jesus as the SON of God (Mark 1:1).
- S A DIFFERENT WORD IS USED IN **VERSE 49** THAT IS HELPFUL IN DETERMINING AGE:
(V. 49), “The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my **CHILD** die.”

- The Greek word “**PAIDION**” (pahee-dee-on) can mean **YOUNG CHILD, LITTLE BOY or INFANT**.
- We are not told the age of the Nobleman’s son, but we can safely conclude **HIS SON WAS JUST A LITTLE BOY**, perhaps just an **INFANT**.

(Verse 53 refers to the nobleman’s “**WHOLE HOUSE.**” He must have had **A WIFE**. Perhaps he had other **sons** and **daughters**. The fact he had **servants** has already been stated.)

#4. HIS SON WAS SICK

(V. 46), “. . . There was a certain nobleman, whose son was **SICK** at Capernaum.”

- S We are **not told** the SPECIFIC **ILLNESS** that afflicted the Nobleman’s son. We are not told whether it was a **LINGERING PROBLEM**, or whether it came upon him **SUDDENLY**.
- S **Verse 47** does tell us this boy was “**AT THE POINT OF DEATH.**” The little guy was just **A HEARTBEAT AWAY FROM ETERNITY**.

#5. THE FATHER WAS SO DESPERATE HE TRAVELED TO CANA TO GET HELP FROM JESUS

(V. 47), “When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into

Galilee, **HE WENT UNTO HIM, . . .** "

- S THAT FATHER WAS WILLING TO MAKE WHATEVER **SACRIFICE WAS NECESSARY** TO HELP HIS SON. He was willing to **PAY ANY PRICE**. He put on his **tunic**, laced up his **sandals** and made the **20 MILE TRIP** to **Cana**. **TRANSPORTATION** in that day would have been by **foot** or by **animal**. The trip by foot would have taken several hours and would have been exhausting. Supposing the father was wealthy enough to afford a chariot, the trip would still have taken as much as **four hours**.
- S **HOWEVER LONG** the trip took, no sacrifice was too great for this father. His son was at the point of death and he needed help. **NOTHING** that father had attempted up to that point had helped. The nobleman knew he could spend all his wealth and still have a sick son.

A DEACON in my past church was remodeling his house when he began experiencing terrible pain in his chest and arm. They called the ambulance and rushed him to the hospital where he underwent immediate bypass surgery. I was in the waiting room with the family when they came and told them his blood pressure was very low and it did not look good.

They were wrong. The man survived the surgery and returned home to become a relatively healthy man. After the ordeal, he told me that **ON THE WAY TO THE HOSPITAL** in the ambulance, when he thought that he might die, he realized what was really important in life. He was not concerned about his lawn, his car, his bank account, his pension, or the remodeling of his house. He said his thoughts were on **GOD** and his **FAMILY**.

Why do you suppose he wasn't thinking about his bank account at such a time as that? The reason was **MONEY COULDN'T HELP**.

(Prov 11:4), "Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death."

THE NOBLEMAN'S **RANK, RICHES, POWER, PROMINENCE** and **POSITION WERE OF NO HELP** TO HIS SON. With all his wealth, he was still helpless. THE NOBLEMAN HAD COME TO A PROBLEM IN LIFE THAT MONEY COULD NOT FIX.

THAT IS A PLACE WHERE GOD **ALLOWS ALL OF US TO COME** to at some point in our lives. **AT THAT TIME** all that can help will be God.

- MONEY can buy **COMPANIONS**, but it cannot buy **TRUE FRIENDSHIP**.
- MONEY can buy **A BOOK ON HUMOR**, but it cannot buy **HAPPINESS**.
- MONEY can buy **A MANSION**, but it cannot buy **A HOME**.
- MONEY can buy **FOUR YEARS IN A UNIVERSITY**, but it cannot buy an **EDUCATION**.
- MONEY can hire the best **PHYSICIAN IN THE LAND**, but it cannot buy **HEALTH**.
- MONEY can build **CHURCH BUILDINGS**, but money cannot purchase a place in **HEAVEN**.

THE ONLY THING LEFT for that nobleman to do was **GO SEE JESUS**.

ONCE THE NOBLEMAN ARRIVED IN CANA, THIS IS WHAT HE DID: **(V. 47)**, “. . . **HE** went unto him, and **BESOUGHT HIM** that he would **COME DOWN**, and **HEAL HIS SON**: for he was at the point of death.”

- S **“HE BESOUGHT HIM”** is in the **IMPERFECT TENSE** indicating **continuous action**. IT IMPLIES ACTION that is REPEATED and PERSISTENT. He urgently **PLED, ASKED and BEGGED** Jesus to come.
- S His request was clear and simple: **“HEAL MY SON” — “CURE HIM” — “RESTORE HIM” — “MAKE HIM WHOLE.”**

JESUS’ RESPONSE WAS MOST UNUSUAL (V. 48), “. . . **‘EXCEPT YE SEE SIGNS AND WONDERS, YE WILL NOT BELIEVE.’**”

- S **THOSE WORDS ARE A BIT PUZZLING!** There stood a father

with an aching heart and Jesus didn't even acknowledge the father's request, or the son's dire need. In fact, at first glance, it appears as if Jesus was somewhat **RUDE**. Rather than addressing the immediate request, Jesus addressed the issue of *miracles*.

S **WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE? IT WAS BECAUSE** Jesus had **AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE** on the issues at hand, while the nobleman only had **A TEMPORAL PERSPECTIVE**. Paul wrote:

(2 Cor 4:18), "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

JESUS WAS AWARE OF **TWO PROBLEMS** THAT DAY, WHEREAS, THE NOBLEMAN WAS ONLY AWARE OF ONE.

- 1) THE FIRST PROBLEM WAS **A PHYSICAL PROBLEM**. The boy was **SICK**. That problem was obvious. The nobleman cried out the need for Jesus to do something about his son's sickness.
- 2) THE SECOND PROBLEM WAS **A FAITH PROBLEM** that was obvious only to Jesus. JESUS **COULD HAVE** healed the boy and sent the father home spiritually sick. **JESUS' GOAL** was to make both the father and the son whole.

SO, JESUS SAYS:

(V. 48), "Except **YOU** see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

S "YOU" IS A **PLURAL** PRONOUN. That pronoun INDICATES **A CROWD** was standing around Jesus and the nobleman that day. **THEY ALL** wanted to see Jesus perform a miracle. **THOSE GALILEANS HAD ALREADY SEEN** Jesus perform miracles while they were in Jerusalem for the Passover (V. 45). Now they wanted to see more miracles.

S **THE PROBLEM WAS** their desire for a miracle **WAS NOT ROOTED IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY**. Their desire was rooted in spiritual immaturity. You may be aware through your study of the Scriptures that Jesus' presentation of miracles is very often **COUCHED IN THE NEGATIVE?**

- **(John 4:48)**, "... Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

- **(John 2:23-25)**, “. . . Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. {24} But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, {25} And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."
- **(Mat 12:39)**, “. . . An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:"

S **WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE JESUS SPOKE SO OFTEN OF MIRACLES FROM A NEGATIVE BENT?**

 WITH *SIGNS AND WONDERS* IN MIND, CONSIDER **SEVEN CAUTIONS** related to miracles. These cautions are presented negatively as warnings because Jesus' statement to the nobleman was couched in the negative. Don't despair! This message will conclude with **EIGHT POSITIVE TRUTHS** related to the story of the nobleman.

SEVEN CAUTIONS

#1. SEEKING SIGNS & WONDERS can easily become A SUBSTITUTE for seeking God

S THE "SPECTACULAR" can easily become **THE HUNGER** of the human heart rather than God. **KING HEROD** is an example.
(Luke 23:8), "And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and HE HOPED TO HAVE SEEN SOME **MIRACLE** DONE BY HIM."

S JESUS WARNED HIS **DISCIPLES** regarding miracles after they had returned from their witnessing campaign. They had discovered that even the demons were subject to them in Jesus' name (Luke 10:17). JESUS SAID TO THEM:
(Luke 10:20), "Notwithstanding in this **REJOICE NOT**, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

#2. Signs and wonders can easily TAKE PROMINENCE OVER GOD'S WORD

S When *personal experience* and *God's Word* conflict with each other, some people choose the *experience* above *God's Word*. That is always a mistake.

S **MOSES GAVE WARNING**

(DEUT 13:1-3), "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, {2} And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; {3} Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

#3. Signs and wonders DO NOT GUARANTEE a person will COME TO CHRIST

S In fact, *Signs and wonders* **CAN SOMETIMES** drive a person further from God.

- (1) **PHARAOH** saw ten mighty *signs and wonders* of God in Egypt and yet his heart grew harder.
- (2) **THE PHARISEES** saw Jesus perform many miracles and yet they concluded His power came from Satan (Matt 12:24).
- (3) The **RICH MAN** in hell asked Abraham to send Lazarus back to talk to his five brothers so they would believe. Do you remember what Jesus said?
 - **(Luke 16:29-31)**, "Abraham saith unto him, **THEY HAVE MOSES AND THE PROPHETS; LET THEM HEAR THEM.** {30} And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. {31} And he said unto him, **IF THEY HEAR NOT MOSES AND THE PROPHETS, NEITHER WILL THEY BE PERSUADED, THOUGH ONE ROSE FROM THE DEAD.**"
 - *Signs and wonders* would not have helped those brothers to believe.

#4. Signs & wonders can be COUNTERFEITED

S **PHARAOH'S MAGICIANS** were able to counterfeit miracles

(Exo 7:11)

- S **THE ANTICHRIST WILL PERFORM MIRACLES** (**2 TH 2:9-10**), "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, {10} And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."
- S **AGAIN, MOSES** warned against being deceived by miracles (Deut 13).

#5. Signs and wonders DO NOT GUARANTEE SPIRITUAL MATURITY ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED THEM

- (1) **ISRAEL** experienced many *signs and wonders* while in the wilderness. God split the **Red Sea**. God fed them **manna** for forty years. God guided them with the **cloud** by day and the pillar of fire by night. In spite of God's many *signs and wonders*, they **MURMURED** again and again.
- (**Psa 95:8-9 NIV**), "Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert, {9} where your fathers **tested** and **tried me**, **THOUGH THEY HAD SEEN WHAT I DID.**"
 - Israel had experienced God's *wonders* firsthand, but that did not keep their **CARCASSES** from dropping dead in the wilderness (Heb 3:17).
- (2) **ELIJAH** saw the mighty hand of God send fire from heaven and consume an altar. A few hours later he was running from Jezebel having been overcome by depression (1 Kings 19:4).
- (3) **THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH** was perhaps the most gifted church in the New Testament. It was also the most troubled and most spiritually immature. Their gifts did not make them spiritually mature.

#6 In one's search for signs & wonders, a person CAN EASILY MISS THE VOICE OF GOD

- S **ELIJAH RAN FROM JEZEBEL** in a state of depression as earlier stated. He eventually began to seek for a word from God. God

eventually spoke to him, but not in the manner he might have expected.

(1 Ki 19:11-13), “And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a **GREAT AND STRONG WIND** rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an **EARTHQUAKE**; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: {12} And after the earthquake **A FIRE**; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire **A STILL SMALL VOICE**. {13} And it was so, when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, **THERE CAME A VOICE** unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?”

- S **GOD SPOKE THROUGH HIS STILL SMALL VOICE** rather than through THE “SPECTACULAR.” How many times have we missed the voice of God because we were looking in all the wrong places?

#7. Desire for signs and wonders can be DISGUISED ATTEMPTS TO CIRCUMVENT God's requirement for PATIENCE IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- S **NOTHING** in Scripture **indicates** that God's goal for His children is that they **avoid every suffering** and difficulty in life. In fact, just the opposite is the indication.
- **(Rom 8:17)**, “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; **IF SO BE THAT WE SUFFER WITH HIM**, that we may be also glorified together.”
 - **(2 Cor 4:17)**, “For OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION, which is but for a moment, **WORKETH FOR US** a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;”
 - **(James 1:2-4)**, “My brethren, **COUNT IT ALL JOY** when ye fall into divers temptations; {3} Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. {4} But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”
- S **THE SAINTS IN SCRIPTURE** were not afforded the opportunity to escape suffering because of their faithfulness. If anything, their faithfulness was the greatest source of their suffering.

We have considered **SEVEN NEGATIVE CAUTIONS** related to *signs and wonders*. Now, consider **EIGHT POSITIVE TRUTHS FROM JESUS' DEALING WITH THE NOBLEMAN'S SON**.

#1. "AFFLICTION" & "DESPERATION" OFTEN DRIVE A PERSON TO GOD

- S THE NOBLEMAN MADE **A BEELINE** to Jesus because the condition of his son drove him there. He had no other alternative. He was between a rock and a hard place.
- S AFFLICTION OFTEN COMES WITH **A MESSAGE** FROM GOD. Suffering can be **HEAVEN'S MEGAPHONE** shouting in a manner that can be heard. **DAVID IS AN EXAMPLE:**
(Psa 119:67), "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word."
(Psa 119:71), "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."
- S WHEN AFFLICTION COMES OUR WAY, **WE MUST NOT RUN FROM GOD. WE SHOULD RUN TO GOD.** .
- S **COURTLAND MYERS**
"Someday, God is going to reveal the fact to every Christian, that the very principles they now rebel against, have been the 'very' instruments He used in perfecting their characters and molding them into perfection, polished stones for His great building yonder."
- S Things that drive us closer to God are blessings from God. From that perspective, we can thank God for our affliction.

#1. **"DESPERATION"** OFTEN DRIVES A PERSON TO GOD

#2. GOD MAY APPEAR RELUCTANT TO ANSWER OUR PRAYERS

(V. 48), "Then said Jesus unto him, **EXCEPT YE SEE SIGNS AND WONDERS, YE WILL NOT BELIEVE.**"

- S At first sight, **IT APPEARED** that Jesus **WAS NOT GOING TO HONOR** THE NOBLEMAN'S REQUEST. It seemed as if the

nobleman's trip had been **FOR NOUGHT**.

- S Times will come when we believe God has revealed something we are to do. It might be the **spiritual equivalent** of going to Cana for the sake of an ailing son. Once we arrive at the place of our ***spiritual Cana***, rather than experiencing success, things actually get worse. Our hopes appear to be dashed. **OUR VISION APPEARS TO DIE AN EARLY DEATH.** We experience ***THE DEATH OF A VISION.***
- S The Bible reveals several examples of God allowing the *death of a vision*. This reality is **AN IMPORTANT TRUTH** that we HAD BEST LEARN WELL, because **GOD WILL ALLOW IT** at times in the lives of all His children.
- (1) GOD GAVE **JOSEPH A DREAM** that revealed his family would bow down to him. Not long after that dream, Joseph was sold into **SLAVERY** and eventually he ended up in **PRISON**. On the surface it appeared the dream had died an early death. Only with the passing of time did the dream come to pass.
- (2) GOD SENT **MOSES TO EGYPT TO DELIVER ISRAEL**. Not too long after Moses' arrival, Pharaoh increased the burden on the children of Israel. It appeared the vision had died. It seemed as if Moses had failed. We know God was at work through it all.
- S **WHY WOULD GOD** give a person a vision, and then allow so much time and difficulty to pass before it was fulfilled? **THE ANSWER IS GOD ALWAYS TESTS OUR FAITH.** God tests our faith for at least TWO REASONS:
- (1) He wants us to know how we will respond under difficult circumstances. God is not trying to discover what we will do. God already knows what we will do. He wants us to know what we will do.
- (2) God wants our response to those tests to be a source of spiritual growth in our lives. It is difficult to grow if we do not know what our strengths and weaknesses are.
- #1. **"DESPERATION"** OFTEN DRIVES A PERSON TO GOD
#2. GOD MAY APPEAR **RELUCTANT** TO ANSWER OUR PRAYERS

#3. GOD COMMENDS PERSISTENCE IN FAITH

(V. 47), "... HE ... BESOUGHT HIM ... "

(V. 49), "The nobleman saith unto him, SIR, COME DOWN ERE

MY CHILD DIE."

- S The nobleman was **unrelenting** in his request. GOD **COMMENDS** THAT KIND OF PERSISTENCE.
- **(James 5:16)**, "... The **EFFECTUAL FERVENT PRAYER** of a righteous man availeth much."
 - **(Luke 18:1)**, "... Men **ought always to pray, and not to faint;**"
 - **(Jer 29:13)**, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

- S JESUS TOLD **TWO STORIES** THAT DEMONSTRATE GOD'S COMMENDATION OF PERSISTENCE.

E.G. #1 - JESUS TOLD OF **A WIDOW** WHO STOOD BEFORE A **WICKED JUDGE** AND WOULD NOT TAKE "NO" FOR AN ANSWER:

(Luke 18:2-5), "Saying, There was in a city **A JUDGE**, which feared not God, neither regarded man: {3} And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. {4} And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; {5} **Yet because this widow troubles me**, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me."

E.G. #2 - JESUS SPOKE OF **A MAN** WHO WAS PERSISTENT WITH **A BAKER**. THE MAN HAD **UNEXPECTED GUESTS** ARRIVE AT NIGHT and he did not have enough bread to feed them. He went to the baker's house and knocked on the door. The baker and his family had already gone to bed and he told the neighbor to go away and not to trouble him. The man refused to take "no" for an answer.

(Luke 11:7-8), "And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. {8} I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his **IMPORTUNITY** he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."

JESUS CONCLUDED THAT STORY BY STATING:

(Luke 11:9), “. . . **ASK**, and it shall be given you; **SEEK**, and ye shall find; **KNOCK**, and it shall be opened unto you."

A SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN RECEIVED AN ANSWER FROM JESUS BECAUSE SHE WAS PERSISTENT

(Mark 7:25), "For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:"

(Mark 7:26-30), "The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. {27} But Jesus said unto her, Let **the children first** be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it **unto the dogs**. {28} And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of **the children's crumbs**. {29} And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. {30} And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed."

THE NOBLEMAN IN OUR TEXT WOULD NOT TAKE "NO" FOR AN ANSWER. For that he was to be **COMMENDED**. We need to learn to be persistent in our faith. Too often we give up before we should.

- **DANIEL WAS PERSISTENT**

(Dan 9:3), "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by **PRAYER** and **SUPPLICATIONS**, with **FASTING**, and **SACKCLOTH**, and **ASHES**:"

- **NEHEMIAH WAS PERSISTENT**

(Neh 1:4), “. . . When I heard these words, that I **SAT DOWN** and **WEPT**, and **MOURNED** certain days, and **FASTED**, and **PRAYED** before the God of heaven,"

- #1. "**DESPERATION**" OFTEN DRIVES A PERSON TO GOD
- #2. GOD MAY APPEAR **RELUCTANT** TO ANSWER OUR PRAYERS
- #3. GOD **COMMENDS PERSISTENCE** IN FAITH

#4. GOD'S WORD IS POWERFUL

(V. 50), "Jesus saith unto him, '**GO THY WAY; THY SON LIVETH.**' . . . "

S JESUS SPOKE **JUST SIX WORDS**, "GO THY WAY; THY SON LIVETH." Jesus simply spoke words. He spoke those words while **TWENTY MILES FROM THE BOY**. In spite of that distance, the

boy was healed. **DISTANCE** was NOT AN OBSTACLE to Jesus.

S **(Psa 107:20)**, “He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.”

JESUS' WORDS ARE POWERFUL

(1) WITH THREE WORDS JESUS STILLED **A STORM** that was raging on the Sea of Galilee:

- **(Mark 4:39)**, “And HE AROSE, and REBUKED THE WIND, AND SAID unto the sea, ‘**PEACE, BE STILL.**’ And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.”
- HE DID THAT **WITH WORDS!**

(2) JESUS RAISED **LAZARUS** from the dead using three words:

- **(John 11:43-44)**, “And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, ‘**LAZARUS, COME FORTH.**’ {44} and he that was dead came forth . . . ”
- HE DID THAT **WITH WORDS!**

(3) WITH WORDS JESUS CREATED THE WORLD

- **(John 1:3)**, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”
- (Gen 1:3; Psa 33:6; Heb 11:3)
- GOD’S WORD IS SO POWERFUL THAT WITH IT HE **CREATED THE UNIVERSE. GOD DID NOT SEND HIS CONSTRUCTION CREW** and command them to construct the world. **GOD SPOKE THE WORLD INTO BEING.**

S **OUR CONCEPTION OF GOD’S WORD IS OFTEN DWARFED. WE ARE LIKE THE NOBLEMAN** when he said “SIR, **COME DOWN** ERE MY CHILD DIE” (V. 49). The nobleman was convinced the only way that Jesus could help his son was to actually touch the boy. He looked at Jesus as having a certain range of effectiveness like a **WALKIE TALKIE** that has to stay within a certain distance to be usable.

S **SOMETIMES WE CONCLUDE OUR CIRCUMSTANCES ARE BEYOND HELP.** We are become like **MARTHA** who said to Jesus after Lazarus had died, “If You had only come sooner” (John 11:21). We get **AFFLICTED WITH** the “**IF ONLY-S!**” Our dwarfed view of God’s Word can easily cause us to lapse into despair.

S Our text stands as a testimony that distance does not hinder God. God’s Word is powerful to affect us wherever we might be.

S GOD SAYS:

(Isa 55:11), "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: **IT SHALL NOT RETURN UNTO ME VOID**, but it **SHALL ACCOMPLISH** that which I please, and it **SHALL PROSPER** in the thing whereto I sent it."

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#5. GOD REQUIRES OBEDIENCE

JESUS SAITH UNTO THE NOBLEMEN

(V. 50a), "... **GO THY WAY**; thy son liveth.' . . ."

(V. 50b), "... And **THE MAN BELIEVED** the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and **HE WENT HIS WAY.**"

S THE NOBLEMAN **DID THREE THINGS**:

1) **HE HEARD!**

(Rom 10:17), "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

2) **HE BELIEVED!**

(Heb 11:6), "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

- We sing, "**AT THE CROSS**, at the cross, where I first saw the light, and the burden of my heart rolled away, **It was there by faith, I received my sight.**" Faith comes first!
- We want to turn that around and say, "It was there by sight that I received my faith." We say "SEEING IS BELIEVING." That is not the biblical perspective. God's Word teaches that "BELIEVING IS SEEING."

3) **HE OBEYED!**

(James 2:20), "... Faith without works is dead?"

S **A CONSISTENT PRINCIPLE** found throughout Scripture is that GOD'S BLESSING IS DEPENDENT upon our **OBEDIENCE** to

God's Word:

- (1) Israel had to approach the **RIVER JORDAN** before God caused it to stop flowing. (Jos 3:13)
- (2) Israel had to walk around **JERICHO** seven days before the walls fell down. (Jos 6:4)
- (3) **NAAMAN** had to dip seven times in Jordan before he was cured of leprosy. (2 Ki 5:10)
- (4) The **TEN LEPERS** headed toward the priests before they were cured (Luke 17:14).

S **HEAR! BELIEVE! OBEY!** It is essential that we do what God tells us to do! **WHAT IS GOD TELLING YOU TO DO?** Are you doing it?

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- #5. GOD **REQUIRES FAITH** and **OBEDIENCE**

#6. THE CONFIRMATION OF ONE'S FAITH IS A JOYOUS EXPERIENCE

(John 4:51-53), "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.**"

S **ON THE WAY BACK HOME**, the nobleman must have **PONDERED JESUS' PROMISE**. Surely there were times of extreme joy. Perhaps there were moments of doubt and question. He must have asked himself, "Did Jesus really heal my son?"

Joy must have filled that father's heart when he received the report from his servants that his son was well. It must have been **double joy** to have discovered his son had been healed at the exact moment Jesus had spoken the words in Cana. It must have been **TRIPLE JOY** when the father actually saw his healthy son with his own eyes.

S **IN DIFFERENT WAYS, WE, TOO, ARE ON OUR JOURNEY HOME**. **ALONG THE WAY** we, too, ponder the promises of God. At times we are filled with extreme joy. Sometimes we have doubts

and questions. Complete joy will be our experience when we actually see Jesus face to face.

S WHEN **THOMAS** SAW JESUS AFTER THE RESURRECTION, HE SAID TO HIM,

(John 20:28), “. . . My Lord and my God.”

JESUS RESPONDED TO THOMAS BY SAYING

(John 20:29), “. . . Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

JOY will fill our hearts someday when we **EXPERIENCE IN FULL** the promises of God.

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#7. NOT MANY NOBLEMEN COME, BUT SOME DO
(V. 53), “. . . THE FATHER . . . **HIMSELF BELIEVED . . .**”

S **(1 Cor 1:26)**, “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, **NOT MANY NOBLE**, are called:”

S Notice that **IT DOES NOT SAY**, “NOT **ANY** NOBLE.” It says “NOT **MANY** NOBLE.” If it had said, “Not any noble,” the nobleman could not have come to Jesus.

#8. PARENTS ARE INSTRUMENTAL IN BRINGING THEIR CHILDREN TO GOD
(V. 53), “. . . THE FATHER . . . Himself believed, and **HIS WHOLE HOUSE.**”

S **WHAT IF** the nobleman had been too busy to go to Cana and get help from Jesus? Because that father obeyed, not only was his son healed, **His whole household** was brought to salvation.

S **IT IS A VERY RARE THING** to find a wife and children who are unbelievers when the father is a committed believer.

S DADS, COME TO JESUS FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAKE

- #1. LET **"DESPERATION"** DRIVE YOU TO JESUS
- #2. BE **PERSISTENT** IN YOUR FAITH
- #3. **TRUST GOD'S POWERFUL WORD**
- #4. **OBEY** GOD'S WORD
- #6. LET GOD'S **JOY BECOME YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

BY THE WAY, remember the little girl **ANDREA** who died of pneumonia at age nine? Not many weeks before her death, she had given her life to Jesus. She didn't really die that day (John 11:26). She left her home that night headed for the hospital and in the process made a detour that ended up in heaven, her eternal home. She was more alive than any of us who were left behind to grieve.

JESUS SAID:

(John 11:26), "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"