

# G R A C E

Reformed Baptist Church

Soli ◇ Deo ◇ Gloria

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### Sermon Notes

#### *The Healing of a Nobelman's Son*

John 4:43-54

February 13, 2005

#### Verse 43

- After two days He went forth from there [Samaria] into Galilee.
  - Verse 40 states that Jesus had stayed with the Samaritans for two days

#### Verses 44 – 45

- The Greek term *patris*, translated *country*, can also mean one's "homeland" or "hometown"
- When this proverb is used in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), it always means Jesus "hometown," **Nazareth in Galilee**
- Scholars have proposed about ten possible suggestions as to what *patris* means here
- The most probable meaning; however, is that *patris* here is referring to Galilee "as it represents Jewish soil over and against Samaritan soil."
  - Therefore, "his own country" is a reference to Judea and Galilee
  - It is significant to note that in Samaria, which was NOT Jesus' "own country," Jesus "enjoyed" great success among the people
  - **Notice the humility of Jesus – he was popular in Samaria, but He continues on to "his own country" the place where He will eventually be crucified.**
- In Verse 45, the Galileans, Jesus' "own people," received Him **because of the things that He did in Jerusalem**
  - **Unlike the faith of the Samaritans, the faith of the Galileans was NOT authentic – it was based upon what they SAW**

## Verse 46

- Jesus arrives back to the location of His first sign: the turning of water into wine
- It is here that He will also perform His second sign
  - A Miracle underscores the **power of God** and is received with a sense of awe.
  - A Sign is something that **reveals and discloses what was hidden before.**
- There was a *royal official* whose son was sick *in Capernaum*
  - This royal official, *basilikos*, was probably a servant of the “king,” the *basileus*
  - The “king” at this time in Galilee was Herod Antipas (he ruled from 4 B.C. to 39 A.D.), who was not truly a “king,” but was referred to as such
  - This royal official was, likely, a Jew rather than a Gentile – but we do not know for certain

## Verse 47

- *When he (the royal official) had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and was imploring Him to come and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.*
  - Word apparently spread quickly concerning Jesus’ ability to produce signs, wonders and miracles
    - This could be because of the miracle at the wedding in Cana or the signs Jesus performed in Judea during Passover
    - The official was *imploring*, or begging Jesus – he was desperate
    - His son was at the brink of death

## Verse 48

- Although Jesus received a warm welcome from the Galileans, He knows their hearts and their motives
- He states, “**Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe.**”
  - This rebuke was is to the Galileans, not directly to the nobleman

- It is important to emphasize the purpose of miracles in the New Testament:
  - **They were to authenticate the identity and claims of Jesus (and His disciples)**
  - However, miracles are no longer normative today as they were then.
  - Why?
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Does God still perform miracles today?
  - But **what is the greatest miracle God performs today?**
  - Why do people still seek miracles and signs today?
  - How does this call into question the **sufficiency of Scripture?**

- I recently read of an experience a pastor had with a miracle in his congregation:

A young woman had become critically ill and her prognosis was grim; she would likely die within the year. Her family had a nominal “Easter and Christmas Eve” commitment to the church, so the discussions in the hospital between the young pastor and this family always plowed new ground. The woman challenged him: ‘If Jesus healed in the Bible, he should be able to heal me today. If not, what use was he?’ So she prayed. The pastor prayed. The whole family prayed – and pleaded and begged and bargained. If God would only show mercy, the family urged, they would completely recommit themselves and come to church every Sunday. This earnest young pastor prayed with all his heart. It was God’s will that she be healed, he concluded.

Then to his amazement, God healed her – completely. And with the physicians shaking their heads, she was sent home from the hospital. The next Sunday, the entire family was there in the front pew, dressed and sparkling. The young woman gave her testimony, praising God for his goodness. The following Sunday, the family was there again. In four weeks, it was only the woman and her husband. And after that, attendance was sporadic until they dropped into their previous pattern. Before long, the woman rationalized the entire incident.

- **What does this story tell us about miracles?**  
 “Miracles cannot compel genuine faith”      D.A. Carson

- *Where* does genuine, unshakeable faith come from?
  - “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”  
Romans 10:17
  - “Jesus said to him [Thomas], ‘Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.’” John 20:29
  - “and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory”  
1 Peter 1:8
- What is the characteristic of *true* worshippers?
  - John 4:24
  - Our cultural is one that demands that our senses be engaged (touch, feel, see, hear, etc.) in order to capture our interest or attention. Is this the way God is?

#### Verse 49

- Notice the official does not argue with Jesus, he simply repeats his request.
- *Sir, come down*
  - Capernaum was on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, at about 700 feet below sea level, therefore, altitude - wise, it was *down* from Cana
- *before my child dies*
  - The word for child here is a term of affection (*paidion*)
    - William Barclay translates this, “my little lad”
    - Or it could be, “my little boy”

#### Verse 50a

- Jesus said to him, “**Go; your son lives.**”
  - This is one of the few miracles that Jesus performed **from a distance**
  - The Puritan commentator Matthew Henry states, “He [the nobleman] forgot that Elijah and Elisha had raised dead children; and is Christ’s power inferior to theirs?...Christ here gives us an instance of His *power*, that he not only could heal, but could heal with so much ease, without the trouble of a visit.”

- What else does this miracle point to (as well as Jesus' knowledge that the son lived)?
  - The divinity of Jesus.
  - Jesus was a man, but He was also God.
    - Read John 2:24:  
“But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,”
    - Read also Luke 40:43-45:  
“And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. And Jesus said, ‘Who is the one who touched Me?’”

**When Jesus became a man, he temporarily set aside the free exercise of certain attributes, in accordance with (1) the will of the Father, and (2) His human nature.**

- In this case, the healing of the nobleman's son, what action would have violated the human nature of Christ?

“Jesus did not exercise his deity at times and his humanity at other times. His actions were always those of divinity-humanity. This is the key to understanding the functional limitations the humanity imposed upon the divinity. For example, he still had the power to be everywhere (omnipresence). However, as an incarnate being, he was limited in the exercise of that power by possession of a human body.

Picture the following analogy. The world's fastest sprinter is entered in a three-legged race, where he must run with one of his legs tied to a leg of a partner. Although his physical capacity is not diminished [i.e. he is still the world's fastest sprinter], the conditions under which he exercises it are severely circumscribed. During that time [the time of Jesus' incarnation] his deity always functioned in connection with his humanity.” Millard Erickson (Christian Theology, p. 751-752)

#### **Verses 50b – 52**

- *The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off.*
  - Jesus gives the nobleman no outward sign, simply a command to GO, and His words that the child lives.
  - The man **believed**

- Why?
  - Was it because of the miracle?
  - Why could that NOT be the case?
- *As he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living. So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."*
  - It is only about twenty (20) miles from Cana to Capernaum
  - When the nobleman meets his slaves, it is the **next day**
  - They said that the fever left him **the previous day** at the seventh hour (**1:00 p.m.**)
  - What does this reveal about the nobleman's faith when Christ said, "Your son lives"?
    - F.F. Bruce states, "Probably the father could have got home the same day, but his confidence in Jesus' word was so strong that all anxiety left him and instead of hurrying home he completed some other convenient business."

### Verse 53

- *So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives" **and he himself believed and his whole household.***
  - What was the **true miracle** in this Biblical account?
  - How does this support the true purpose of miracles in Scripture?
  - Was it merely because of the miracle that the Nobleman believed?

### Verse 54

- "The sign at Cana set forth the life-giving power of Christ over against the ritualism of Judaism, and his disciples believed (2:11). The healing of the nobleman's son points to Jesus as the Life, and life came to the nobleman and his house."  
Leon Morris
- In this sign, not only does Jesus rescue a dying boy from the brink of death, but He gives ETERNAL life to an entire household.