

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 4TH - 5TH, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

TAKING HIM AT HIS WORD (JOHN 4:43-54) "NO HONOR IN HIS OWN COUNTRY"

As Jesus and the 12 move north toward the province He was born in (Nazareth in Galilee), John foreshadows Jesus being rejected by the people in the very area He came from.

- Others did believe in Him, and John mentions that. But these were people who had "seen everything in Jerusalem."

RETURNING TO THE SITE OF A PREVIOUS MIRACLE

On His return to Cana (bypassing Nazareth), "a certain royal official" who had a deathly ill son "pleaded with [Jesus] to come down and heal his son."

- We're not sure if this was a Roman, but we are sure that he knew of Jesus' reputation and that he traveled 25 miles to meet Him.

DESPERATE FOR A MIRACLE

The man "pleaded" for Jesus to heal his son, but Jesus makes an interesting statement about faith: "Unless you...see signs and wonders, you will not believe."

- We see a pattern here. **Jesus keeps trying to get people to look beyond this world into the eternal and spiritual.**

WELL, WHAT IS WRONG WITH HEALING?

Notice the believers in Samaria **believed because of the message, not the miraculous.** And isn't eternal life the most miraculous thing?

- We need to believe God still does physical miracles when He sees fit, but **the greater aspiration of the mature Christian is to desire soul healing that lasts forever!**

MIRACLES HAVE A GREATER POINT

Jesus heals the official's son, but the miracle had much greater implications than just a boy getting physically well. The point of miracles is to show God's power and advance the gospel message of salvation and His Kingdom.

- **Physical healing without a soul being saved is ultimately a loss.**

TRUSTING THE WORD

Notice the official never saw the miracle. He took Jesus at His word and believed. This goes back to a major theme: **Believing is seeing.**

- Hebrews 11:1 says, "...faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen." **We have to trust His Word and learn to think eternal not just temporary.**

WALKING 25 MILES TO HAVE AN ENCOUNTER

After the official got home and realized what had happened, not only he, but his entire family began to believe in Jesus.

- We don't have to walk 25 miles, but **we do have to put effort into our faith. Would we still follow Jesus if it were difficult? Do we think it is going to get easier?**

WANTING CHANGE (JOHN 5:1-9A) FROM NORTH BACK DOWN SOUTH

Chapter 5 opens up in Jerusalem during a vague "Jewish festival." In the northeast corner of the city, there was a pool that functioned as a **superstitious** place of healing.

- At this pool, people with disabilities would wait to get into the water to experience instantaneous healing.

NOTICE THERE IS NO FOURTH VERSE

The KJV has a fourth verse that mentions "an angel that went down...into the pool, and troubled the water," and whoever got in first would be healed. Why is it missing?

- The KJV was translated in 1611 from a manuscript not as accurate as the newer manuscripts used today.

38 YEARS!

When Jesus came to the Pool of Bethesda, He saw a man who had been disabled for 38 years and asked him, "Do you want to get well?" The man responded with the obvious problem: he had "no one to put [him] into the pool."

- We tend to think time produces hopelessness, but this man was holding on.

DEPENDING ON THE RIGHT THING

In God's wisdom, a 38-year situation was set up to prove to the man, and us, that **the answer to change is not through magic, superstition, or our abilities, but through the grace and power of Jesus.**

- **Jesus needs no talisman to work; he just wants us to trust in Him!**

GOD WORKS HOW HE CHOOSES

Notice there is no faith from the man at the pool before his healing. It is only afterward that he hears the truth and responds.

- **God works how He wants. In some cases, people are delivered and then saved, for others, it is the opposite. Jesus doesn't need our permission to work.**

IF WE ARE ALIVE, IT ISN'T TOO LATE!

Though He doesn't need our permission to work, we're still responsible for our choices.

- This simply means that we can be blessed (Matthew 5:45) or even physically healed and still be lost (Luke 17:17). Again, Jesus is trying to get us to think eternally more than temporarily.

A STERN WARNING (JOHN 5:9B-16) "NOW THAT DAY WAS THE SABBATH"

Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath. On the Sabbath, which literally means to rest, Jews were not allowed to work in any way. The religious leaders saw this, and it became a major source of contention. **Why all the fuss?**

- **Because we often want rules over grace and to boast about our deeds.**

I AM FOLLOWING THAT GUY!

Jesus knew that it was Saturday and that the religious leaders would be upset. He also knew the 39 Sabbath laws. So why did He do it?

- **Jesus is God, and He holds all authority.** Mark 2:27 tells us that **the Sabbath was meant to be a blessing, not a burden, but religion made it burdensome!**

"WHO IS THIS MAN THAT TOLD YOU..."

The religious people focused on the carried mat, not the restored legs. **It wasn't about a relationship with God but checking off a list.**

- **The point of Christianity is to be in a relationship with Jesus. The principles and commands are means of building that relationship.**

"SOMETHING WORSE"

After the commotion had subsided, Jesus found the man in the temple and said, "...you are well. **Do not sin anymore, so that something worse doesn't happen to you.**"

- **Jesus came to forgive and restore sinners. Sin is something we must despise, repent for, and move away from!**

THIS IS AN ODD RESPONSE

Not only did the man never thank Jesus, but he went and reported to the Jews. Because this miracle was done on the Sabbath, "the Jews began persecuting Jesus."

- **Though it is easy to judge, how many of us have been blessed only to become entitled, selfish, or fearful?**

ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY (JOHN 5:17-23) "MAKING HIMSELF EQUAL TO GOD"

Someone "working" on the Sabbath went against the law, unless that someone had the right to be above the law. The only person capable of that would be God.

- Jesus performing miraculous works on the Sabbath was good because He is over the Sabbath and was changing its significance.

SABBATARIANISM

Many Christians have carried the same legalism of the Sabbath over from the Pharisees by claiming we must worship on a particular day. This would go against Romans 14:5-6, Colossians 2:16-17, and Galatians 4:9-10.

- The principle of Sabbath remains: **we must rest and set aside time to worship God.**

JESUS IS THE ONLY KEY

V20-23 is basically Jesus clarifying that **all authority of what is right and wrong, all power, judgment, and access to the eternal** comes through Him exclusively.

- **If we trust in Jesus, He's not only the key to salvation, but we "will be amazed" at what He will do with us in this life!**

TRUST REGARDLESS OF WHAT WE SEE

- When we pray, read the Word, and obey, Jesus works in our lives, His reputation will establish, and our trust will grow.
- **We should believe in the miraculous, but what if "the fig tree never blooms" (Habbakuk 3:17-19)? Will we still trust?**
- Are we thinking about the eternal?

HAVE WE CHOSEN RELIGION OVER RELATIONSHIP?

- Have we trusted in superstitious religious acts and talismans more than prayer and leaning on the wisdom of the Bible?
- Do we fail to see God working because our religious preferences get in the way?
- **Do we have a relationship with Jesus or are we doing empty repetitious actions?**

HONOR

- Honor is something lost in our society. We fail to honor each other because we fail to honor the absolute authority.
- To honor someone is to not only hold them in the highest esteem, but to adhere to their standard. **Do we live like Jesus sets the standard for what our life should look like?**
- If we do not humble ourselves and honor God in our relationship with Him and how we live, we will not be honored, either in this life or the next.
- **Can we say we are honorable people? Do we adhere to Jesus, live with moral integrity, and love and respect others properly?**