



Small group questions (prepared alongside Simon's sermon)

Official's son healed – Jesus the life-giver – John 4:43-54

Leaders – if the questions make no sense or you don't know the answer – please contact the preacher!

1. "There are times when believing somebody's word is a matter of life and death." Have you ever had an experience like that?
2. How have people in the opening chapters of John's gospel believed or rejected Jesus?

Read John 4:43-54

3. How do you make sense of Jesus' statement reported in v44 with what happens in v45? (cf ch 2:23-25)
4. What do the royal official's actions in v46-47 and v49 tell us about him?
5. What do you make of Jesus' response in v48?
6. "You may go. Your son will live." (v50) What will it say about Jesus if it turns out the boy is not healed?
7. "Miracles were only something done by Jesus and the apostles." Discuss.
8. How might our understanding of the statement in Q7 influence our prayer life?
9. How does the royal official's faith progress through this story?
10. What is the connection between faith and life?
11. Knowing Jesus, the life-giver is awesome! How ought it to affect our lives and priorities?

Please pray for the students coming from the Brisbane School of Theology; for the holidays kids club; for the new youth group at Peregian; for Simon and Heather and the family in uncertain times and for those who are unwell presently.

Date: 5 March 2017

Jesus the life-giver - John 4:43-54

Opener: Ski train disaster in Austria, 2000. Those who trusted the fire fighter lived.

Context: Last week we started our new series on the signs in John's Gospel. Each one of these miracles points to another aspect of who Jesus is or why he came. Last week we heard how Jesus turned water into wine, showing how the old days of stale ritual had been replaced by the joy that only God's messiah could bring. His disciples put their trust in him. Right through John's gospel, we see that theme: some people accept Jesus – they believe in him/ put their trust in him; other people reject Jesus.

You see both sides in chapter four. Just before the part that we read, Jesus met the woman at the well in Samaria. After she introduced Jesus to the people of her village, they said:

"We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world." They BELIEVED in him.

Now he is heading back home to Galilee, and the way John writes it, it just doesn't add up: v44 says that Jesus predicted he would be rejected by his own people, yet v45 says that they welcome him! The thing is, it's the same as at the end of ch 2: the crowds in Jerusalem – these Galileans among them - saw Jesus doing miracles and they BELIEVED in him, but it is a shallow belief – they are merely entertained – and so Jesus does not entrust himself to them. This shallow belief is not giving Jesus due honour; it is no better than a rejection. And in the midst of this scene, we see a man come up to Jesus asking for a miracle, but he gets so much more.

Let's have a closer look, and let me show you: A sign of genuine faith, and

A sign of genuine life

Part one: v46-50 - a sign of genuine faith

⁴⁶Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

⁴⁸"Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe."

⁴⁹The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies."

⁵⁰Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son will live."

The man took Jesus at his word and departed.

V46 - Cana again, something of a base for Jesus and his discs. but this time, the problem is not running out of wine, this time it is literally a matter of life and death.

Royal official – probably worked for King Herod

His son is sick at Capernaum. He comes to find Jesus

V47 - Cana = Cooroy; Capernaum = Sunshine Beach, before motor transport and the road was a lot steeper. I like this dad! Comes personally, directly, urgently. Begged...close to death.

V48 - WHAT?! Jesus tells him off???

Jesus can go and heal the son, and dad will be happy and excited, but Jesus has something better in mind for this dad. Something that will only come about with a genuine faith. He needs to see Jesus as he really is.

V49 – The dad shows that he is not giving up. [passion – you can hear his voice breaking] ***"Sir, come down before my child dies!"***

But Jesus chooses not to come down to Capernaum. Instead he raises the stakes so that this man can really understand who Jesus is.

V50 – Go, your son lives. Now either, Jesus is the greatest healer ever known, or he is a hoax, a charlatan. Can he really heal a dying boy from this distance?

'Yes, he can,' thinks the royal official. Look at v 50, 'the man took Jesus at his word and departed.'

Before, he believed in Jesus' ability to heal; now he believes in his **promise** that he has already done it.

This is a genuine faith, but it is only good if the object of that faith is good.

We'll come back to that later...

Illustration: Jesus still heals people today. People I know: my dad, my friend, Clarry, friends from Bible college. There's nothing quite like a doctor pointing at the before and after scans: I don't understand: where did the infection go? Why does your eye work? Why isn't your baby horribly deformed? And the patients got to tell of their faith in Jesus. BUT, I have other friends who have prayed earnestly for a miracle, and it never came. Their beautiful son died. I'm sure we've all seen cases like that.

Application: **Should we pray for miracles?** Absolutely yes. Should we expect them? Yes! But we always need to pray like Jesus in the Garden, "not my will, but your will be done." We won't always get the answer we wanted, and sometimes it will break our heart. But even then, genuine faith acknowledges that God is in control. Genuine faith says, God will bring good out of this. Genuine faith believes God's promises. We don't have direct, personal promises of healing in any and every circumstance. If we did, the population of the world would be a little out of control by now! Believe in Jesus, pray for miracles, but be humble and faithful, even if the answer is not what we wanted. God will still be glorified.

BUT this father in the story, DID have a specific promise of healing, and so he made his way home...

And on his way, found a sign of genuine life, v51-54

⁵¹While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living.⁵²When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, "The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour."

⁵³Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and all his household believed.

⁵⁴This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus performed, having come from Judea to Galilee.

V51 – So he's going down to Capernaum, and his servants are coming the other way. Great news: the boy lives!

He is genuinely alive because he has been genuinely healed by the life-giver!

V52 – he asks, when was this? The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour (1pm)

(It would have been too late to get home yesterday, he's stayed overnight somewhere)

Read v53 Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." **So he and all his household believed.**

This is a different level of belief, isn't it? First, he believed Jesus could heal his son if he came to the house; then he believed Jesus' promise that he HAD HEALED from a distance; now he BELIEVES, and his whole household with him. What do they believe? It has to be something along the lines of John 20:31 where John tells us the purpose of his book: But these are written that you may^{f86} believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that **by believing you may have life in his name.**

This miracle is a sign of life. On the surface, the boy is alive and well. But deeper, the whole family have come to know the life-giver. They know he can give life physically, and it's a sign that he can give life spiritually.

If Jesus had not been powerful to save, then the man's faith would have been misplaced and useless. But genuine faith in the right direction? It saves. It connects you to the life-giver, and saves your soul for eternity.

Illustration: Ever found something so good you couldn't shut up about it? **BORDERTOWN (no commission!)**

Application: **1) do you BELIEVE in the life-giver?** I'm not asking, "have you been around church for a while/ are baptised Anglican/ do you turn to God when bad stuff is happening?" I mean, do you believe he is the Son of God, who died and rose for you, beating death for you, and offering you life? If you don't, today is the day. Eternal life can be yours, today. Please see me or Mark after the service. We would love to talk you through that
2) will you tell others about the life giver?

>>> My role finishing. Anguish over opportunities. YR 3s at SBSS, never had RE classes, don't even know Jesus' name! Who will tell them when I've gone? Year 5 and 6 at TSS.

Who will say, next year, I won't go caravanning, I'll volunteer to teach RE or Dynamite. I'm not being self-serving here, I want those kids to know the life giver. Because when you know the life giver, you know life, and you feel it bursting out of you so that others can know him too.