

Session Five: The Cure of the Royal Official's Son

Opening Prayer

Recap

- Similar themes of above will be here as well

Where is the story in John? The curing of the royal official's son at Cana: John 4:46-54

Context within John itself:

- We have been to Cana once already for the wedding feast at the beginning of Chapter 2.
- Jesus has been to Jerusalem for Passover and to drive out what is impure in the Temple
- The leaders of the Temple have not understood his reasons for this.
- Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night to try and understand who Jesus is, but his understanding is only partial.

- Jesus makes his way back to Galilee by way of Samaria and meets the woman at the well.
- There he encounters faith but not initially, and he does so among people who are marginally Jewish.
- The woman's faith leads to a growth in the faith of others.

- After all those encounters, Jesus is back in Cana again where he will encounter a non-Jew. This sets up this 2nd sign.
- If we can trust John's festival chronology, this puts us late into the spring of the first year of Jesus' public ministry.
- Once Jesus is done here, John has him traveling back down to Jerusalem for another feast, possibly Pentecost, and to the next sign Jesus will perform.

The story:

- This is probably the least well-known of the signs of John in the manner that he specifically tells it.
- Though it is probably still well known as a story in general simply because Matthew and Luke have a very similar story.

- While Jesus is in Cana, a royal official comes to see Jesus to ask for his son to be cured.
- His son is near death.
- The royal official and his son live in Capernaum which is about a day or two journey from Cana, down along the Sea of Galilee.
- The man walks to Cana to meet Jesus and asks Jesus to accompany him back for the desired cure.

- Jesus offers an initial rebuff, explaining that "you people" require signs in order to believe. This is a corrective move: "do not reduce me to merely a wonder-worker."
- The official is not deterred and asks again, showing deeper belief.
- Jesus explains that his son will live and that the official can go back without Jesus coming along.
- The spoken word of Jesus, even from a distance, not in-person, is powerful enough to heal.

- The official accepts Jesus' word on faith and walks back to Capernaum.
- He meets his slaves on the way back who explain that the boy began to recover at 1pm the day before, the very hour that Jesus had spoken of the cure.
- As a result, the entire household of the official came to believe in Jesus.
- The belief in Jesus' word by one person leads the faith to spread to others.

Who is Jesus based on this sign?

- As we already saw, he is the giver of powerful words.
- His word can cure and it gives life.
- He exists in close communion with the God of Israel whose word moves mountains.
- Jesus is also a savior for the non-Jews. His word is what unites all peoples.

Lessons and Reflections for today:

- the power of the Word
- the faith of the royal official who accepts what Jesus says and walks back home
- the presence of faith in those who are outside of the regular community of believers
- Faith must spread to new believers through our own faith
- The word of God is what binds nations, groups, and races together most authentically.
- This is the answer to identity politics.

End of Session Five