

20. READING THE SIGNS (JOHN 4:46-54) 07/01/12  
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, PASTOR LEE HENDON

WHEN THE WORLD IS GOING TO HELL IN A HAND BASKET, THE WALLS COME TUMBLING DOWN, ALL OUR PLANS & SCHEMES HAVE GONE AWRY, WHO ARE WE GOING TO TURN TO, WHO ARE WE GONNA CALL? THE GHOST BUSTERS! (HA,HA!) THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE IS NOT AS USER FRIENDLY AS WE MIGHT SUPPOSE - UNEXPECTED TRAGEDIES - ILLNESSES - HEART BREAKS - DISASTERS - LOOM AROUND EVERY CORNER. WHEN WE REALLY CONSIDER IT, THE WORLD CAN BE A VERY DANGEROUS PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE.

THIS PASSAGE IS PACKED WITH MOVEMENT - ON A JOURNEY HERE & THERE - JESUS IS TRAVELING FROM SYCHAR TO CANA - THE ROYAL OFFICER FROM CAPERNAUM TO CANA. LIFE IS INDEED A **JOURNEY** & NOT ITS DESTINY. WHERE ARE YOU ON YOUR LIFE JOURNEY TODAY? IT IS 18 MILES FROM CAPERNAUM TO CANA - WHICH IS A FULL DAY'S WALK. THE OFFICIAL WAS ON A MISSION OF **URGENCY!** HIS SON WAS ILL WITH A VERY HIGH FEVER - THE KIND OF FEVER FROM WHICH A CHILD DID NOT NORMALLY RECOVER. IN JESUS' DAY & AGE FEVERS WERE MOST OFTEN **DEADLY** ESPECIALLY WITH CHILDREN & THE ELDERLY. PERHAPS YOU HAVE HAD TO RUSH YOUR CHILD TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM DURING THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT - THE CHILD'S FEVER ON THE RISE - NOT EVEN AN ICY BATH HAD HELPED. WELL, THEY DID NOT HAVE MODERN MEDICINE IN BIBLE TIMES - THE OFFICIAL HAD HEARD OF THE MIRACLE WORKER JESUS - SO OFF HE RACED FROM CAPERNAUM TO CANA. HE WOULD HAVE TO HURRY OVER THOSE 18 DUSTY MILES BEFORE IT WAS TOO LATE TO HELP HIS SON.

WHEN THE OFFICIAL FOUND JESUS HE FELL PROSTRATE AT THE FEET OF JESUS. THIS WAS A MOST UNUSUAL, OUT OF THE ORDINARY SCENE. OTHER PEOPLE USUALLY FELL PROSTRATE BEFORE HIM, NOW **HE** WAS EATING THE DUST OF THE GROUND. DESPERATE PEOPLE DO DESPERATE THINGS - THE ROLES WERE NOW REVERSED. THE OFFICIAL WAS NOW THE BEGGAR - REPEATEDLY BEGGING & PLEADING FOR HIS SON'S LIFE. WHAT DOES IT TAKE FOR YOU TO CAST ASIDE YOUR **PRIDE?** PRIDE IS NOT TOO HIGH A PRICE TO PAY FOR YOUR CHILD'S LIFE - PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO ACT THE FOOL FOR MUCH LESS THAN THAT. LOVE OF FAMILY CAN MOVE US TO THROW CAUTION TO THE WIND -

HIGH OFFICIAL BOWING DOWN TO A COMMONER....

THE OFFICIAL KNEW ENOUGH ABOUT JESUS TO TAKE A CHANCE & RISK LOSING FACE IN PUBLIC. HE HEARD THE STORY THAT JESUS HAD PERFORMED THE MIRACLE OF TURNING THE WATER TO WINE ON HIS LAST VISIT TO CANA. THE POPULAR WORD OF MOUTH WAS THAT JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH, THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD. OH IF ONLY ALL THIS COULD BE TRUE, THEN TRULY JESUS COULD BE OF HELP TO HIM TO PROVIDE THE CURE FOR HIS ALMOST DEAD SON! PROPHETS OF OLD HAD DONE SUCH MIRACLES ...HE WAS COUNTING ON JESUS TO BE THE MEDICAL CURE NO DOCTOR OR HOSPITAL COULD GIVE.

JESUS RESPONDED W/, "UNLESS YOU SEE SIGNS & WONDERS YOU WILL NOT BELIEVE." HE SAID THAT TO THE GATHERING CROWD WHICH INCLUDED THE OFFICIAL - THE "YOU" IN GREEK IS PLURAL. JESUS WAS NOT PICKING ON OR PATRONIZING THE MAN. JESUS WOULD USE THIS MIRACLE OPPORTUNITY FOR A MUCH GREATER PURPOSE THAN SAVING THE BOY FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH. MUCH GREATER ISSUES WERE AT STAKE. WHICH IS TRUE FOR LIFE ITSELF. **DEATH IS NOT THE PROBLEM - NOT HAVING A SAVIOR IS THE PROBLEM!** JESUS HAD NOT COME TO SAVE THE LIVES OF THE LIVING FROM DEATH BUT TO SAVE LOST SOULS. THE LIVES OF JESUS & THE OFFICIAL HAD CROSSED ON THIS JOURNEY IN LIFE FOR A MUCH GREATER PURPOSE. AT STAKE WAS NOT "SIGNS & WONDERS" BUT HOW TO MOVE PEOPLE TO A POSITION OF FAITH IN JESUS AS LORD & SAVIOR - THE MESSIAH OF GOD. SAVE YOUR SOUL & LIFE FALLS INTO PLACE.

THE ROYAL OFFICIAL WAS PERSISTENT WITH HIS PLEADING FOR HIS SON'S LIFE. WHEN A PERSON IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM LOOMING & CERTAIN DISASTER HE/SHE LOOSES SIGHT OF THE BIG PICTURE - GET ME THRU THIS STORM FIRST, JESUS! WE CAN SO EASILY BECOME OBSESSED WITH THE PROBLEM(S) AROUND US THAT WE LOOSE SIGHT OF THE SOLUTION(S). BELIEF IN JESUS AS ONE'S PERSONAL SAVIOR IS THE SOLUTION TO WHAT MIGHT EVER AIL US. MOTH & RUST EAT AWAY AT OUR EARTHLY POSSESSIONS - THIEVES MAY COME IN THE NIGHT TO STEAL AWAY WHAT IS OURS - STOCK MARKETS WILL RISE & CRASH - HEALTH WILL COME & GO - KINGDOMS & GOVERNMENTS WILL RISE & FALL - THOSE ARE FACETS OF OUR LIVES BUT THE CRUX OF WHAT REALLY MATTERS IS **JESUS**. HAVING JESUS AS OUR SAVIOR PUTS EVERYTHING,

EVERYTHING, EVERYTHING ELSE IN ITS PROPER PERSPECTIVE.  
***JESUS ALIGNS OUR LIVING SO THAT WE HAVE LIFE!***

TO SHOW THE CROWD & THE OFFICIAL HE MEANT WHAT HE SAID, JESUS HEALED THE BOY WITH THE POWER & AUTHORITY OF HIS **SPOKEN WORD**. IN THE BEGINNING OF CREATION, GOD SPOKE A WORD & ALL THE WORLD & EVERYTHING IN IT CAME INTO BEING. WOULD BE SO LITTLE A TASK FOR JESUS, AS GOD'S SON, TO SPEAK THE BOY BACK FROM DEATH TO LIFE. SOMEDAY SOON, PERHAPS WE WILL IMAGINE PRACTICING MEDICINE AT A DISTANCE BUT NOT TODAY. THE DOCTORS APPOINTMENTS, THE HOSPITAL STAYS, ALL THE TESTS AFTER TESTS, THE ROWS OF MEDICINES TO TAKE NOW & THEN, ***HANDS-ON-HEALING*** IS ALL THAT WE KNOW. JESUS SPOKE A WORD & ACROSS 18 MILES, A DAY'S JOURNEY, THE BOYS HEALTH WAS RESTORED TO LIFE **IN AN INSTANT!** ***INSTANTANEOUSLY!*** DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT THAT IS VERY IMPRESSIVE TO ME. IT SURELY GOT THE ATTENTION OF THE OFFICIAL & THOSE IN THE CROWD. NO MAGIC, NO MUMBO-JUMBO, JUST A SPOKEN WORD & THE BOY WAS HEALED!

I HAVE BEEN IN THE MINISTRY SINCE 1970 & HAVE YET TO EXPERIENCE THE MIRACLE OF **INSTANT HEALING**. I HAVE SECRET-LY YEARNED FOR THAT EXPERIENCE IN MY LIFE BUT IT IS YET TO COME. DOES THAT MEAN I HAVE BEEN ROBBED, YOU HAVE BEEN ROBBED OF SOMETHG NEEDED FOR MY/OUR FAITH JOURNEYS. NOT REALLY - THOUGH ON THE SURFACE IT MAY APPEAR SO. THE ROYAL OFFICIAL **INSTANTLY BELIEVED** IN THE POWER OF JESUS' SPOKEN WORD FOR THE MIRACLE OF HEALING. HIS BELIEF, OUR BELIEF IS THE POINT OF THE STORY. THE MIRACLE WAS CONFIRMED THE NEXT DAY WHEN THE OFFICIAL WAS ON HIS RETURN HOME. AT THE HOUR JESUS SPOKE IT, THE BOY WAS HEALED - THAT WAS IMPRESSIVE. SUCH POWER & AUTHORITY WAS & IS MEANT TO MOVE THEM/US TO FAITH IN JESUS AS SAVIOR. WITH SUCH POWER & AUTHORITY, JESUS MUST BE/IS THE SON OF GOD. THE EVENT WAS/IS TO MOVE US TO BELIEVE IN JESUS & NOT IN THE MIRACLE.

THAT THIS WAS THE "**SECOND SIGN**" JESUS DID IN GALILEE IS THE CRUX OF THE EVENT. A SIGN WAS GIVEN FROM JESUS TO GIVE US AN INSIGHT, A GLIMPSE, A PICTURE OF JESUS AS GOD'S SON & OUR SAVIOR. THE SIGNS ARE SECONDARY, **FAITH IS PRIMARY**. THAT WE SHOULD HOPE FOR/DESIRE SUCH MIRACLES IN OUR

JOURNEY IS NOT SO IMPORTANT - WHAT IS OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE IS THAT WE BELIEVE IN JESUS. WHEN CATASTROPHES/TRAGEDIES HAPPEN TO US IN LIFE WE MIGHT WONDER WHERE IS GOD - WHAT IS GOD LIKE? UNTIL WE HEAR GOD TALK - SEE GOD'S PROMISES IN ACTION - **UNTIL WE MEET JESUS** - WE ARE HELPLESS & HOPELESS. JESUS HAD/HAS THE POWER THAT BELONGS TO GOD. WITH JESUS' GLORY REVEALED THERE IS HOPE FOR US WHEN WE BELIEVE IN HIM - WE CAN GO OUR WAYS IN LIFE - JESUS GIVES US & PROMISES US LIFE - A LIFE THAT IS ETERNAL! **THAT IS MORE THAN ENOUGH!**