

Thought for Sunday 30th August 2020

Pastor Gordon Hamilton

Read John 4:45-54

Last week we read what John said was the first of Jesus' miraculous signs, and for some strange reason, none of the other gospel writers felt it was right to include either of these two miracles in their accounts. In verse 48 we see Jesus challenges the people, maybe the royal official especially; *'Unless you see miraculous signs and wonders you will never believe.'* John says in verse 54; *'This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus performed.'* As we read chapter 2 the implication is that the first miracle was not seen by everyone at the wedding, only Mary, the servants and his disciples knew what had happened. In John 3:2 we read Nicodemus speaking to Jesus; *'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.'* From that we presume John is saying, this was the second miracle Jesus performed in Galilee, rather than the second miracle Jesus had performed. We do have other accounts of people in authority coming to Jesus, or sending someone to Jesus asking for him to heal their child. In Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:2-10 we read about the centurion's son, but here in John 4, we see it is the royal official who comes himself to face Jesus. I guess as a royal official he would have carried a certain degree of authority and the others who would have been there would have made a space for the official to speak to Jesus. It is possible that people knew the man's son was very ill and wouldn't have wanted to impede the man in his quest to speak to Jesus. We are told he went to Jesus *'and begged him to come and heal his son.'* In Luke's gospel we read in chapter 4 that Jesus returned to Galilee, where he stood in the synagogue and read from Isaiah 61:1-2, then said; *'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'* And went on to say that he wouldn't be accepted in his home town and verse 31 says; *'Jesus went down to Capernaum.'* We presume the events we are looking at today happened just prior to his arriving in Capernaum. So the official begs Jesus to *'come and heal my son.'* Jesus challenges the man, and those around, and many people today by saying; *'Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, you will never believe.'* The official again pleads with Jesus; *'Sir, come down before my child dies.'* Jesus replied, *'You may go. Your son will live.'* *The man took Jesus at his word.'* Of course it is in **Luke 17:11-19** read Jesus heals the ten lepers and nine of the ten didn't even bother to thank him. The impression in that miracle is that the nine who didn't thank Jesus were Jews, the one who did (Luke 17:18) was a foreigner. I wonder how good we are at saying 'Thank you' to God. Sue and I watched a programme on the television the other night about people who go missing. One was of an elderly couple who had been to the shops, the husband went into a shop while the wife, who suffered with dementia, wandered off and wasn't found for several hours. The man said, that towards the end, while his wife was still missing, he prayed to God that she would be found safe and sound, and she was, but there was no mention that he thanked God when she was found. Sadly, that is too often the case, we pray for a miracle, some small, some large, but do we give God the glory? John 4:51 tells us; *'while the official was still on his way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living.'* **Read verses 52-53....** we are not told whether the official came back and thanked Jesus, just that *'his household believed.'* To have found that out, John must have at least met up with people who knew the

royal official. Last week as we looked at Jesus changing the water into wine, we saw Mary accepting that to walk with Jesus and to believe in Him and in his power was to accept a life of peace, trusting in everything he does and says. I believe I may have said before, many years ago I used to commentate on Crawley Town Football Clubs matches, for the hospital radio, this was back in the 1970's, before they were a league club. I would get to the ground for an evening match under floodlights, taking a blind friend with me as he enjoyed sitting in the commentary box with me. At the end of the game, by the time I had packed the microphones and everything away and was ready to go, all the lights would have been turned off, it was pitched black, the way to the exit was uneven but I would put my trust in my blind friend who remembered every pothole and every step up or down. It may seem strange to be guided by someone who was blind, in the dark, but I held his hand and trusted him, he never let me down. I do the same with Jesus. There's a song by Robin Mark titled, 'All is well', if you have Youtube, you can listen to it there, the words say this: *He lowers us to raise us, so we can sing his praises, whatever is his way, all is well. He makes us rich and poor, that we might trust him more, whatever is his way all is well. All my changes come from him, he who never changes. And I'm held firm in grasp of the rock of all the ages. All is well with my soul, he is God in control, I know not all his plans, but I know I'm in his hands. He clothes us now then strips us, yet with his Word equips us, whatever is his way all is well. And though our seasons change, we still exalt his name, whatever is his way all is well.* There are several things in that song that we need to be assured of 1) We're held firm in grasp of the rock of all the ages. 2) he is God in control, we know not all his plans, but we know we're in his hands. When we recognise that God is in control, then we can walk hand in hand with the God of all creation, and know the peace that passes all understanding. The royal official asked and received. Let us not be afraid to ask Jesus to be with us and to guide us, every day of our lives. Amen.

I need Thee every hour, most gracious Lord:
No tender voice like Thine can peace afford.

*I need Thee, O I need Thee! Every hour I need Thee;
O bless me now, my Saviour! I come to Thee*

I need Thee every hour, stay Thou near by;
Temptations lose their power when Thou art nigh.

I need Thee...

I need Thee every hour, in joy or pain;
Come quickly and abide, or life is vain.

I need Thee...

I need Thee every hour, teach me Thy will;
And thy rich promises in me fulfil.

I need Thee...

I need Thee every hour, most Holy One;
O make me Thine indeed, Thou blessed Son!

I need Thee...