



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 4:43-54

“Healing of the Nobleman’s Son”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are studying in the Gospel of John, and we have reached the account of the second of John’s signs in John chapter 4 verse 43 through verse 54. So, if you have a New Testament or a Bible with you, I hope you do have them, will you listen as we look at this incident in which the Lord heals the nobleman’s son. John 4 verse 43 through verse 54,

“Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. (Remember our Lord had been in Judea, he had gone through Samaria where he had had his interview with the Samaritan woman and now he is on the way back to Galilee.) For Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honor in his own country. Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast. So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. (Will you notice carefully that the pronouns are plural in this verse, except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. Now I think I took a look at the New American Standard Bible, and I believe it renders it something like except you people, strictly speaking, it’s simply ye or you plural. So this is not a

statement addressed simply to the nobleman but includes others as well.) The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend (or when he got better). And they said unto him, yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.”

Notice carefully the word that is used for the miracle. Now my text here that I’m reading says, “This is again the second miracle, it is the word sign. That is it points to something supernatural which in itself is not the total goal of the author but we are to look behind it for spiritual significance. And so this was a sign that points the reader to something beyond the mere physical healing of that young boy. We shall talk about the significance of it in the message. May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

The subject for today in the exposition of the word in the ministry of the word service is, “The healing of the Nobleman’s Son.” This is the second of the signs that John records in his gospel in his attempt to bring his readers to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ that means eternal life. Remember he says in the 30th and 31st verses of the 20th chapter, “Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

Now he alludes to the first two of the signs in this passage that we have just read for in verse 46 he said, “So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee where he made the water wine.” And then at the conclusion of this account he says “this is again the second sign that Jesus did when he came out of Judea into Galilee.” It is rather striking that he is at Cana of Galilee in both of the performances

of these signs. But this is the second of the signs that John would have his readers give attention to in pondering the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He would desire that his readers come to a personal understanding of him who to know is eternal life.

From the context of John chapter 4, we have seen our Lord coming from Judea after a relatively successful ministry there among a small group of people there, into Samaria, the text said, “He must needs go through Samaria,” evidently a reference to the divine purpose that he go there. He had the interview with the woman of Samaria and discussed with her the water which turned out to be the water of life. Then he discussed true worship which was to be in Spirit and in truth. And then as a result of the testimony of the woman, the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ spread to a number of Samaritans in the village that was near Jacob’s well.

Now he is on his way from Samaria into Galilee. We read in verse 43, “Now after two days he departed thence and went into Galilee, for Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honor in his own country.” One wonders about that as the Lord Jesus saying by verse 44 that his country is Galilee in which he was nurtured, or is his country Judea where he has just had some ministry and where he was born? And in the light of that statement we would gather evidences of the rejection of him are already in view, or is he looking forward to the ministry in Galilee in which he will also find general rejection acceptance only by some?

“For,” he says, that’s an interesting for that begins verse 44. He went into Galilee “For Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honor in his own country.” So evidently he went into Galilee in order that this fact that a prophet hath no honor in his own country be manifested, be carried out there. It might seem strange to us, but remember John looks at things from the standpoint of the divine sovereignty often throughout his gospel. That is a general truth, that a prophet has no honor in his own country. So far as I know, there has been only one exception to that. And that is the fact that people in Chicago throw bigger rocks at me than they do in Dallas. That as far as I know the only exception to this rule that a prophet has no honor in his own country.

Well, this is a most interesting incident that we’re going to look at and it’s a striking instance of a nobleman who comes to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And he not only comes to faith in Christ, he not only becomes a nobleman in the kingdom of God and Christ, but he carries his whole family with him too. Nothing can be more significant than this wonderful fact, for we read in verse 53, “And himself believed and his whole house.” So, what a striking thing it is, a man comes to faith in Christ and his whole house comes also to faith in him. You know, I have often seen this happen around the country, discussing the salvation of an individual, we’ll discover that that person was the first believer in their immediate home and now every member of the house has become a Christian. That’s a most wonderful thing and often happens, and has happened here. It happened in the house of the Philippian jailer remember for he himself believed and his whole house believed with him. I’m sure that many of you in this audience since you can sing, “I have been redeemed,” can also look around you in your own family and see how one member of the family came to Christ and as a result the whole family has become a Christian family.

Well the story revolves around three people, the nobleman, the son that was sick and the Lord Jesus Christ. In the 46th verse, this man is described as, “A certain nobleman.” Now the original text says simply, “he was a certain king’s man.” For the adjective *basilikos* means something just like that. He is a king’s man, a certain royal man. We do not know to whom he belonged or who he served. It’s possible he was in the service of Herod Antipas. Now the Herods strictly speaking were not kings, but nevertheless because of the relationships that they enjoyed, it was possible to call them that. And so it’s possible he waited upon Herod Antipas or served him in some way. We do not know whether he was a civil employee or whether he was a military man. All that is said is that he was a certain nobleman. In fact, in an endeavor to speculate about him, some have sought to link him with the individual who is referred to in the 8th chapter of the Gospel of Luke where we read in verse 3, “And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod’s steward and Susannah and many others which ministered unto him of their substance.” These were the women who supported our Lord in his ministry and one of them was Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward. Some have

thought that perhaps this man was that Chuza, Herod’s steward. He could be called conceivably a nobleman because he was in the employ of King Herod.

Others have thought well perhaps he’s the one who is mentioned in Acts chapter 13 as one of the teachers or prophets in the Church at Antioch later on. Luke writes there, “Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen,” notice this that is which is said about him, “Manaen which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch,” evidently a foster brother of Herod the tetrarch and possibly this particular individual is in view here. But really we do not know that is pure speculation, we cannot say that that is the person whose son our Lord healed. So, a nobleman.

Now it is striking however that he is a nobleman and that he comes to faith in Christ. Remember the Apostle Paul says with reference to the Corinthians, he said, “Now take a look at your assembly and you will find that not many mighty, not many noble, not many well-born have been called.” That was designed to show them that it’s not a person’s standing that determines our response to the gospel. In fact, the actual experience is that not many mighty, not many noble, not many well born do respond. The reason for that no doubt is that if a person has influence, or he has power or he has money, he has less reason it would seem to turn to the Lord. So it’s not necessarily a blessing of life to be powerful and influential and rich, because the experiences of life are often designed to show us our need. “Not many mighty, not many noble.

Lady Huntington who was a friend of the Wesley and George Whitefield and did a great deal in the support of the gospel during the times of those revivals was a person who liked to say that she was saved by an M. And when asked what she meant she would say, “Well Paul said not many noble are called. He did not say not any,” so she got in by the “M.” Well here is a person who also got in by the M. He was a nobleman, but one of those few who was called by the Lord. And not only did he get in as I say, but he carried his whole family with him.

The second of the persons who is important in this story is the son. We don’t really know anything about him. He evidently was a small boy because in a moment after calling him his son he

calls him his child and the word that is used is a word that is a diminutive that is it’s a word of affection that one would use for a little boy or a little child. So when he says, “Sir come down ere my child die,” in verse 49, he refers to him as his little boy. And also others refer to him as a boy later on. So he was just a young boy and he is the object of the healing ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. All we know about him is that he was sick and evidently very desperately ill because he was at the point of death as comes out in this story.

The third person who is important in the account of course is our Lord. Now many times our Lord appears as a great miracle worker, here he appears as a great miracle worker but as the Great Physician. But a great physician not only in the physical sense but also in the spiritual sense as well, for the young boy is brought back to physical health, but the nobleman and perhaps a far more important miracle is performed here, the nobleman is brought from spiritual death to spiritual life. He is the great physician.

There is a story that I read about some time ago about a miner that was converted. And he went to hear a very well known preacher by the name of John Hutton. And once he interrupted Mr. Hutton as he was preaching. He leapt to his feet and he led the whole congregation in the singing of the Doxology. And later someone asked him why he had done that. He explained that he’s been a Christian only for some months and that it was all so gloriously different to him that he just couldn’t help jumping up and talking about how he had been saved. He said, “I used to be a bad lot. I drank, I pawned the furniture, I knocked my wife about, and my life is real life and splendidly worthwhile now.” Well he worked among the miners and his friends knew that so they said, “Well, how did you fair among the miners down in the pit?” He laughed and he said, “Today they asked me you don’t seriously credit that whole yarn about Jesus turning the water into wine do you?” To which he made the devastating answer, “I don’t know anything about water and wine, but I do know this, that in my house, Christ has turned beer into furniture, and that’s a good enough miracle for me.” [Laughter]

Henry Clay used to say that he didn’t know anything for himself personally about the change of heart spoken of by the Christians when Kentucky family feuds of longstanding were healed. But

he said that he knew that whatever healed a Kentucky family feud was bound to be more than human, and so he had respect for the change of heart spoken of by Christians.

Well this is the Lord and he’s the third important character. Now what I would like for you to notice as we briefly trace the thought through this section, is this, our Lord poses three tests for this nobleman. Each of the tests it seems to me is plainly set out and there designed to bring him into a full saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I want you to notice as we go through that the Lord does not disdain simple faith in insufficient aspects of our Lord’s ministry. He’s willing to accept the faith that is there and to move on toward full saving faith that completely satisfies which is a very encouraging thing. But as is always the case, he poses some tests, and the nobleman surmounts these tests in a most interesting way.

The first test in this miracle that is performed is found implicitly in the statement in verse 47 when he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee. Now notice what is involved here, the nobleman lives in Capernaum, he ministers in Capernaum, it’s about twenty to twenty-five miles from Cana in Galilee. And he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee. So it is clear that some reports of our Lord’s ministry had come to this man, whether someone told him, whether he had heard because it was the talk of the neighborhood, we don’t know. But word had come that there was a miracle worker in the vicinity. Later on people call him a prophet, perhaps he was called a prophet, we don’t know. But his ministry had become known, and consequently he was now faced with his first test concerning faith in him. His child is at the point of death, and word comes that Jesus has come back into the vicinity.

Now I’m sure that from our Lord’s standpoint, he of course knew that that nobleman was in Capernaum and he fully expected to have some contact with him. We read in the Bible, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” So faith flows out of the word of God. Well here comes the word in its simplest form to the nobleman. That individual of whom it is said he is able to heal the sick has come again in the vicinity. And so the test to him is shall I go to him and

ask him to heal my son? So, the test had to do with the nature of the power of our Lord and his response to the word that he had heard concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now it is clear he had learned to trust the power of our Lord in that he came to the Lord Jesus to Cana of Galilee, went to him according to verse 47 and began to beseech him that he would come down and heal his son because he was at the point of death. Now that’s the first test and he surmounts it, he comes and he beseeches our Lord. The Greek text there suggests that he engaged in a kind of ministry of beseeching because it went on for some time evidently. Maybe he repeated his request several times. Maybe there was a crowd around our Lord but at any rate, he was beseeching him that he would come down and heal his son because he was about to die.

Now our Lord begins the second test with the words in verse 48, “Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe.” That would indicate that others were about the nobleman when he spoke these words. And speaking to them generally, he said, “Except you see signs and wonders you will not believe.” In other words, your faith rests not upon the word of God, but upon the mighty miracles that may be done for your benefit. I think that is very significant of course it is designed primarily for the nation Israel because we are in the country of Israel here. And we know that later on, the Apostle Paul speaks about the character of Israel in the day of our Lord and the day of the apostles, they were those who sought the signs. Our Lord knew that too, he said, “You’re seeking signs but there’s just one sign going to be given you and it’s the sign of Jonah the prophet. The ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ is the sign.

Now you’ll notice he does not even give this nobleman an answer, but he speaks generally, “Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe.” There are people who are just like this. They do not really believe that you can trust the Lord God unless some miracle comes first. That’s very common, John Calvin four hundred years ago in his commentary on John says, “Nothing is commoner than the saying that the miracles come first and then we will give ear to their teaching.” There are people all over Dallas today who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ because he is set forth in the word of God as the Savior of sinners, but they want to have some visible impression of

his mighty power and then if they have that, some instances of healing, so called, some instances of mighty power, then they will give effect to faith.

Now you’ll notice our Lord does not regard that as totally without merit, but that is a very, very low approach to him so far as acceptance with him in the fullest sense is concerned. He says, “Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe.” Signs and wonders may have been an excitement to faith, but faith in the word of God, how much more significant that is. Now you’ll notice too that this man his a person who is still dictating the method by which our Lord shall heal. And that shows you the weakness of his faith. There are two things wrong with it. He thinks that our Lord can only heal if he comes down to Capernaum. He says, “Come down ere my child die.” And further, he seems to think that if the child dies then there is nothing that the Lord Jesus can do about it. So in two ways his faith is deficient.

Now our Lord accepts his response even in spite of its deficiency which is an encouraging thing. That’s why he has accepted us as we have come to him with deficient faith so often. But here is a man who draws our Lord’s judgment of seeking signs and wonders and if not he will not believe.

On Friday I was coming down from Chicago and I got on the other airline this time and was two hours late. I must say however, it was not really the other airline’s fault, but still I did, after fifty trips I tried the other airline. And I guess I’ll have to try it again. But anyway, we were very late, I came in and sat down in the seat that I usually sit in on number seven seat and it was different in the other airline and I didn’t particularly like the seat, but anyway it was the Lord’s place for me because a lady came in and sat down next to me with a little boy. And we engaged in a bit of conversation and she looked over and saw I was reading a book on Micah the prophet. And she said, “Are you a teacher in a Bible college or Bible institute?” And I said, “Well yes, I teach in a theological seminary in Chicago.” And she said, “Well I’m a member of the United Methodist Church in northwestern Ohio and I sing in the choir.”

And I looked over at her and in my usual very tactful way [Laughter] I said, “Is this young man over here” he looked to me like he was about eight or nine years of age, it turned out he was

ten. I said, “Is this young man over here your son or your grandson?” I really thought he was her grandson but I put in son just in order to make her feel good and protect me. [Laughter] Because I do remember one time that there was a man who went in a store here in Dallas, a man or a lady I cannot remember. It was a lady I think who went in with a little boy who attended a church that I was pastor of in the city many years ago. And one of the floor men in the department store came over to her and said, “Good morning.” And something like this, “How is your grandson?” And she turned and said “Well he’s not my grandson but he’s my son.” and he was so flustered he said, “Well you’d never know it!” [Laughter] And with that she said he just turned in confusion and left. And she was able to shop very pleasantly thereafter.

Well I remembered that and so I said, “Is this your son or your grandson?” And she said, “Well it’s my son.” We had a nice little conversation and I said to her, “Well you’ve told me you’re a member of the Methodist Church, but are you a Christian?” And she said, “Well yes I am a Christian.” And I then said, “Well now on what do you base your confidence that you are a Christian?” And she said, “Well the Lord has been so very good to me.” And with that she launched into a discussion concerning the little boy. When he was just a little child he had had a convulsion. And it was necessary for her to take him to the hospital. And he went to the hospital and he was taken into the room for examination, and the doctors rushed him into another room, did everything they possibly could for him and then came out and told her that there was no evidences of vital signs. And so she said, “I was sitting in a little room which was for meditation,” and she said “I just prayed to the Lord that something might happen.” And of course it’s obvious what happened, there was the little boy a very, very nice looking young fellow with the nicest look on his face and the most excited look, it was the first plane ride they both had ever taken. And he was really excited, when that plane started down, he was just I thought well this boy’s going to wind up a pilot because he is so excited over the trip. But it was interesting that the only reason, the only confidence she had that she was a Christian was the fact that she had been the recipient of this miracle or this answer to prayer when her child of ten years old was just a young boy.

Of course I did have an opportunity to speak to her about the fact that our faith really ultimately rests upon the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And she was very responsive to it and so was the little boy who went on to say that there was in his room a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ with his hands outstretched which was obviously intended to be a reference to him hanging upon the cross.

But many people are like that. Their knowledge of the Christian faith is so weak, and so inadequate in so many ways that the only way in which they can think of that they belong to him is in some particular work they think maybe the Lord did for them in years past. What a terrible thing it is to be in a church, to be active in a church for many years and not to know anything more about the basis of one’s salvation than that.

Well here is a man who has come to believe that Jesus might perform a mighty work. Our Lord does not reject that; he just says that that is not sufficient as the account goes on to point out. He doesn’t know yet that he can heal when he’s in Cana and the boy’s in Capernaum and furthermore, he doesn’t know yet that Jesus is able to raise someone from the dead if need be. So there is a third test posed to the nobleman, and we read in verse 50, “Jesus said to him go your way, your son lives.” One might think from the nobleman’s standpoint that his prayer was not answered. He said, “Come down with me in order that my child might not die.” The Lord’s answer is not I will come down, but, “Go your son lives.” He said come, the Lord said go. But it posed for him a dilemma, and as a result of course, two miracles transpired. The miracle of the healing of the little boy and the miracle of the fullness of faith that was created by the Lord Jesus when he said, “Go, your son lives.” And we read in verse 50, “And the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and he went his way.”

Now Mr. Calvin said something, I was reading Calvin last night about twelve thirty, I hadn’t read him on this and I thought, “My goodness, I’m not prepared to speak, I haven’t read Calvin on it.” So I read Calvin on this incident here and he made a comment which is a very perceptive comment I thought. He said, “How few profit as much from a number of sermons as this half

heathen man did from hearing a single word from the Lord Jesus.” How true that is. There are people today who have the opportunity to hear literally scores of sermons concerning the word of God in services like this who go out absolutely unchanged. But here is a half heathen man, as Calvin says, a half heathen man who hears simply the words, “Go thy way, thy son liveth,” and he believed the word that Jesus had spoken to him and he went his way. What a terrible charge and accusation that is against us to realize that it is true, there are people who hear literally scores of sermons and are untouched by them. And here is a man who has just a bare minimum of divine revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ and he brings his whole family into the kingdom of God and of Christ. How important it is that we respond to the word of God.

Well, let’s just think now about the fact that this is a sign and ask ourselves, what is the meaning or message of this sign, this mighty healing that is performed? I suggest to you without any dogmatism at all, contrary to my custom usually, I suggest to you that this is a sign about the development of faith. Now first of all, from verse 49, it is clear that the nobleman has responded properly to the first test that was put to him. For Jesus said, “Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe.” So he repeats his request, “Sir, come down ere my child die.” Now that’s a lower stage of faith to have faith in the power of the Lord Jesus, but it’s a sufficient stage. He thinks that our Lord has sufficient power to do the supernatural. Someone has said, “What Jesus does is not the supernatural just the super understandable.” How he heals we do not know, but for us it is supernatural and only God can heal. This is not psychosomatic healing. Now I know you would be encouraged if I told you what I read in the Interpreter’s Bible. Because the Interpreter’s Bible is written by individuals who are with us today for the most part, it’s a very liberal commentary on the Bible generally, but not entirely, written by individuals who probably are of the same type of faith as that woman’s pastor in that little town in northern Ohio. This is what we read in the Interpreter’s Bible,

“As to how the cure was affected, modern medicine of course constantly uses suggestion to produce very remarkable and blessed result in many types of illness. But always I suppose, or at least practically so, patient and physician are face to face. Yet modern day science seems to claim that one mind can influence and tell upon another even at a distance, in some cases with surprising outcomes.”

Well last night I was reading this and Martha does not know this, but she was in the living room at the time I was reading this, and so I said, “Well I’m going to try this.” [Laughter] So I said, “Martha, come to my study.” And I thought very seriously about that for about thirty seconds, “Come into my study.” And she’s totally impervious to telepathic effect. She stayed exactly where she was, I presume that she was disobedient to these things that kept saying to her, “Go in the study where Lewis is,” or something like that. But anyway, it did not work. I don’t want to say that these people are not able to do that, but nevertheless, it did not work with me.

He goes on to say,

“Years ago, Arthur James Balfour, the British prime minister wrote confidently, consciously or unconsciously, we are all capable of telepathically effecting others. (I don’t believe that so well now.) The Buddhists, or most of them, have no prayers but the devout among them practice a daily exercise, the Brahma-viharas. Primarily, this is a species of moral hygiene whereby one cleanses his own nature. But, they say that they are exercising a species of televolution on behalf of present sufferers to buttress them and so forth. But if these things are so, given a personality like Jesus Christ, how likely that even he at a distance could rally the boy to life. Now how would you like to have a savior who can so telepathically affect others that he can rally them to life at a distance of twenty to twenty-five miles? I’ve so often said this, I believe it with all my heart, when liberal unorthodox men speak of the miracles of the Bible and say they cannot accept them, if they would just say, “We cannot accept them,” well then I could understand. But almost invariably, they then

give us how they understand that miracle. And it always requires far less faith to believe the accounts of the Bible than it is to believe their explanations. That is almost always the case.

You know it is easy to psychologically explain how we might psychosomatically affect others. But how can one deal with the nature miracles that our Lord performed? Ultimately we have to deny the Bible. We can think of how I might influence another person psychosomatically, there are some illustrations of this that seem to be supported by proper scientific research. But how can we say that our Lord psychosomatically affected the storm on the Sea of Galilee such that there came an immediate calm when he stood up and said, “Back to your kennels, peace be still.” That’s something else. How can we explain Jesus walking on the water as if he were walking on the seashore and they thought it was the water, but Peter got out of his boat and began to sink? See the difficulties lie with the explanation of the critics rather than the picture that is given of us in the Bible of Jesus of Nazareth.

This was not a psychosomatic matter and the nobleman would be the first to testify to that fact. He had a lower stage of faith, but he did have faith in the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he passed that test, “Sir come down ere my child die.”

The second step in the faith follows in verse 50 when Jesus said, “Go thy way thy son liveth and the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him.” So his faith in the power of our Lord Jesus Christ now rises to faith in this bare word that Jesus said to him twenty-five miles away, “Go on back down to Capernaum, your son is living.” That’s the next step.

And finally we read in verse 53, when he found out that the son was healed at the very hour that Jesus said, “Thy son liveth,” he believed and then he gave testimony to the whole of his house and they believed too. That I suggest is not faith in his power, not faith simply in his word, but faith in him and thus faith in his power and faith in his word is comprehended in that. He did the only honest thing that a person can do, he surrendered himself to him and faith became a very personal thing to him.

Now pondering this I wonder if we can make these further suggestions? Faith in the power of the Lord Jesus Christ does bring safety. The very fact that he came to the Lord Jesus Christ and urged him to heal his son was a sufficient for that healing to take place. Faith in the power of our Lord brought safety for him. There’s an old story about Mr. Wesley that I think is very interesting. I’m not sure it’s true, but it is a documented story. One day when Mr. Wesley had been having some difficulties, he had been discouraged, he was suffering from some rather severe trials and feeling the need for a refuge in his own time from his troubles, he was sitting by an open window. As he was looking out over the beautiful fields in the springtime, presently he noticed a little bird that was flitting about in the sunshine. It attracted his attention and he was looking but just about that time a hawk swooped down toward the little bird, and the poor thing was very much frightened it was plain. He flew here and there trying to escape the hawk and finally just flew right in through the open window and lodged up against Mr. Wesley’s bosom quivering from the fear of the hawk, and it is said that he took up his pen and he wrote that sweet hymn, “Jesus lover of my soul let me to Thy bosom fly. That was the occasion.

Well, faith in our Lord’s power brings safety and we can be sure that when we appeal to him he does answer that. But he would like for us to move beyond faith in his power to a faith in his word that brings assurance. Now I think this man reached assurance before he came home. Because we read in verse 51, “as he was going down his servants met him and told him saying your son’s living.” Now like any good interested fellow who now has received the benefits of our Lord’s work he said, “When?” He wanted some more evidence of our Lord’s work. “When did he get well?” Why they said to him “it was yesterday at the seventh hour that the fever left him.” Now that is very interesting. Of course he goes on to say that he knew that that was the very hour in which our Lord had said to him, “thy son liveth,” and so that evoked the final stage of faith, the faith that brings total satisfaction.

But is it not strange that that man waited until the next day to go back to Capernaum to see about his child? Would you not think if the Lord spoke to him in the afternoon around one o’clock

and it would appear that John normally gives time according to Hebrew reckoning of time so the seventh hour would be about one in the afternoon? Would it not be the normal thing for an individual to get on his chariot or horse or whatever he had or even walk and go the twenty or twenty-four miles back to find out how his son was if he was at the point of death? But this man evidently stayed over in the town where he was.

Now of course, we don’t know, there may have been some things that happened that made it impossible for him to go. He may have gone out, gotten in his chariot and a wheel fallen off. Because they didn’t have five year warranties in those days and they didn’t give any rebates, and so naturally the wheels, well they were very much like American models I’m sure in those days, but anyway something may have happened of course. But so far as the account is concerned, evidently he stayed where he was and in a very leisurely way went back because he must have been so confident that what our Lord [said] had happened had really happened, that he could feel safe and free to spend the night before he made his way back to Capernaum. I suggest to you that that suggests that this man had faith in his word that brought assurance. But when he got back and he found out that it had happened at the very hour that Jesus had said, “Your son lives,” well then he went out having his faith to reach its climax he went out and told his whole house and others no doubt about what our Lord had done and how he had healed with a word something he had never anticipated before, he had actually healed with a word. And he himself was brought to a satisfied faith in the person of our Lord and he carried his whole house with him into the new kingdom of God and of Christ.

He’s still a nobleman, he’s the son and companion of the King of kings and Lord of lords, but oh what a nobleman he is now. What a magnificent story, and what a call it is to us to exercise faith not simply in the power of our Lord, but in his word a faith that rises to confidence in him sufficient for all of the experiences of life. If you’ve never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we invite you to come to trust in him. He has the mighty power to heal with a word, he not only heals with a word, but he may heal at a distance, he may heal in your life, he may bring you to the

experiences of life that glorify his name and that magnify his name in your own personal life. Most of all, he has offered himself as a sacrifice for sin and by coming to him who offered the atoning sacrifice, you may come to life in him and faith in him that brings a total and complete satisfaction amid all the struggles and trials of life, even to have a son at the point of death. May God help you to come, come to Christ, don’t leave this meeting without faith in him.

[Prayer] Father we are so grateful to Thee for these wonderful incidents in the life of our Lord in which we are brought face to face with the issues of life, trust in Thee and in Jesus Christ who thou hast sent. Deliver us Lord from faithlessness to a faith in his power, in his word and ultimately in him. If there are some here who have never believed, give them no rest or peace until they rest in Christ. May they Lord like that little bird flee ...

[AUDIO ENDS ABRUPTLY]