

The Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. John 4:46b-54
October 29th, 2023
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

The Man Believed

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sermon Text:

“Jesus saith unto him, ‘Go thy way; thy son liveth.’ The man believed the word that Jesus spake unto him, and he went his way.”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Almighty and Everlasting God, Who, by Thy Son, hast promised us forgiveness of sins and everlasting life: we beseech Thee so to rule and govern our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit that in our daily need, and especially in all time of temptation, we may seek help from Him, and by a true and lively faith in Thy Word obtain the same; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Lord + Jesus performed His first miracle in Cana at a wedding feast. He turned water into wine. We heard that narrative during the Epiphany season. We heard St. John, the Apostle and Evangelist, tell us that because of that miracle His Apostles believed on Him. Our Lord then went south, into the land of Judah. He preached and performed miracles there too. He was there for about eight or nine months. Today, we are told by St. John in the first half of verse forty-six that our Lord once again entered into Galilee and returned to Cana, the site of His first miracle. Today He performs His second of many miracles that He performs in Galilee.

We are told that a certain nobleman came down from the Capernaum to Cana to find our Lord + Jesus, so that He could heal this man’s son of a fever. The son was at the point of death. According to Church antiquity this nobleman is identified with either Chuza, the husband of Joanna, one of the women who attended to the Lord’s needs while in Galilee, and was also the steward of King Herod, or he is Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, and son of Herod the Great. In other words, this man was an important man. If he was not a relative of Herod, he was at least an officer in his court. What this teaches us is how desperate this man was. He had clearly exhausted all medical avenues for his son to no avail. He had heard of the miracle in Cana almost a year ago, he had heard of the miracles that our Lord + Jesus performed while He was in Judah, and so upon hearing that the Lord was in Cana of Galilee, he left his home in Capernaum and traveled up from the lowlands of Capernaum to the mountainous region where Cana was located.

Now, my dear friends, does this not show great faith? But when this man arrives before our Lord, He says, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe.” Our Lord can clearly see the condition of this man’s heart. The Greek grammar that does not come out in the English shows that this man is coming to our Lord filled with a combination of fear for his son and hope that the Lord + Jesus might be able to do something. So, our Lord’s apparent rebuke is not just aimed at this man. Besides the fact that our Lord uses the plural for “you”: “ye,” and not the singular: “thou”, showing that He is

referring to all people who come to the Lord with this sort of half faith, our Lord is also trying to help this nobleman to a greater faith. He sees that this man is filled with uncertainty. He has tried everything else, why not give this man who can perform miracles a try. This is no different than many people today, who request things of the Lord, hoping that it will come true, but fearing that it will not.

Our Lord would not have us have such poor faith. And with this nobleman, our Lord begins to bring him to a greater faith by basically refusing to go down to see his son. This is this man's request that the Lord + Jesus come down from Cana to Capernaum to heal his son. He needed to be taught that the Lord did not need to be there to heal his son. This type of healing would, as we see from the text, bring this man to a fuller faith. One in which he and his whole house believed. Our Lord teaches this man that the Lord's Word will heal all.

This is also a lesson for us as well. For we are without our Lord's presence. So, how does He heal us if He is not here with us? He heals us in the same way that He heals this man's son, with His Word. The nobleman pleads for the Lord to come down "ere my child die" and the Lord simply says, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." St. John tells us the man believed the word and went his way. His faith is confirmed even further when the miracle takes place. His son is healed. His servants run to meet him on his way back to tell him the good news. He inquires at what time the fever left the child, and it was the seventh hour, the same hour when our Lord + Jesus told him that his son liveth.

What is clear in the Greek, but not in the English is that this healing is complete. The Greek implies that this child was not only healed but was healed to the point that he was better than he was even before the fever. This is the same Greek phraseology that is used of Simon Peter's mother-in-law, who was sick with a fever, and could not serve her guests. After the Lord + Jesus healed her, she immediately "ministered" to them. To us this would seem odd. She just got over her sickness, she should take some more time to recover. But this shows us how completely she was healed. She was so thoroughly healed by the Lord that she had no residual effects of the fever.

The same is true of the child of this nobleman. He was so completely healed that there was no evidence that he had been sick in the first place. This is what prompts the servants to come to the nobleman. They beheld with their own eyes the miracle. The confirmation of the healing being the same hour, only confirms the miracle was of the Lord + Jesus. If this boy had recovered without the help of the Lord, he would still be weak from the fever. But the Lord leaves no doubt for this nobleman about how his son was healed. The Lord shows him that he is indeed the Lord God come down to earth to redeem mankind. The Lord shows him that His Word is powerful to heal. The Lord shows him in whom he should trust for all good things. And he and his family believed on the Lord + Jesus. And if this man is Chuzza, as many people believe, and his wife is Joanna, who is among the women who not only ministered to the Lord's needs while He was in Galilee, but was also there with the women at the tomb, we can see how firmly this man, and his family, believed.

Oh, that the Lord + Jesus would grant us such faith! For, as I said, we are also daily without our Lord's presence in the flesh. We must rely solely on His Word. He gives us His Word through the work of the Holy Ghost, Who creates and strengthens our faith through the Word. We hear of all the good things our Lord + Jesus does, and we cling in faith to Him. He declares to us when we come to this holy house that He has washed us in His Blood through the waters of Holy Baptism. In those waters He attached His Word—His very Name—He placed upon us His Name and declared that our sins have been washed away. We believe His Word and live daily in repentance, daily drowning the Old Adam, so that a new man may arise each day, clean and free from sins. His Name—His Word—is powerful to daily forgive us of our sins.

By His Word He calls us to come to this holy house to hear His Word and receive His Sacraments. He begins by reminding us at the beginning of the Service that we have been baptized,

as the minister blesses us with the Invocation. He speaks His Word of Absolution to us through the minister also. The pastor declares to all of us who heartily repent of our sins, believe on + Jesus Christ, and sincerely and earnestly purpose by the assistance of God the Holy Ghost to henceforth amend our sinful lives, that our sins are forgiven by the Lord God Himself in Heaven. We hear the Absolution and believe. We confess our belief that our sins are forgiven completely and thoroughly, just like Simon Peter's mother-in-law and the son of nobleman, by declaring our faith in the Absolution by saying, "Amen."

Having received the forgiveness of our sins, both through Holy Baptism and the Absolution, we heed our Lord's invitation to receive the meal of His very Body and Blood given in bread and wine. He has attached His Word to the bread and wine, so that all those who have been baptized, and who hunger and thirst for righteousness might receive the special comfort and strengthening of this meal of our Lord's institution. We believe that we truly do receive our Lord's true and substantial Body and Blood in, with, and under the bread and wine for the remission of our sins. We remember His death—His sacrifice on the tree of the holy cross—and we remember that He was raised from the dead for our justification. By receiving this meal, we give Him thanks for healing us completely of our sins and trespasses. For He has given this meal to us to heal us completely and thoroughly of our sins.

Therefore, my dear friends, our Lord + Jesus has not left us alone. Even though He is not with us in His flesh, He is with us every day and every hour with His Word. We can be in our Lord's presence whenever we hear His Word and receive His Sacraments. And whenever we have these things, we not only have our Lord's presence and healing, but we have Him telling us that He has paid for our sins by His suffering and death. Just like the nobleman from the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John today, our Lord would not leave us with a combination of fear and hope. He would have our faith strengthened, so that we see what good things He richly and daily provides for us. Let us then cling to Him in faith, and believe on Him completely, like this nobleman and his whole family. And let us follow our Lord + Jesus to the cross, like the women who ministered to His needs while in Galilee, for at the cross we see the Lord's victory over sin and death. And in His Word and Sacraments, we receive that victory, and receive the remission of all of our sins. Thanks be to the Lord God Almighty for His Word! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!