

## Teaching Points

Tonight we're going to study the second "sign" in John's gospel (v. 54). Remember, we said these signs were miracles that Jesus performed as demonstrations of His divine nature. Each sign illustrated a different aspect of His person and work as the Messiah.

Just by way of reminder, the first sign was back in 2:1-11. There, Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding. He instantly transformed the nature of the water. This is a picture of His power to transform us. He saves sinners by making us into something new!

This second sign is connected to the first. The miracle takes place while Jesus is back in Cana of Galilee - which is the same location where He turned the water into wine. It seems that Jesus had gained a reputation as a healer/miracle worker based on His first miracle in Cana and reports that had come back from Jerusalem (v. 45). This is why the Galileans welcomed Him - it's also why the man in our story approaches Jesus in hopes that He will perform yet another miracle.

The man in our story is described as "**a certain nobleman**" (v. 46). Not much is said about his identity. He was likely a royal official, perhaps a servant of Herod. What we do know is that he was a father whose son was deathly ill. When the nobleman heard that Jesus was back in Cana he went to beg for His son's life.

Notice the exchange between Jesus and the nobleman. Jesus doesn't immediately grant the man's request. His initial response is, "**Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.**"

**Discussion Question:** What does this statement from Jesus mean? Why did He respond to the man in this way?

**Thoughts:** *Jesus did not come to show off His power in order to entertain crowds and arouse peoples' curiosity. Jesus performed His miracles to demonstrate His true divine nature. He was more concerned with people believing His message than simply wondering at His power. There were many who admired Christ's miracles - but never believed His claims. That's not good enough. John's gospel calls us to believe - not just spectate.*

The nobleman's response shows that he was serious about his request. He wasn't interested in being entertained by Christ's power - he was desperately in need of a healing touch for his beloved son. For this father, Christ's ability to heal was not a matter for academic debate - it was a matter of life and death for his son. His response is short and sincere, "**Sir, come down before my child dies!**" (v. 49).

What happens next is instructive and intriguing. The man wants Jesus to travel with him to his house so He can physically touch his son in order to heal him. Jesus doesn't comply with this request. Instead, Jesus simply pronounces the healing, "**Go your way; your son lives.**" (v. 50). Now what? The man's son was miles away from where he and Jesus were standing. There were no cell phones to call home and see if the boy was really healed. The man had a simple choice:

1. Stay there and beg Jesus to come back with him anyway. This would insult Christ because it would mean that the nobleman didn't believe what Jesus had just told him.
2. Walk away from Jesus and travel home. This would require the man to go with nothing more than a word from Jesus to bank on.

Here's the simple question: **Is this word from Jesus enough all by itself?** In other words, can this nobleman walk away from Jesus with confidence that his son is really healed? Verse 50 says that's exactly what the man did, ***“So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.”***

**Discussion Question:** How is the nobleman's departure evidence of his faith?

**Thoughts:** *Jesus said the son was healed. The man heard what Jesus said and he believed that it was done. Jesus said it, he believed it, that's it. The man's faith is seen in how he accepted what Christ said as fact. He didn't need Jesus to follow him back to his house “just in case” Christ's word didn't work. When Jesus spoke this nobleman took it to the bank. He had nothing to go on except the bare word of Jesus - and that was enough.*

The nobleman who believed the word of Jesus was not disappointed. On his way home some of his servants came to meet him and brought this sweet testimony, ***“Your son lives!”*** What a confirmation of this nobleman's faith! After inquiring when the sickness left the boy, the nobleman knew it was the exact same hour when Jesus had spoke. Even though they were miles away at the time, Jesus was able to reach the boy by the power of His word.

Pay attention to the repetition in the passage. The glad report of the servants is an exact repetition of the word that Christ had spoken the day before. Jesus says in verse 50, ***“Go your way; your son lives.”*** The servants say in verse 51, ***“Your son lives!”*** Then, the nobleman made this same connection. Verse 52 repeats the phrase one more time, ***“So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, ‘Your son lives.’”*** These few words that Christ spoke healed the dying child and left an indelible mark on the nobleman's mind.

The end result is belief. The man “believed” when he took Jesus at His word back in verse 50. But when he arrives home and sees his dying son has recovered, verse 53 says, ***“And he himself believed, and his whole household.”*** Remember, belief is a major theme in John's gospel. This sign from Jesus created faith in this nobleman and his whole family. They not only saw Christ's power - but they believed in His person. This is a beautiful picture of saving faith in the one who has the power to give life.

Lastly, consider the element of space in this miracle. Jesus was miles away from the boy when He healed Him. The nobleman assumed that Jesus had to physically walk to the house to perform the miracle but Jesus showed Him how that wasn't necessary. Christ showed this man, and us, that there are no limits to the reach of His power. His word goes out of His mouth and it always accomplishes its purpose - regardless of distance.

## **Prayer Focus**

Praise God for His goodness and power. This story is yet another picture of the power and love of Jesus. He answered this father's prayer and did much more than he asked. He gave him and his household faith that forever changed their lives!

Pray with confidence for loved ones who are far away from you. Remember, they are not beyond Christ's reach.

Pray for confidence in God's word - just like the nobleman. He took Jesus at His word and so should we.