



Sermon Series: ALL SIGNS POINT TO JESUS

To be used with Session: The Sign of His Grace

Sermon Title Possibilities: BELIEVING IS SEEING

Scripture: John 4:46-54

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study “All Signs Point to Jesus” this sermon demonstrates that regardless of ethnicity or culture, Jesus welcomes and is willing to work on behalf of all who come to Him. Cana in Galilee was the scene of His first sign, changing water into wine (John 2:11), a sign that pointed to Jesus as Messiah and the in-breaking of the Messianic age, signaling a time of national rejoicing and celebration. However, Jesus did not come to just bring joy and new life to the nation of Israel. This second sign in Cana of Galilee demonstrated that He had come to bring life to all who would believe.

Introduction: There’s a stanza in the hymn “Rock of Ages,” *Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling...helpless look to Thee for grace.* Grace is God’s unmerited (not adequately earned or deserved) favor toward us. The royal official’s position, power, nor prosperity could do nothing about his plight - his son was sick to the point of death. He had become so desperate that when he heard that Jesus was in Cana, he traveled some twenty miles from Capernaum, knowing that his position could not influence Jesus, his power could not compel Jesus, his prosperity could not pay Jesus, the only recourse he had was to plead for Jesus to heal his son. There will come a time in our lives when who we are, and what we have, cannot do a thing about our circumstances nor the challenges we face. However, Jesus can. He is both willing and able if we would only come to Him and believe. The author of Hebrews encourages us, “Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

PLEAD BECAUSE HE’S GRACIOUS (4:46-47)

The servants at the wedding in Cana of Galilee were aware that Jesus changed water into wine. It is highly probable that these servants testified that Jesus had performed this miracle and word spread, eventually reaching Capernaum. Capernaum was about an eight-hour journey from Cana. The distance and the unidentified “certain royal official,” remind us that any one of us could and have found ourselves in similar circumstances of personal anguish, and the great lengths that people are willing to go to relieve a loved one’s suffering. If we, out of personal anguish are willing to go great lengths to relieve the suffering of someone we love, how much

more will God do the same (John. 3:16)? The royal official hearing that Jesus had returned to Cana, came, and pled with Him to come to Capernaum and heal his son.

Our testimonies are important because they often give hope to people who are in hopeless situations. We need to tell our story because we never know who our testimonies may touch and be the tool through which someone turns to Jesus. The bible says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). The royal official had not only heard about what Jesus had done earlier in Cana, but based on faith, came to Jesus, and begged him to heal his son. Not only can our testimonies give hope to the hopeless, but they can also be the conduits through which people come to faith in Jesus Christ.

PERSIST BECAUSE HE'S GRACIOUS (4:48-50)

In Luke 18:1-8, Jesus tells a parable to encourage the disciples to pray and never give up, "will not God grant justice to His elect who cry out to Him day and night? Will He delay helping them" (18:7)? Jesus's answer teaches us that what is delay from our perspective is on-time from God's perspective. God's delay is not always denial, but an opportunity for us to demonstrate our persistent faith in Him and for God to show His steadfast faithfulness toward us.

It appeared that Jesus denied the royal official's first plea. But the official, undaunted by Jesus's apparent denial, made his request again. Perhaps this was an object lesson for those who heard Jesus's response to the official's first request and observed his persistence despite it. In other words, Jesus was demonstrating to those who were observing what genuine faith is, and to the royal official himself, what genuine faith looked like. True faith is not based on "signs" but Who the signs point to and belief in what He's said.

Let's remain persistent in prayer, knowing that delay from our point of view is God's perfect timing. Let's remember that faith is not based on what we see, but on Who God is, what He's done in the past (not only for us, but for others), and the promises that He's made for a future (Jer. 29:11).

PERSEVERE BECAUSE HE'S GRACIOUS (4:51-54)

The journey back to Capernaum would require an overnight stop. It wasn't until the next day, when the royal official resumed his journey, that he was met by his servants, who told him his son had recovered. When he inquired about the time when this occurred, he realized it was the same time that Jesus said to him, "your son will live," and the official believed Jesus's Word. God keeps His promises (Num. 23:19). When we believe God's promises and persevere in His Word, not only does it keep us in dark times, but it helps us to keep going.

The royal official obviously shared with his son and his entire household, that Jesus had answered his prayer, and that his son's healing was a result of God's grace. "Somebody Prayed for Me," is a song by Dorothy Norwood. She sings about how glad she is that somebody had her in mind and took the time to pray. It's reminder to us that many of the miracles that have

occurred in our lives are because when we were too sick, or didn't know any better, somebody prayed for us, and God answered their prayer.

His testimony must have been compelling because his entire household believed in Jesus. When things seem impossible, whether it's sickness or an unbelieving family, believe God's promises and persevere in His Word because "what is impossible with man is possible with God" (Luke 18:27), and "Everything is possible for the one who believes" (Mark 9:23).

Conclusion: This story teaches us about the passion of prayer (4:47), the persistence of prayer (4:49), and the practicality of prayer (4:50). When God answers prayer, He will often give us practical steps to follow. But more importantly, it shows us the person who ought to be the object of our prayer, Jesus Christ. The world's prayers often go unanswered because they believe that prayer has inherent power. We believe in the God who has the power to answer our prayers. Prayer is only as good as the object you pray to. Who is the object of your prayers? If it is Jesus, do you believe that He has the power to answer your prayers? Are you passionate and persistent about your requests? Are you expecting God to answer with practical steps? If you have become discouraged because you believe delay is denial, then this story should encourage you to stir up your faith! Get back to being passionate and persistent in prayer. God has a practical plan for your problem and promises for your life. "For every one of God's promises is "Yes" in Christ Jesus" (2 Cor. 1:20).

Bio: Dr. Jerome F. Coleman is lead pastor of the First Baptist Church of Crestmont, Willow Grove, PA, shepherding God's flock for 16 years. He has been happily married to his wife Kim for 28 years and is currently vice-president of the National African American Fellowship of the Southern Baptist Convention.