

Armagh Baptist Church – Sunday 9th August 2009
“The Nobleman & His Family – Footsteps to Faith”
John ch.4:43-54

Introduction

Our last few studies in John’s Gospel have already introduced us to a couple of people in this Gospel who met Christ, personally for themselves, while he was here on earth:

- John ch.3 – Nicodemus – a man who thought he was very religious, but what in fact he needed was to be born again.
- John ch.4 – the Woman of Samaria – an immoral woman, an outcast, but a woman who was forgiven and changed by God, and then used by God to reach half of her own village for Christ!

Tonight we come to look at another person who met Christ in John ch.4. (vs.43-54).

1. What do we know about this man?

- A Certain Nobleman or Royal Official (v.46)

Some versions refer to him as a Nobleman, others simply call him a Royal Official. Either way, we could describe this man as very well to do! He would have been very well off. Not lacking anything in terms of personal wealth and finances. It’s quite possible that he was employed in King Herod’s Court.

- He lived in Capernaum (v.46)

A village in Galilee, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum was just 20 miles from Cana of Galilee where Jesus had performed his first miracle – the changing of the water into wine.

- He had a son who was very ill. (v.46)

We’re told in v.47 that his son ‘was close to death’ or ‘at the point of death’.

- He was probably very wealthy.

As a nobleman he would have had the wherewithal to pay for the best of doctors, but none had been able to heal his boy. He was now desperate!

- So he was facing a major crisis in his family.

2. How did he come to meet Jesus?

- To meet Jesus, this man had to make a journey (v.46-47)
- If any of us want to meet Jesus, we too will have to make a journey – not perhaps physically to the Holy land, or anything like that – but each one of us will have to make a spiritual journey of faith.
- Let’s look tonight at some ‘Footsteps to Faith’, as we trace this man’s journey to Christ.

Footstep 1: He Heard about Jesus (v.47)

(i) He had heard what Jesus had done in Cana (v.46)

(ii) He had probably heard about what Jesus had done in Jerusalem too. (v.45) (See John 2:23-25)

In other words, he had heard what Jesus had been able to do for others.

Perhaps you have too? Perhaps you have seen a friend's life transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Or maybe someone in your family has trusted in Christ, and you've seen the change that has made to them?

Well, tonight you are hearing about Jesus again for yourself. The question is, What are you going to do with what you've heard about Jesus?

Footstep 2: He Thought about Jesus (v.47)

(i) *'I wonder could Jesus do anything to help me?'*

He seemed to think that Jesus could, so...

(ii) He set off on his journey to meet Jesus.

I'm sure he had many thoughts, many doubts, many fears in his mind, as he went those 20 miles or so to Cana of Galilee, from his home in Capernaum.

Footstep 3: He had to Ask Jesus (v.47,49)

If we want God to do something for us, we have to ask Him.

See Matthew 7:7-8. See Romans 10:13.

If you want to be saved, you have to ask God to do it for you.

(i) He begged Jesus to come and heal his son (v.47)

But look at how Jesus responds in v.48 !

Some people just wanted to see miracles like magic tricks.

Jesus was testing this man to see if he really was genuine (cf John 2:23-25). He was also testing this man's faith, to make it stronger too.

(ii) *'Sir, come down, before my child dies!'* (v.49)

That was his cry of desperation. Was he genuine? Of course he was!

I wonder are you genuine about asking Jesus to save you, to forgive you? Well where is the evidence that you're prepared to turn from all that you know to be wrong in your life? That will prove your genuineness – your repentance.

Footstep 4: He Listened to Jesus' Words. (v.50)

'You may go, your son will live!' (v.50)

That was God's Word for this man's situation.

I wonder have you been listening for God's Word to you in John's Gospel?

What about some of these verses: John 1:11,12; John 3:16; John 4:13-14.

But as well as listening, we have got to believe what Jesus actually says to us, and act upon it.

Footstep 5: He Took Jesus at His Word. (v.50)

There was no questioning at all. He didn't say...

'Why will you not come and see my boy in person?'

'How do I know you've really healed him?'

'Maybe you're just trying to palm me off, or get rid of me?'

No, instead, he just believed what Jesus had just said to him – 'By faith!'

See Romans 10:17.

In fact he was so sure it was true, he stayed overnight in Cana!! (v.52)

Do you claim to be saved?

Do you sometimes doubt whether you are or not?

The answer to doubts about your salvation is simply to take God at His Word.

e.g. John 1:12; John 3:16; John 5:24; John 6:37; John 10:28-30.

Accept these verses by faith, if you have already asked Jesus to save you, and so be sure of your salvation.

Footstep 6: His Faith was Confirmed (v.51-53)

When he did arrive home the next day, he discovered that:

- His boy was alive and well (v.51)
- What time had this happened? (v.52)
- At the exact time Jesus had said those words! (v.53)

If you have trusted in Christ, ask God to prove himself in your life, in a real way in the coming days, and He will. And in so doing he will confirm your faith.

Footstep 7: His whole Family Believed too! (v.53)

Not only did this nobleman trust in Christ as his Saviour.
His whole family came to believe in Jesus as well!

Perhaps you're here tonight, and you want to take the step of faith to trust in Christ. But your biggest fear is how your family will react if you do?

Maybe your family doesn't believe in Jesus at all?
Maybe you'd find it so hard to go on as a Christian within the walls of your own home? Maybe it would be so hard to live for Jesus in front of your own family?

- Pray for your family to be saved too!
- God might want to use you to bring your family to Christ as well!
- Don't limit him. But you need to take the step of faith first.
- Maybe then you'll become the bridge into your home, into your family, for Christ to come into all of their lives.

Example of people saved through prayer:

Richard McNeight (Wallace High School), Raymond Whiteside (Millisle).

Don't set limits on what God might do through you to reach into your home.

Conclusion:

I think it's amazing that God used an outcast Samaritan woman in John ch.4 as the bridge into that Samaritan village, and as a result many of them believed in Jesus too.

But I also think it's amazing that it was this son's illness also in John ch.4 that became the bridge to bring the Gospel into his home, as his father tentatively took steps of faith towards Jesus.

An old Chinese Proverb says 'the longest journey begins with the first step.'

Well you might think it a tall order for your family, or your village, to be transformed by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but why not you be

the one to take the first step, and then pray, and wait and see what God wants to do through you to reach them! Read John 4:34-38 and be encouraged!

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