

XXI Trinity 2023  
Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish  
Father Craig Looney

*Ephesians 6.10-20*      *St. John 4.46-54*



He was an important government official. He was used to following his supervisor's orders...he gave orders to people under him and expected them carry them out. He was also a family man. He had a son whom he loved. His son was very sick and about to die. Perhaps doctors couldn't do anything more for the boy He needed help and he needed it right now...not later.

Jesus and his friends have finished their celebration of the Passover in Jerusalem and are passing through Cana on their way back to their base of operations in Capernaum Our desperate father with the sick son must have heard about Jesus...and his "miracles and wonders". Surely Jesus could save his dying son.

Our desperate dad also lived in Capernaum. He was a government official...an employee of the Roman Empire. The distance between Capernaum and Cana is 25-30 miles. As a government worker, perhaps he had access to a horse. Even with a horse traveling at warp speed...it would have taken him a full day to get to Cana.

When our desperate dad finally reaches Cana and finds Jesus...he begs him to come and heal his dying son. Jesus appears indifferent to the man's pleas for help. He tells the man no one will ever believe unless they see miracles and wonders.

Desperate dad isn't put off by Jesus' apparent indifference. He is persistent in asking Jesus to take action...right now...not later. He pleads with Jesus to come with him back to Capernaum and heal his son before he dies. Instead of going with him, Jesus tells the man to go home...he will find his son completely well.

Our desperate father took Jesus at his word. He didn't ask for more miracles and wonders so Jesus could prove who he was. He mounted his horse and raced home as fast as he could. There he found his son well...and he and his entire household believed.

Miracles and wonders! Saint John records seven miracles and wonders of Jesus in the first half of his Gospel:

- Jesus changed water into wine in Cana

- Jesus healed the government official's son in today's Gospel
- Jesus healed a paralyzed man
- Jesus fed 5000 hungry people
- Jesus walked on water
- Jesus healed a man born blind
- Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead

We have two conclusions we can reach from the miracles and wonders of Jesus our friend Saint John talks about. Either Jesus is the greatest trickster and magician who ever lived. Or his miracles and wonders are the irrefutable and conclusive proof Jesus is exactly who he claims to be: the promised Messiah of the Old Testament and the Son of God of the New Testament. We have a good idea what Saint John thought about Jesus. What do we think about him?

Our government official dad believed Jesus could and would heal his sick son. That led him to be persistent in asking Jesus to do something. Jesus healed the man's sick son from a distance. Although the Gospel doesn't specifically spell it out...our government official friend was likely a pagan. He worked for a pagan government. Jesus never turned anyone down who asked for his help. It did not matter who they were or what part of town they lived in. God's power to heal is universal. Jesus wants us to be persistent when we ask God for healing. It shows we are serious.

In the Epistle, Saint Paul tells us to pray on every occasion and to be persistent in our prayers and to never give up. He tells us to always pray for all of God's people. We do this during the Prayer for the Church, when we pray in a general way that God will help all those who are in "trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity." We do this in a more specific and for many of us a very personal way during the Intercessions.

God always answers our prayers...yes, no or wait a while. Remember what Saint Paul tells us...be persistent in our prayers...not to get God's attention...we already have that...but because it is through prayer we begin to experience God's power to heal us and restore order to our lives.

The miracles and wonders of Jesus...are as real today as they were 2000 years ago. Sometimes we just have to be quiet and look for them. Sometimes they happen when we least expect them. And at all times we need to be persistent in our prayers.

