

XXI Trinity 2024

Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish

Father Craig Looney

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

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Parents love their children. When they are hurting or sick, they will do anything to try to help them and make them feel better.

In this morning's Gospel, Jesus has just arrived in Cana after having spent some time teaching and healing people in Capernaum. Capernaum was Jesus' base of operations during his public ministry.

Capernaum was also the hometown of Peter, Andrew, James and John, and probably Matthew. Cana and Capernaum are about 20 miles apart. Google Maps says you can walk this distance in about 8 hours. But for the man with the son who was near death...no distance was too far to travel to get help for his dying son.

The Gospel identifies the man as a government official...a Gentile...who lived in Capernaum. He may have seen Jesus perform miraculous healings while he was there, or he may have heard about Jesus. Jesus attracted large crowds wherever he went...and the people went back to their homes and told others what they witnessed.

When the government official found Jesus he asked him to come back with him to Capernaum to heal his son who was at the point of death. Jesus' responds to the man's plea by saying no one will believe unless they see miracles and wonders. Jesus isn't questioning the man's faith. His remark is directed more toward the crowd around him...they wanted Jesus to prove himself.

Our desperate father is not put off by Jesus' seeming indifference toward him. Instead, he pleads all the more loudly...almost demanding Jesus come with him back to Capernaum with him to heal his son. Jesus recognizes the man's great faith and tells him to go back home; his son will live.

The man doesn't question Jesus...his word was good enough for him. On his way home...his servants met him with the good news..."Your son will live!" The man's son started getting better at the very same moment Jesus told him his son will live. He and his whole household believed!

The miracle in today's Gospel was the second miracle Jesus performed. The first was when he changed water into wine at the wedding feast. Both miracles took place in Cana of Galilee...in Gentile territory. Jesus chose to begin his public ministry in territory inhabited by non-Jews. Jesus does not discriminate when he heals someone...and he never turned anyone down who came to him for help.

What Jesus wants from us is for us to show the same kind of faith and determination the man showed. It's the kind of faith that doesn't demand Jesus prove himself to us through miracles and wonders. But if we are looking for miracles and wonders...they are all around us...if we take the time to look for them.

Jesus doesn't want us to give up if we don't get an immediate answer to our prayers, especially prayers for healing. No prayer goes unanswered. We can expect one of three answers: yes, no, or wait a while longer. And we may not get the answer we expected.

When we pray God will heal a sick person and that person dies...we know our prayers have been answered. Because we know the truth about those who have died...as our friend Paul reminds us...we know death is a form of healing...and the entrance through the gates of larger life.

Paul tells us in today's Epistle 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 that during the Intercessions and during the Prayer for the Church, when we pray God will help all those who are in "trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity."

Prayer strengthens our Faith and helps keep us focused on the work God wants us to do. Through prayer, we learn to trust Jesus more and more each day as the Healer of mind, body and soul; the one who hears what we ask, and the one who is ready to take action, so our lives can be made whole again.

Jesus invites us to come to him. Let the healing begin now!

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