

Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

A. The Beginning of Jesus’ Ministry in Galilee

2. Jesus Performs His Second Miracle, With Just a Word

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #050  
Base Text: JN 4.46-54

46 Once again Jesus visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. There was a certain royal official whose son was lying sick at Capernaum. 47 Having heard that Jesus had come to Galilee from Judea, this man went to him and was pleading with him to come and heal his son, who was lingering on the edge of death.

48 Jesus said: *"Unless you all see signs and wonders, you absolutely refuse to believe."*

49 The royal official said, "Sir, please come down now, before my child dies."

50 *"Go,"* Jesus commanded him, *"your son will have an abundant life."* The man believed the word which Jesus had spoken to him, and departed on the journey back home.

51 While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. 52 When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, "Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him."

53 Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, *"Your son will have an abundant life."* So he and his whole household believed.

54 This was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are italicized in red*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	Cana in Galilee
Timeline	Latter August, 30 AD (Month seven)
Jesus’ Life Context	Stage IV: The Great Galilean Ministry
	A. The Beginning of Jesus Ministry in Galilee
Title	2. Jesus Performs His Second Miracle, With Just a Word

COMMENT:

This is the second of six DJN readings which describe the beginning of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee. John had already noted (JN 4.45) that the people of Galilee welcomed Jesus warmly because they had heard about—and many of them had seen—the miracles he performed at Passover some five months earlier. This shows that Jesus was not performing miracles on a regular basis in Judea during the four months he spent there after Passover. (If he had done so, news of the miracles would have traveled quickly through the Palestine, as it did during the Galilean ministry.)

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Today's reading features Jesus' second miracle that is recorded in the gospels. The gospel writers chronicle 35 specific miracles performed by Jesus. We will be numbering these miracles throughout the DAILY JESUS NEWS, and we will seek to learn the unique lessons that Jesus taught through each one.

Three things stand out in Jesus' second miracle. First, He healed a young boy on his deathbed, from a distance of about 20 miles, with a mere word. This was highly unusual. In the vast majority of cases, Jesus performed miracles by direct contact with the people involved, often touching them as he did it.

There were three cases in the gospels in which Jesus performed a healing miracle at a distance, with just a spoken word. Two of those miracles (in Syria, and Capernaum) involved distances within the same city--probably less than a mile from where Jesus was standing when he spoke the word. In this case, 20 miles was a very substantial distance--equal to at least a half-day journey--and it was an immediate healing that occurred at the exact moment Jesus spoke it into being from so far away. It was a profound demonstration of Jesus' Divine power and authority as God's Son.

A second thing that stands out is Jesus' choice of words in pronouncing the healing. When he said, **"your son will live,"** Jesus used the word for the highest quality of life--the word that the gospel of John uses for God's own quality of life--the kind that lasts forever! This is why I translated this phrase, **"your son will have an abundant life."** The Greek phrase is repeated twice for emphasis in the story.

Jesus was communicating that the boy would not merely regain biological life. The Lord knew that through the revelation of his glory in granting this miracle, everyone in the household would end up believing in him and receive eternal life--the "abundant" life of which he was speaking. This was a revelation-miracle, for it led into eternal life and glory for the entire household. This is part of the purpose behind all seven sign-miracles in the gospel of John, and the 35 in the four gospels; they should lead to faith in Jesus that imparts eternal life.

A third thing that stands out in this brief story is the lesson about the nature of saving faith. Jesus tested the faith of this desperate father. In His statement, **"you all... will never believe..."** Jesus included the father in the group of people ("you all") who reject Jesus by their "will," or choice NOT to believe in Him ("will never believe"). While it seems rather cold at first glance for Jesus to say such a thing when a person comes to Him in deep need, this was actually intended to give the man the opportunity to enter into true faith through his response.

**"You all will never believe unless you see miraculous signs and wonders."** Jesus knows best that there is a far stronger foundation for faith than mere miraculous power. Yet, many people seem to think that miracle-working faith is the greatest expression of faith. As we work our way through all the teachings of Jesus we will see that He specifically taught otherwise.

God's miraculous power is true indeed, and we should believe in it. In fact, Jesus taught us to expect God's miraculous power when we pray, for He said: **"IF you can! All things are possible for the person who keeps on believing."** M 9.23 Believing in God's infinite power is good and necessary then, but the ground for God-pleasing faith is much more than just that.

Throughout His ministry Jesus rebuked the desire of people to merely see Him perform miracles, and faith that was merely miracle-based. **"A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah."** MT 12.39 Note that Jesus confronted the desire to see multiple signs and wonders, yet he DID promise one decisive sign as the foundation for true faith: the "sign of Jonah." This refers to the comprehensive "sign" of His death, resurrection, ascension and outpouring of the Holy Spirit--all according to the Scriptures.

Every "sign-miracle" of Jesus' ministry (and there were at least hundreds of them performed, if not thousands) was intended to point to THE sign of all signs: His perfect, saving work on our behalf. THIS "sign" reveals the comprehensive nature and character of God more than any other events in the history of the universe, including even creation. This is the sure foundation for faith.

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God has done SO much to reveal Himself to all of humanity throughout history, but it all pales before the glory and power of becoming what we are as a human being, and suffering every evil we can do Him, even the ignominious humiliation of death on a cross as a criminal, in order to save us from ourselves and make us like Him. God-pleasing faith lays hold of the character of God—His Goodness, Grace and Love as revealed in the ultimate sign. Believing in THAT God as revealed in THOSE events is what He requires of every person who has ever lived, and what Jesus was seeking for within the immediate, urgent request of a desperate father who came to Him in Cana.

Furthermore, this miracle shows us that to believe is to **"take Jesus at his word,"** as this father did. At the time Jesus promised the abundant, life-giving healing, all the desperate father had to go on was Jesus' promise. He took it at face value and departed. This began a walk of faith. It would be half a day before he found out the condition of his son. He had to walk along the road with nothing but a promise from Jesus to sustain him, and he did that.

Then, when the messengers arrived, he found out that his son had already been healed-at the very moment Jesus pronounced it done. He had been walking along for hours believing in something that had actually been granted already!

All faith is like that. It stands on Jesus' Word. Everything Jesus promises has actually been accomplished by him already. It requires a time of walking along, trusting in his promise, before we actually experience the fulfillment of what Jesus has promised us.

Sometimes the "walk of faith" before we experience its fulfillment is half a day. It might be half a year. It might be half a lifetime. Taking Jesus at his Word means that we leave the timing to him, as we continue to walk along in faith. In addition, when we experience the fulfillment, we always discover that it is SO much better than anything we had imagined it to be. An entire household of people receiving the gift of eternal life was much better than one boy merely being restored to health on his death bed...as great as that was.

### APPLICATION:

Jesus, who knows our hearts, does not probe our unbelief or struggling faith to condemn or judge us; He tests our faith in order to strengthen it. There is nothing to fear when we face our unbelief and struggles in our faith. HE is the source, strengthener, and sustainer of true faith in Him. Struggling with our unbelief is how we move into deeper faith.

Another father who came to Jesus in desperate need for his son to be healed said it well: **"I believe; please help my unbelief!"** M 9.24 Jesus knew that testing the father in this miracle would propel him forward in his faith. He uses every test of OUR faith to accomplish the same thing.

Faith is a matter of taking Jesus at his Word, while we walk along on a journey to the fulfillment of what he has promised us. He has already accomplished what he promised, but our experience of it is still partial, so we walk in faith.

*What has Jesus promised you that you need to accept by faith today, and begin to walk toward?*

*Is there something that He promised you in the past that you have stopped walking toward?*

*Just take up his Word to you again, and start out walking like you did before. The experience of total fulfillment is certainly waiting for you ahead, if you will just keep walking toward it by faith.*