

The Nobleman's Son

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Date: 01 January 2000

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[0 : 00] I'd like to turn your thoughts to the passage we read in John's Gospel, chapter 4. And the words that we have from verse 46 to verse 54, and especially the words in verse 52 and 53.

So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him. The father knew that that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, Your son will live. And he himself believed, and all his household.

It's a wonderful thought, in fact it's an amazing thought, that down through the years, hundreds and thousands of people have come into a saving experience with the Saviour.

Down through the years, many have met with Christ. Their lives have been changed. They have been taken from darkness to light, from the power of Satan into the power of God, redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb.

Think of that for a moment. Hundreds of thousands have believed, and believe in the Saviour. In this chapter, and in the previous chapter, we are told about a number of folk that had such an encounter with the Saviour.

[1 : 44] And I believe that what happened in the incidents that we have recorded for us here, what has happened in every life that has come face to face with the Gospel, and come to believe, three, at least three elements were at work.

And I want us to think of those three just very briefly, before looking at the words that are before us. Because with every individual that comes to believe and trust in the Saviour, there is a stage in their experience when they are awakened.

Awakened out of a deadness. The Word of God reminds us, that's how we were born into the world. We are dead spiritually.

There is nothing within us that would in any way, not just commend ourselves to God, but there is nothing within us that we could say that could bring us to God.

There is this total depravity. There is this awful deadness within our souls. And yet, when God by the Holy Spirit begins to work in our lives, then there is an awakening.

[3 : 08] Everything begins with God. And He is the only one who can awaken the dead. So I want us to keep that in our minds, and we'll come back to it later on.

But a second thing that happens, I believe, is this. That there is an awareness in the individual. Where they become aware that they have a need.

In other words, they're aware of an emptiness within their lives. They know, they come to know, they become aware that they are lost, that they are without Christ, that they're on their way to a lost eternity, and that only the Savior can meet them at the point of their need.

An awareness. An awakening and an awareness. An awareness. But then, I believe that there's a third element.

And that is where there comes the acceptance on the part of the individual. Where God by His Word has been speaking.

- [4 : 20] Where His Spirit has been striving. Where His love has been reaching out. And that individual is aware of this, that they are being drawn irresistibly by the love of the gospel. And where they just want to close in with all that is being offered. No longer resisting. No longer running away or no longer rebelling. But willing to accept what is being offered. Grasping the gospel. Grasping this everlasting life which is being put out before them. Those three things. When you turn to the experience of the man that is mentioned here. That's the first thing you notice. That there was an awakening in this man. And I want us to think about it in two ways. First of all, there was the illness of His Son. And I believe that that awakened this man.
- [5 : 28] And brought him to see his need. But then later on you notice. That he was given information. That Jesus was passing by. First of all, the illness of His Son. A parent concerned for his child. That is what awakened this man to see his need. Now we don't know much about him. We don't know where he came from. We don't really know what he did. He could have been part of Herod's court. What we do know is this. That his concern and his anxiety for his son. Led this man to Christ and to faith. Led him to Christ and to faith. And maybe you're sitting here tonight. And you're looking back down through the years.
- [6 : 35] When the Lord first awakened you. To see your need. And it may have been something just like this. It may have been a problem. Some difficulty. It may have been a bereavement. It may have been an illness. It could have been anything. But the Lord in His mercy. Or the Lord in His providence. Use that. To awaken your soul. And I often think about that. Because as a nine year old. My father died. And that was the first thought. That came into my mind. Or the first thought that came into my mind was this. That if I were ever to see him again. It would only be in glory. And God's word says. Except a man be born again. He cannot see the kingdom of God.
- [7 : 37] That was the first arrow. That for me was the awakening. God awakening the deadness in my soul. And maybe you're looking back. And you remember that time when you were first awakened. And you can see how things progressed from then on. But maybe you're sitting here tonight. And you're not sure. You're not sure of where you stand spiritually. But then you too look back. And you can see a time when you were awakened. That was the work of God the Holy Spirit. You couldn't waken yourself up. And when you began to see that you had a need. Or that you saw that there was an emptiness in your life. That awakening came about. By the power of God the Holy Spirit.
- [8 : 41] When you look at this story. A number of things we remember. You know the first miracle that Jesus did was in Cana. And it was at the request of a mother. His mother. And now we are being told about the second miracle. And it was the request of a father.

And here is Jesus listening to the thoughts. He was listening to the cries that come from the individuals.

But especially when you think of the story here. He was hearing the cry. The call of this man. And it was coming from the very depths of his being.

The concern that he had for his son. Led him to Christ. And led him to faith. Maybe you are sitting here tonight.

[9 : 44] And you feel that you have just been awakened. And maybe it is beginning to dawn on you. What is happening. And you don't fully realize. How this is going to develop.

Remember this. That when the Lord begins to awaken you. To rouse you. The Lord doesn't leave you. In that situation. The Lord's word begins to speak.

His spirit begins to strive. And when the Lord is awakening us. Then deep within us. There are those desires. That we have.

For the Lord. For his word. For his grace. For his forgiveness. And I believe as this man. Had encountered the saviour. And was pleading with him.

To come and to heal his son. That he was also aware. That there was something else going on. In his life. But we will come to that. More about that later on.

[10 : 43] The second thing was this. The information he had. Not just the illness of his son. That stirred him. That awakened him. But the information that he had. Someone.

Someone. Told him. That Christ. Was in the area. Someone. Told him. We don't know who. Last night.

We were. Hearing about. Different folk that. A word here. A simple word. A word that. Maybe some. A person would have thought. Had no significance.

And yet. It was that word. That reached to their hearts. Or reached to their consciences. That word that. Awakened them. That is something similar.

To what we have here. This man heard. That Jesus. Was passing by. That stirred at him. That reached.

[11 : 38] Right to his heart. Someone. Told him. We don't know. Who that person was. But you know.

There's a lesson. That you can learn from that. It's a simple lesson. You can be telling others. About Christ. You can be telling them. In simple words.

What he did for you. You can be telling them. That he is able to meet. Their need. As well. Now. When you think of this man.

Being given this information. Christ is passing. There's a. There's a possibility. That this man was. A. In the vicinity. Of where Jesus performed.

The. The miracle. Changing the water. To wine. Or maybe someone else. Had told him. About Jesus. Performing this miracle. But I think.

[12 : 31] What happened is this. That when Jesus. Heard that this. That. Rather. When this man heard. That Jesus was passing by. He remembered. The miracle.

He remembered. What Jesus did then. And I believe. That that was the reason. Why he came. Searching. For him.

And. With what was within him. It made him come. It made him search. The. The working that was going on. Within him. It made him try. I wonder.

What did you think. When you first heard. That Christ. Was passing by. That he was the one. That could meet your need.

The Lord's people. Can remember with joy. How. When they realized. The Lord was passing by. And he reached to them. That he touched them.

[13 : 28] That he blessed you. That he delivered you. That he made you. His own. It's a wonderful thought. Telling. Others.

About. The saviour. So that's. The awakening. This man's awakening. He was. Dead in his sins. But he was awakened. And he was awakened.

I believe. By these two things. The illness of his son. And. The information. That he was given. That the saviour. Was passing by. The second thing.

Is what he did. His actions. Now. We don't know. But this man. Could have tried. Elsewhere. For a cure. For his son. But when he heard.

That the saviour. Was passing. He went. To where Jesus was. And the first thing. That I want us to notice. Is this. His earnestness. In seeking.

[14 : 25] The saviour. And he came. To where Jesus was. And he prayed. He came to where he was. And where he prayed.

And that he prayed. And I want us to notice this. That distance. Was no problem. To this man. And the way it is put. In the word of God. Is this. That he kept.

On asking. He kept. On beseeching. The saviour. To heal. His son. And when you. When you look at the words.

You know. It's. He says to him. That he. He asked him. To come down. He says. Come down. And heal my son. For he is at the point of death.

And it was. That he was. Keep. He kept on asking. The saviour. To come down. Now. When you think of that. Here is this man.

[15 : 21] At his wits end. There is no one else. There is no one else. He can go. That's what he feels. There is no one else. To whom he can turn. But as I said earlier.

This man. Has been awakened. Something. Is at work. It's not of himself. It's not of anyone else.

God by his spirit. Is at work. And here is a man now. That is seeking. Seeking. Faith. Seeking.

The Lord. And there are two or three things. That I want us to take from that. And the first thing is this. That seeking faith. Will make an individual. Attend.

Where Jesus is. That's what this man did. Where we will go. To his house. Where we will go. To his word. Where we will go. To the place of prayer. That is an evidence.

[16 : 21] Of seeking faith. Seeking faith. Will make us. Attend. Where Jesus is. But also. Seeking faith. Will make us.

Attentive. To Jesus words. Again. When you think of it. When. When God. Begins to speak to you. You listen to the sermons.

In a way. That you never listened. To them before. And in some cases. We think that. When we're beginning. To enjoy the sermons. That it's the minister.

That's getting better. But all the time. It is. That is God. That is speaking. To us. Seeking faith. Will make us. More attentive. To his words.

And where we want. To listen. To what the saviour. Has to say. Where there is. More meaning. Where it seems. To be just. For us. That these words.

[17 : 19] Are being proclaimed. But there is something else. Seeking faith. Will make us. Ask. It will make us. Ask. More of ourselves. And.

Of. About him. It's not true. It goes on. In our own lives. When the Lord. Begins to work. We begin to ask questions. And some of the questions.

We ask ourselves. Is this. Can the Lord. Really bless me. Can he reach down. To where I am. Can the Lord. Forgive my sins.

We begin to ask. Those questions. Why? Because God. The Holy Spirit. Is dealing with us. And we want. We want to ask. Questions of others.

About Christ. What he has done. What he is able to do. And so on. And what you discover here. Is this. Here is a man.

[18 : 16] That is seeking. And he was willing. To do anything. And he was willing. To go anywhere. In seeking. In order. To find.

The Savior. Here. Surely. That is an evidence. That we are seeking him. That the Lord. Is at work. In our lives. When we want.

To go. Anywhere. To hear. What the Lord. Has to say. So that is. The first thing. This man. Was earnest. In his seeking. That is how he acted.

He acted. In a very earnest way. We are told. That. When he came. When Jesus came into Capernaum. This official met him.

And. There is an earnestness. About this man. In all that he is saying. In all that he is doing. But there is one other thing. That he did. And that is.

[19 : 11] He made. What you would call mistakes. In his seeking. Remember. Seeking. Faith. Can make mistakes.

A person. That is seeking. The Lord. Can get things wrong. And this man did. Two things. First of all. He limited. The power. Of the Savior.

Because what he was saying. To him. Come down. Come down. To my house. Go down. To my house. Come down. Before my son dies. An individual. Is telling the Savior.

What he should do. Lord. You should be doing it. This way. And maybe we find ourselves. Thinking along those lines. That if the Lord. Is going to save us. If the Lord. Is going to bless us.

Then he's going to do it. In this particular way. Telling the Lord. How he should bless us. Or how he should save us. The Lord. Did not need.

[20 : 08] To go down. To this man's house. So. He limited. He was limiting. The power. Of Christ. Could that be true. With anyone here tonight.

You're aware. Of your need. But at the same time. You could be limiting. The power. Of Christ. Or limiting. The power. Of the gospel.

And you might be asking yourself. The question. Can the Lord. Bless me. Can the Lord. Help me. And maybe there is someone. And you're contemplating.

Coming forward. To the table. And you're thinking to yourself. Will the Lord. Give me the strength. And sometimes. We are limiting. His power. But then.

The next thing he did. Was this. Or the. The other mistake. That he made. Was. That he looked. For the spectacular. And the way. Jesus. Answered this man.

[21 : 08] He said to him. Unless. You see. Signs. And wonders. You will not believe. Looking for the spectacular. And there were many.

In that day. There are many today. And unless. They're seeing those signs. And those wonders. They're not going to believe. And I believe. That in the. In the. In the life of this man here.

There was a hint of that. He wanted to see. The spectacular. Like what others would say. Seeing. Is believing.

So you can see the mistakes. That he made. The errors that he made. In seeking. But to go on to. A third main point. And it is this. This man's. Acceptance. And again.

There are two things. That I want us to notice. The first thing is this. He believed. The word. Of the saviour. And at the very. Moment. That Jesus.

[22 : 05] Was healing. His son's body. He was healing. The father's soul. That's what was happening. But the point is this.

We are told that he believed. In other words. He was enabled. To believe. The Lord. Helped him. To believe. And when.

When Jesus spoke to him. He said. Go your way. Your son. Will live. And we are told this. That the man. Believed. The word of Jesus.

He was enabled. To believe. How often. Have we sat under the preaching. Of God's word. And we found it so difficult.

Just. To grasp it. To lay hold of it. To believe it. Then all of a sudden. You find that you're able. To believe. What the saviour is saying.

[23 : 01] What the word is saying. Because the Lord. Enables you. To believe. We have a man in Skye. And. He was drowning.

He couldn't swim. And he was seeing. What he thought. Were ropes dangling. In the water. And he would make a.

A grasp. For them. And discovered. It was a bit of seaweed. And he would grasp. And nothing would happen. Everything. Just gave way.

And this was happening. Over a period of time. You know. It wasn't just. Seconds. But the man felt. That this was minutes. And. Two or three times. He would grasp.

At this seaweed. And nothing was happening. And all the time. He was seeing. Something else. And what it turned out to be. It was a rope. And here was the rope.

[23 : 56] That he could cling to. That he could grasp. The rope that was able. To save his life. And he felt himself. Stretching out. Trying to reach to this rope.

And he couldn't. For some reason. And he said. All of a sudden. He says. I was. I just stretched out my hand. And I was. Able to grasp it. And I was able.

To catch the rope. And he says. That's what brought me. To safety. And he used that story. To relate. His own.

Spiritual experience. Throughout his life. He was grasping. At other things. And then he saw. He saw. That the saviour. Could help him. That he was the one.

That was able. To meet his need. And he felt. That he was. Trying to reach out. But nothing was happening. And then he said. Suddenly. He grasped. Suddenly.

[24 : 51] He was able. To take hold of it. And I believe. With this man here. We are told. That the man. Believed the word.

He was able. To grasp it. And he was able. To lay hold of it. He believed. The word. That Jesus said. Some might put it this way.

That when this man. Heard those words. That he was. That he had a sense of peace. That the anxiety. That he had. It just. That it seemed to go. And he had this.

Sense of peace. That happens with individuals. They're seeking the Lord. There's an anxiety. There's a concern. And then they're able to grasp.

That word. And the Lord brings. A wonderful peace. Into their souls. He accepted the word. Though he didn't.

[25 : 45] See the deed. He believed. Believed. The word. Of Jesus. The promise. And when you think of that. You think of all the promises.

That God gives. To all those who seek him. To all those who believe. That they have found him. The Lord reminds us. That when we seek him. With all our hearts.

We shall find him. He has promised. That he would always be with us. That he would never. Ever. Ever. Leave. His people. There are lots of promises.

Tremendous promises. Given to us. In the word of God. So. This man's acceptance. He believed. The word of Jesus. But also. He went. His way.

Home. That's what he did. He said. Jesus said to him. Go. Your son will live. The man believed. The word that Jesus spoke. And he went. His way. In other words.

[26 : 41] He was putting into action. What he heard. Faith. Made him go. There was no longer. Any holding back. There was no longer.

Wanting to stay in that spot. When Jesus said to him. Go. I believe. That it was. Faith. That made him go. Are you hearing words.

Tonight. That are telling you. To go. To go forward. Are you hearing that word. That is. Inviting you to come.

To his table. Here is a man. And. It was his faith. That made him. Go. The Lord.

Enabled him. To go. But the point is this. The man was told. What to do. And the man.

[27 : 38] Obeyed. The word. Of Christ. The last thing. That I want us to notice. Is his assurance. And. The way it is put here. That.

The man. You know. When he was coming home. Now. The time. Is not the important thing. In this story. It's the fact that. The man. Made his way home. And. On the way.

He met the servants. Coming the other way. And they talked. And by using. The common sense. That God had given him.

Reasoning out. This man. Was able. To. Reach. Or come to this decision. That was the point.

That was the time. When my son. Got better. That was the time. That the saviour. Said to me. That. He would be better. And told me. To go. Now the point is.

[28 : 32] That. When the man. Met the servants. He asked them. The question. When. Did he start. To improve. That's it literally. When did he start.

To improve. And the reply. That the servants. Gave was this. That. And the. The gist of it. Is that it was a. Total. An instant. Recovery.

Yesterday. At the seventh hour. The fever. Left him. Now. The man is. All this is going on. In the man's mind.

The hour. When did it happen. What really happened. And this man. Just by reasoning out. All the events. Of the past day. Or the past hours.

And reasoning out. A number of things. He comes to this conclusion. That the saviour. Not only blessed his son. But the saviour. Had blessed him.

[29 : 30] And that was what brought this man. You could use the expression. To a full assurance. Assurance of faith. You see. There are lots of people.

They have assurance. And then. The Lord draws near. With a word. Or something happens. And it.

Reinforces. Their assurance. Their assurance. And I think that was. What was happening. In the case of this man. But there was something else. That when he came home. We are told that.

When he. Told everything that happened. To his son. Then. We are told that. That his household. He believed. And all. His household.

What a tremendous. Assurance. Given to this man. What a tremendous. Blessing. That this man. Was given. Because.

[30 : 24] Not only did he come. And was blessed. By the saviour. But as a result. Of what they heard. As a result. Of what they saw. They were able.

To put these things together. We are told. That they. Believed. As well. Now there is. There is a sermon. In that. In that thought.

A sermon. In that in itself. But I don't want to go into that. Because time is going on. And there are two. Three things. That I want us to notice. In conclusion. The first thing is this. Where there is faith.

Faith does not. Lack. Prayer. Faith does not. Lack. Prayer. An evidence. That God is at work.

An evidence. That we are seeking. When we are. Seeking him. In prayer. That's the first thing. A second thing is this.

[31 : 23] Faith does not. Look. For signs. You are not looking for this. Bolt from the blue. You are not looking for.

Necessarily for this. Wonderful experience. Now. Sometimes. Sometimes. When the Lord deals with individuals. It can be quite a traumatic experience. With others.

It may be just like Lydia. Where it is a gentle experience. The Lord. Opened her heart. And that's why I put it like this. Faith does not.

Look. For signs. Believes. The word of God. A third thing is this. That. Faith. Does not.

Limit. God. Faith does not. Limit God. Think of it this way. How he works. Where he works. When he works.

[32 : 19] And on whom. On whom. He works. Faith does not. Limit. God. Now. Think of that in two ways.

First of all. From your own point of view. You don't limit the way. God is going to work. Or the God. Or the way God has worked. In your life. Maybe you think something is missing.

Because he has worked. In someone else's life. Differently. To the way he has worked. In your life. The Lord knew. How to deal with you. The Lord knew. The best way.

To bring you to himself. I'm putting that in simple language. Faith does not limit. The way God works. In our own souls. But also. You don't limit the way.

God is going to work. In the lives. Of others. When he works. Where he works. Or in whom he works. Because the spirit of God.

[33 : 15] Doesn't deal with us all. In the same way. And sometimes. Maybe I'm a newly converted person. They're relating their story.

To someone else. And that other person. Raises question marks. Well that's not the way I came. That's not the experience I had. And sometimes.

As believers. We wonder. We question. How God has blessed others. Or in the way. That God has blessed others. We shouldn't limit.

The way. God works. And the way he brings. Individuals to himself. Here is a man. That.

Came to faith. His life was changed. He believed. The word. Of Jesus. Jesus. And here was a man. Then.

[34 : 10] That was able. To go back home. And to tell others. What Jesus. Did. For him. Here was this man.

At the first opportunity. Publicly. Professing. What the Savior. Did. For him. Are you in any way.

Like this man. Maybe you haven't come. To the Savior. The way this man came. But maybe you're sitting here tonight. And you know. That the Lord.

In his mercy. Has reached out to you. That he has blessed you. That he has forgiven you. You know. That it's not of yourself. That it is all.

Of God's grace. Have you. Openly. Publicly. Professed that. Before others. Have you done it.

[35 : 04] Before your friends. Have you done this. Before your family. You have an opportunity. To do this. This coming Lord's day. To openly.

State. That you are. On the Lord's side. Here is a man. That believed. And when he told others. Others.

Were blessed. As a result. May that be true. For us all. Let us pray.entre you. Thank you. See you. See you. One. One. One. One.

One. Two. Two. Three. Three. Three. Two. Three. Three. Right.