

THURSDAY 24 March 2022 "7 Words" John 4:43-53

Hello my "Walking with Jesus" friends around the world,

How often do you think about what it was really like for those men and women who 'walked with Jesus' during the years Jesus was here on earth? *I've chosen that theme for this daily experience with you, my global friends, because I hope we will be challenged to see our daily walk-through life as being a path we can walk WITH God guiding us, protecting us, teaching us, empowering us. Is that your desire? Is it becoming your experience?*

Today is day 16 of a 40-day journey I'm taking WITH Jesus as we walk along with HIM toward His Easter weekend. Yesterday we were with Jesus in the Samaritan town of Sychar where Jesus actually spent two days and the town was changed because many people there concluded: **"...this man really is the Savior of the world."** (John 4:42) John then tells us Jesus continued on toward Galilee and I presume the five men who were getting to know Jesus walked with Him... Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathaniel and John who is writing the record for us. I suspect the reception Jesus received surprised Him. Certainly, it seemed to surprise John who writes: **"When Jesus arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed Him. They had seen all that He had done in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, for they had also been there."** A reputation was beginning to spread about Jesus. John tells us Jesus went to Cana where He had turned the water into wine at a wedding a few weeks before. This time another opportunity was awaiting Him.

John writes: **"There was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. When this man heard that Jesus had arrived, he went to Jesus and begged Him to come and heal his son who was close to death."** (John 4:46,47) Look at what's happening here my friends. This man evidently was a high ranking official probably with some Roman government authority in the region. Capernaum was about 20 miles or so from Cana. Probably this man was not Jewish yet desperation with a dying son motivated him to travel 20 miles as soon as he heard Jesus was there, and not just inform Jesus of his problem, but BEG Jesus to come quickly and heal his son back in Capernaum. *Perhaps this man had heard about what had happened in Sychar and thus he had hope that Jesus cared about all people, not only the Jews.* Desperate parents will do almost anything for their children in great need, isn't that true, all around the world?

Capernaum was the major town in this region of the Galilee. The best medical help would have been there, and I presume this official could afford any medical help and he had sought it, I'm sure. His son wasn't just sick, his son was dying. He knew he needed more than the best available medical help. Have you ever been in that desperate situation? What did you do?

John was likely an eyewitness to this event, and he records this for us: **"The royal official said to Jesus, 'Sir, come down before my child dies.'" (John 4:49)** Important people, or at least those who think they are important, don't often refer to others, of what they believe to be a lower status, as **"Sir"**. I assume this official had made it his business to find out all he could about this **"Jesus"** of whom he was hearing amazing things. His use of the respectful word **"Sir"** and the fact that he was begging Jesus to come and help his family leads me to believe this was genuine. This man, like the people of Sychar, evidently realized Jesus was someone very special and a 20-mile trip was well worth the possibility that this Jesus might help him and his dying son. Imagine his shock when Jesus responded to his appeal with this: **"You may go. Your son will live."** (John 4:50) Seven brief words, but seven words of both hope and decision. *When was the last time you, my friends, were faced with the opportunity to demonstrate by your actions how much you really trust God?*

I imagine money was no object for this royal official, yet I see no evidence he opened his purse strings to pressure Jesus to come with him back to Capernaum... quickly. Power and perhaps authority are wrapped up in his title **"royal official"**, yet I see no evidence this powerful man demanded Jesus do what he wanted. I assume this man was not accustomed to being put off or disregarded or anything other than immediate obedience to his request or his orders. Look at the people standing around watching this remarkable scene. *A wealthy, powerful official, in near desperation, begging for the life of his son, now has a decision to make, perhaps a life and death decision.* He can argue with Jesus, or he can threaten Jesus, or he can turn and rush home to see what has just happened.

What would you have done my friends? There was tremendous significance in this moment. As far as we know Jesus had never met this man or his son. The man had given no explanation of exactly where his sick son was or what illness he had, nor did Jesus ask any questions. Simply a promise: **"You may go. Your son will live."** I ask us all again... what would any of us have done if we had been that official, in that moment?

John records what happened this way: **"The royal official took Jesus at His word and departed. While he was still on his way, his servants met him..."** It's not difficult for me to imagine this man rushing, as fast as he can, toward Capernaum, 20 miles away. If on foot, that would take several hours. If on a mule or horse much less time. Regardless of how he traveled, time was of the essence and as he saw men coming toward him, whom he recognized as his servants, do you suppose his heart was sinking with fear of what news they bore? Do you suppose he shouted from a distance...? **"What news do you bring me? Is my son still alive?"** As this official had turned away from Jesus to head home, what attitude do you think filled his heart? Disappointment, frustration, anxiety, worry, anger, fear? As far as we know he and Jesus had never met before and this encounter lasted only a few moments.

John records **"...his servants met him with the news that his boy was living! When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, 'The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour.' The father realized that was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, 'Your son will live'."** Did you notice something friends? This encounter with his servants happened THE NEXT DAY after the official and Jesus had spoken. That means this man spent the evening, a long night and the morning wondering about Jesus and Jesus' promise to him. Perhaps he had traveled all through the night. May I ask, *how do you handle the time while you are waiting for God to work the miracle you need?* Is there something here for you and me to learn about trusting God, leaving important things in God's hands? And about waiting. Waiting in trust, for God to do what only God can do?!

John doesn't leave us there in this story, he has one more statement to make, an important statement: **"So he and his household believed."** In these times the word **"household"** doesn't mean parents and children, it means EVERYONE associated with this man, who lived under his roof or considered themselves under his care. That was likely extended family and servants and employees. This was an important man, and his life touched many people. What he had just experienced made a huge difference in his **'household'**. I presume none of them had ever seen or met Jesus, but they believed the story and thus they believed Jesus to be a miracle worker and I'm sure had a sudden desire to get to know Him. It stirs this question in me: *'How has your response to Jesus impacted your 'household'? How has the work of God in your life affected those your life touches?'*

Let's pause right here and ponder this remarkable event.

What does it tell you about Jesus and His miraculous ability to heal from afar, to do great miracles without any detailed explanation?

What does it tell you about Jesus' love for people, all types of people, and His response to great faith, found in anyone?

Do you have something in your life which could greatly benefit from a miraculous touch from Jesus? Do you have the desperation of this man and the faith of this man?

I invite you to talk with Jesus about how your heart is responding to this remarkable event. And here's a song to help us all you consider it. . .

Today's Scripture is John 4:43-53.