

Bible Studies for Life: March 9

The Sign of His Grace • John 4:46-54

By Clay Anthony



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Jesus had left the wedding party of chapter 2 with everyone singing His praises. He makes His way down to Jerusalem where He meets opposition that includes turning over tables in the Temple. The Jews reject His teachings and demand a sign, which Jesus refuses to give. Only a glimmer of interest is shown from that community in chapter 3 with a nighttime meeting with Nicodemus held in secret.

Next, Jesus must go to Samaria for a divine appointment with a woman at a well. He lays open her story and reveals the true nature of worship. The woman not only has her questions answered but also her heart changed by meeting Jesus. She has been called the first missionary for what she did after hearing the good news: she took it to her city.

Jesus then makes His way back to Cana and is approached by one we are told to be an *official*. This is no doubt someone that was of Jewish ancestry but not a devotee. He worked in the court of Herod Antipas, who acted as a puppet ruler for Rome in that region. There is no reason to think that this official had not heard of the man that could change water into wine.

Perhaps having a sick son drove this man to try every available avenue of healing much like we read about in Luke 8. Chapter 2 records Jesus' first, and at that time, only miracle so this must have been enough for a desperate father to make one more attempt to bring his child relief.

A simple request was made, "Please come and heal my son." Jesus' answer is shocking at first reading: *Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe (vs. 48)*. Harsh, right? Understand that two times in that response Jesus uses the word "you" in plural form. He was not addressing this official's lack of faith but the entire area. Jesus knew that this crowd remembered what happened at the wedding and now they would like to see the second act.

"Go, your son will live," was the simple yet powerful response from Jesus. We are told the man believed (vs. 50) but this level of belief means that he was only willing to check and see if Jesus' words worked once he gets home. The next verse reveals that he did not make it home before seeing people from his home announcing that the boy was indeed fine. To make matters better, the father discovered that the boy was revived around 1:00 PM which was the exact same moment that Jesus spoke those words of healing the day before. Upon returning home, he is greeted by a son, as well as a family made whole. Because of these powerful words of Jesus, a household of faith was born.

Who else cares for people as Jesus does? Here is One that blesses a wedding scene, challenges religious leaders, goes out of His way to meet an outcast by a well and is able to speak healing when not even present. The power that was displayed in John 4 is active today. No, Jesus is not physically present with us, yet we pray for all types of movements on our behalf. This is a wise move.

What more could Jesus do to prove Himself? The Jews of chapter 3 demanded a sign. Their hostility and disbelief lead to

friction with Jesus and tables being overturned, which leads to Jesus meeting one of them at night, alone. In Samaria, He meets a lady who takes the Gospel to people who want nothing to do with her. In Cana, Jesus is celebrated, welcomed and approached with a public request for help which leads to a Christ honoring home. We must see that Jesus' greatest sign in this scene was that His gift of grace reaches to wherever and to whoever it is needed.

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