

The Gospel of John - #18 - 02/07/2021 - "Familiarity Breeds Praise!" John 4: 43-54

Introduction: IL- Publius Syrus was a Roman slave who lived in the second century BC. His master noted his immense talent for writing and set him free and paid for his formal education. The rest of his life Publius was known for writing short, weighty statements to leave readers thinking, statements like: "A good reputation is more valuable than money." His most well-known maxim is: "Familiarity breeds contempt." Jesus said something similar in our text this morning in verse 44- "A prophet has no honor in his hometown." Our challenge today is to look directly at the honor Jesus deserves, the welcome we can extend to Him, the comfort of His healing in our lives and the results of believing on Jesus for eternal life!

The privilege of honoring Jesus- verses 43 and 44 Jesus, after two days in Sychar among the Samaritans, resumes His journey to Galilee that the Apostle John mentions in verse 3 of this chapter. He headed north to Galilee. Previously on Jewish turf He wasn't accepted like He was in Samaria. He had not been widely accepted in Judea either. But now He returns to Galilee and the crowds rally around Him. Jesus' statement about not receiving honor among His own people hardly needs restating, because we all know that John 1: 11 is true- "He came to His own and His own people did not receive Him." And that became painfully obvious when Jesus was illegally arrested and tried for no crime at all and crucified on a Roman cross because of the hatred of the Jewish leaders in particular. The other three Gospels give us similar renditions of this quote from the Savior about His reception. Matthew 13: 57- "A prophet is not without honor except in His hometown." The exact same wording is in Mark 6: 4. Luke 4: 24 reads- "A prophet is not acceptable in his own hometown." So, in the case of the God-man Jesus and the Jews, His own people, He was not accepted in large numbers. His own people were not grateful for all that He did for them in preaching words of truth and in demonstrating His power and His love in the miracles He did. Many of them, rejecting the truths He proclaimed, were only wanting to see a sign or wonder in person. For so many of His own people there was unwarranted skepticism, curiosity in that a carpenter's son could possibly be the Messiah, and the confusion about a mother they all knew or heard of, Mary, who would give birth miraculously to a divine child?! They didn't have the text of Hebrews 2: 3 in their hands where we read: "How shall we escape if we neglect such great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles!" So, Jesus knew the hearts of men, He knew in advance that He would not be hugely welcomed in Galilee, but that is where He sensed a need. The practical question for you and me is this: do WE here in America and in Garden City honor the Lord Jesus as He deserves? It is quite clear that there is not an overwhelming acceptance of Jesus as Savior, not the huge crowds that once turned out at Billy Graham crusades around the country, not packed church houses, not baptisms in every available body of water as a testimony of a life changed from the inside out by the cleansing power of the blood of the Lord Jesus. The next question is: Will YOU honor Him as He deserves to be magnified and lifted up? Will you get to know Him better and better by spending time in His Word each day? Will you honor Him by honoring the church of which He is the Head, faithfully attending, generously sharing your time

and talent and treasure? Will you praise Him in conversations with others rather than just discussing the Super Bowl and its final score and heralding whoever is chosen as MVP? Will you honor Him by talking to Him in prayer consistently? For too many people prayer is a last-ditch effort during a crisis, but when the crisis is over, so is the praying! These Galileans witnessed His works in Jerusalem at the Feast as we saw in chapter 2 starting in verse 13. But what is clear is that, as a people, the Galileans didn't anoint Jesus as MVP- Messiah Visually Present! Is He YOUR MVP- Messiah Valued Personally, honored and praised in every way you can think to do so?

The excitement of welcoming Him- verse 45- The people of Galilee, at least those who made it out to see this Jesus of Nazareth, welcomed Him to their district. I believe a good number of them were anticipating His miracle power on display, so they could tell others at home, "I saw Him do it! It was fantastic!" The people of Cana were going to be on hand as Jesus dealt with a needy Roman official in healing the man's son. But to welcome Jesus as Savior, like the Samaritan woman and her hometown people- that is a different story. Welcoming Jesus to the area around Cana is very different from welcoming Jesus into one's heart and life and following Him and obeying Him and, yes, honoring Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. In just this one verse there is a call to practically live out a true, spiritual welcome from the heart, more than just a common welcome with a handshake! It means, to be more specific, that we invite Him into our lives by a direct act of the will and confession with our mouths. It means opening ourselves up to Him to come in and take over. It includes saying with our welcome- "Lord, I need You- oh I need You- literally, every hour I need You! Too many professing Christians have welcomed so many other things into their lives that there is no room for Jesus to operate! In Revelation 2 Jesus speaks to the church at Ephesus and tells them, "You have abandoned your first love!" He said plainly to the churchgoers at Laodicea in chapter three, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock!" He was waiting for a loving welcome from that local church, but it hadn't come and likely would not. Welcoming Him in our lives in this modern era means telling Jesus, "Here's my life- take AND use me for your purposes and to Your glory". It means giving Him total access to every area of our lives, holding nothing back. It means keeping short accounts with Him of sin through confession, and claiming His sweet forgiveness! It means too that we welcome His words, knowing His words well like a red-letter Bible expert! It also means that, when I've been hurt by life's cruelties or other people's insensitivities, I can tell Him all about what is going on down deep inside and claim His power to heal and restore!

The comfort of His healing- verses 46-49 A specific healing is what verses 46 to 49 are about. Jesus has arrived at Cana in Galilee. Remember Cana in John chapter 2 is the location of Jesus first miracle of turning water into wine. Well, Jesus did other miracles according to the other three Gospel writers, but this is the second miracle unique to Cana and especially unique to this official who arrived from Capernaum, some 17 miles away. This man was most likely a high official in the Roman military and an official of Herod Agrippa who was tetrach or appointed ruler of that area. Many people believed Herod was a king, but this official is now standing in front of THE King. And whether or not he knew Jesus as King, he was so burdened for his child

that he asked, literally "begged" Jesus to come to Capernaum and heal the boy. This miracle, by the way, is not to be confused with the one in Matthew 8 where Jesus healed a centurion's servant. Two major differences between these miracles- the centurion told Jesus, "Just speak the word and my servant will be healed!" In that account Jesus had just said, "I will come down and heal him!" Here- the nobleman asked Jesus to come down and do the healing. And Jesus did not respond with, "I will come." In fact, as you note in verse 48, Jesus used the opportunity to talk to the nobleman and the people in the crowd about the lack of faith that says, "Unless I see it, I won't believe!" Jesus wanted that father, and wants you and me, to be able to confidently say, "I'll see it when I believe it!" The official now refers to Jesus as "Sir" just like the Samaritan woman did. The word means, "Lord" or "Master" and so it seems that his faith is growing and his thoughts about his dying son are becoming more emotionally charged. Jesus doesn't go with the man and Jesus tells him plainly, "You go back home- your son will live." And that is exactly what happened because of the power of Jesus and His words! I confess to you this morning that I am far from being an expert of Biblical healing. But I can tell you what I DO know about the subject. I know that God is Jehovah Rapha, the God who heals! I can tell you that the Bible, both Old and New Testament, gives us many examples of healing of all kinds of ailments or physical maladies and demonic possession. Who can forget the story of Naaman and his leprosy and his healing in the muddy Jordan River? He was not a Jewish man but a Gentile. This man now begging Jesus for the life of his son, is a Gentile too. So that tells me one more thing about healing- it is not limited to a certain group, racially, ethnically or religiously. Jesus can heal anyone. While there are many questions we all have about healing, like "When is God going to answer my prayer for healing?" the most important thing to consider is that Jesus never changes! He is the same "yesterday, today and forever". And we need to claim the truth that no one who came to Jesus to be healed walked away unhealed! Compare that to some of the TV evangelist/healer types where many people come to their crusades and walk away unchanged and, in many cases, give up on ever being healed. Finally, the subject of healing directly connects to the subject of faith- of believing God in any and every area of life, starting with believing in Jesus to receive His free gift of eternal life!

The results of believing on Him- verses 50-54 In this final section of our text we see in verse 50- "The man believed the word" and it was certainly more than mere intellectual assent. His faith gave him the confidence to turn on his heels and head for home, taking Jesus at His word! Sure enough, part way back to Capernaum some of this leading man's servants met him, coming from the bedside of the boy, to report, I'm sure with smiles and tears mixed- "He's getting better as we speak!" The nobleman asked them what time the boy began to turn the corner and come out from under the effects of this fever. The servants told him- "At the seventh hour (1 in the afternoon!)" was the response. The father knew that was the very point on the clock when Jesus said, "Go- your son WILL live!" The answer as to time simply confirmed the reality of that healing miracle from 17 miles away! He truly believed at that point. But it was not only the father who gained that measure of faith- it was his whole household. There are other examples in the Bible of entire families, even with servants, getting right with God by faith. Acts 10, 16

and 18 record Cornelius and his family and servants getting saved, Lydia and her family putting faith in Jesus and the Philippian jailer and his family getting right with God! To have faith, to truly believe God, is something like this father who believed from miles away from his son! Rather than stern words from Jesus directed to this father and the crowd causing the man to disbelieve or harden his heart toward God, the opposite was true- those stern words motivated him to ask again and then, when Jesus gave that promise- "Your son will live again!" his faith swelled in his heart and his feet were ready to go see it all right before his eyes back in Capernaum! If your faith needs challenging, accept that from your loving God and let your faith be enriched by God's wonderful grace! A father and his demon-possessed son came to Jesus and Jesus cast out the demon and set the boy free. In Mark 9, when that miracle occurred, the father said, "I believe, help my unbelief!" That's another way to say, "I DO have faith, but sometimes it is not very strong- help me to become a person of deep faith, unwavering belief in You and Your promises and Your power!" Many of us forget that Jesus did His miracles for two primary reasons- to show His great power and to demonstrate His deep love. A great verse to memorize and then apply when our faith needs a boost is Isaiah 55: 11- "So shall My Word be that goes forth out of My mouth- it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it!"

Conclusion: One more practical thing I want to mention based on this extended account. It is a rare thing to find a believing wife and children where the father is an unbeliever! If there are those in your extended family who are not saved, make it a matter of believing prayer to see each one come to faith in the Lord Jesus. Our text today is the record of the first entire family to believe in our New Testaments! Your family could be next on the list- let's pray that way today!

Prayer