

## In Nomine Iesu

### The Twenty First Sunday after Trinity 2022 The way of peace – John 4:46-54

“So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then Jesus said to him, ‘Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.’ The nobleman said to Him, ‘Sir, come down before my child dies!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your son lives.’ So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, ‘Your son lives!’ The he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they told him, saying, ‘Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.’ So, the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, ‘Your son lives.’ And he himself believed, and his whole household. This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.”

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father and from the Son, who is our Lord and Savior, our Son of righteousness, Jesus Christ. Dear fellow redeemed in Christ:

Jesus said to the nobleman, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.” The nobleman might have thought, “Why should we?” Why should we believe and risk having all our hopes dashed against the hard rock of reality without signs and wonders? What good is faith if it does not deliver what it believes in? If faith does not cause mountains to be removed and cast into the sea, should it not at least make sickness go away? Where is the flame that burned in the bush and yet did not consume it as Moses stood there, sandals removed? Where is the towering column of fire by night and smoke by day that led Israel through sea and out of Egypt? Why were these signs and wonders given to the people then while we are given none in ours? Why must my son die in Capernaum rather than drink wine at a wedding in Cana? Why could there be no miracle in Capernaum?

#### I

The nobleman had left the side of his dying son to bring home the miracle worker, the One whom many were saying is the Messiah, the promised One. It took faith, a burning ember of belief that He could and would help. But the miracle worker, the man who turned water into wine, now seemed not to grasp the man’s urgency. It did not seem He was about to leave Cana any time soon. And, the nobleman must have thought, my authority is not enough to motivate Him. I am a member of the royal court, and I cannot move this Nazarene to come with me. He speaks of the people needing signs and miracles to believe, and I have come here to ask for just such a sign. I have come here to Cana because of Him, because of the sign He did here. I have come here for my dying son. Does He not hear my plea?

Jesus doesn’t meet the felt needs of the people. He refuses to be what they want Him to be, to do what they want Him to do, and to do it in the way they want Him to do it. Why - for goodness’ sake - here in the streets of dusty little Cana He brings faith to its knees. He brings one who trusted Him for his son’s life to the

brink of hopelessness. What kind of Shepherd is that? So, the nobleman loses his nobility. He does not care anymore about it anymore. He has left behind everything dear to him in beautiful, lakeside Capernaum to stand here in little Cana's narrow, dusty street before a carpenter's Son. His desperation, his fear, has pushed aside his nobility. He has become just the father of a dying boy. And so, he speaks once more, and his plaintive cry, heartfelt and soft, slips out of his mouth and hangs heavy in the still air between them: "Sir, come down before my child dies."

Still, Jesus will not be moved from Cana, where He made the water into wine, but says: "Go your way; your son lives." And, miracle of miracles, that mysterious sentence changed the nobleman. He had tried to plead with Jesus. He'd implored Him, again and again. It hadn't worked. In his desperation he did not ask anymore. He had just looked at Jesus and pleaded, "Come down before my child dies."

"Your son lives," and everything was changed. It was no longer the nobleman who hoped. It was just a man, the father of a dying son. The nobleman who'd come to Cana to find a miracle worker was changed into a man who believed in the Savior of all men. The word of Jesus changed him. And he went on his way. He believed simply as a man, stripped of pretensions, but now knowing the difference between life and death, resting in the word of promise spoken to him by the promised One. He left death and despair behind him in Cana. Now he turned and left dusty Cana, and walked the way from Cana to Capernaum in faith. He had only the Messiah's word of promise, without signs or wonders.

## II

Imagine the winding road, rocky and uneven, hot and dusty under the Galilean sun. The knees and ankles that desperation had empowered for the long uphill trek from Capernaum to Cana – 26 ½ miles and a thousand feet in elevation - all of that had been the nobleman's journey to see Jesus. His noble knees and ankles, privileged lungs, and less than toned muscles none too well conditioned by upscale, lakeside Capernaum, now must negotiate the return downhill as the dying sun sank into the west and night fell. He had only the stars to light way. The dawn broke and still his tired ankles and knees, along with his aching muscles moved him onward, one foot in front of the other, left, right, left, right, left, right. In the morning light his tired eyes saw familiar faces running toward him, happy, weeping with joy. As they drew near he heard the cry, "Your son lives." And he knew in his heart the answer to the question that nevertheless he had to ask. "When? At what hour did he get better? Tell me!" The words tumble excitedly out of the servants' mouths, one more eager than the next to tell the story, "Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him." And the nobleman knew how true the conviction had been that had risen in his heart through all those steps, all those long hours of darkness.

The nobleman was not the first parent to get a son back from the dead, as the word of God testifies. The widows in Nain and Zarephath had experienced this miracle as well. And before them, Jacob received Joseph back alive from brotherly murder. Abraham too got Isaac back alive from the mountain of sacrifice. God provides. He always does. That is His promise to you.

But most importantly for us all, our Father in heaven received **His Son** back from the dead. When it was finished, and the Son had given up His spirit, He awakened

from death. He descended to hell to proclaim His victory over death and the devil, rose on the third day, and then forty days later ascended to heaven, the Son of God and Son of Man, the Victor over sin, death, and devil.

The difference, however, is this: that Son didn't have to die. He didn't have to be forsaken by the Father to the hatred of the mob and the still deeper hatred of hell's first, and most prominent citizen. God's Son did not have to do that. He did not, except that His love for all the world's dying sons and daughters demanded He do it, as did His Father's love, who so loved the world. So, He Himself determined it was necessary. Love drove Him to the cross. Just as love drove away the hot fever of the son in Capernaum and the cold of death that would have followed it, just as love changed water into wine in Cana that all might share the joy of the unending marriage feast that was to come.

Love demanded death be put death, so that the Son of God and Son of Mary could stand in the upper room and pronounce peace and forgiveness upon weary, fearful men, and so establish the ministry of reconciliation. The Father lost His Son on the cross. He turned Him over to the devil to endure the torments of Hell, where there was no ram caught in the thicket to be His substitute, no miracle worker to help, no plea to be uttered. There the Son was alone, in order that the Father's righteous wrath against all sin would be turned in full fury on Him who bore the sins of the world, and so be burned out forever. There hell lost its claim on us. There paradise was restored. There the way of peace was marked out for all to see and follow.

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So, dear friends, on this autumn day as the dying leaves fall and are blown away: Go your way, the Son, who gave His life for ours, lives. He is more fully yours than the sons and daughters God has temporarily placed into your care, **for He is yours forever**. Your Son lives. He is the Son whose righteousness was placed on you like a robe in the waters of Baptism, and whose body and blood are placed upon your tongue and lips in Holy Communion for the forgiveness of your sins. You are His. He is yours. And His Father has become your Father. Today, you've come to this Cana we call Parkland Lutheran Church, where water is not turned into wine, but where the wine is the blood of Christ and makes glad the hearts of God's people. Here you really do have your miracle, your sign of God's favor in the body and blood of Jesus, given and shed for you. Here you are strengthened and encouraged to continue your walk in the way of peace, peace in your heart, and peace for the hearts of those whose lives touch yours. So, return home today, return to your Capernaum, walking through each day and night. Go back to your life and your work, to your households, your families. Go back, yes, even to your trials and difficulties. The Father's Son lives. And because He does, so will you and your children. That is the promise that gives us the peace that passes all understanding. That peace will see you through all trials. Its joyful fulfillment awaits you at the end of your path. Amen.

**Soli Deo Gloria**