

Trinity XXI, 2006  
Text: John 4:46-54  
Trinity Lutheran, Worden, IL & Zion Lutheran, Carpenter, IL  
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✠Grace, Mercy, and Peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ ✠

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Who could forget the wedding at Cana? What a party! The best wine came last and fast – almost a hundred gallons of it out of those old water jars. Jesus, that nice young man from Nazareth, had done this. Some kind of miracle working prophet – and the people of Cana would never forget. And so when Jesus passes through town again, a royal official wants a piece of the miraculous action. He has a sick son and wants Jesus to come down and heal him.

Royal officials, like all rich and powerful men, are accustomed to getting what they want and to using people as tools, as ends to means. And so this royal official comes to Jesus and asks him to get down to his house and heal his dying son. He does not come praising Jesus as the Son of David as do the lepers. He does not come falling on his knees as the Canaanite woman. He does not come anointing Jesus' feet out of love as Mary Magdalene. All this royal official sees in Jesus is a means to an end – a miracle dispenser, a healing sideshow, a never-failing emergency room.

Is this man not a mirror for your heart? Is the Jesus he wants the Jesus you want? Do you treat Jesus as a heavenly butler ready to come to your aid when you demand him, but not much more? Does your faith in him waiver when things go badly? Or, on the other hand, is the only time you exercise your faith in him when things go badly? Do you want Jesus or do you just want what he can give you? Is he a Lord to be worshiped and adored or a tool to be used and put back on the shelf when you are done with him until the next time you need something in your life fixed?

Repent. The Lord Jesus is not impressed that you believe he can do miracles. Even the devils believe this and shudder. Hear the rebuke he gives to this royal official and the people of Cana: “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not

believe.” This is like unto the rebuke he gave to Disbelieving Thomas “Stop disbelieving and believe. . . .Have you believed in me because you have seen me? Blessed are they who have not seen yet have believed.”

After this rebuke, you would think the royal official would repent – take a step back, wait for what else Jesus would say – but no, he presses on. This time he doesn't even ask, he demands: “Sir, get down to my house before my boy dies.” But Jesus won't budge. He won't come down. He won't play by the royal official's rules. Instead he undoes him with mercy, he kills his pride with kindness, he shows that he is the forgiving and life giving Lord who blesses even when men deserve cursing: he says, “Go; your son lives.”

This Word of the Lord: “Go, your son lives” changes everything. First, it puts the royal official in his place and strips him of his rank. Now St. John writes, “The man believed the Word” not “the royal official believed the Word.” He has no more claim to title. He couldn't order Jesus around. But look how merciful Jesus is! In putting him in his place Jesus gives him more than he asked for. The royal official thought Jesus was some kind of sideshow healer who had to come down to the house and waive his hand over the boy or some such nonsense – Jesus refuses to be placed in a box like this, instead he heals from afar, with a Word. He says something is so, and it is so. Just like God at Creation: “Let there be light. And there was Light.” Now God in the flesh says, your son lives, and so he does, from that very hour. His Word makes reality.

There is only One whose Word makes reality – and that is God himself. And now the man, stripped of his royal title, believes. Now he knows who Jesus is. Now the miracle of God in the flesh comes home to the man. Now he knows Jesus not as a miracle dispenser but as the Lord of all creation who rules all things with a Word. Now he believes – and all his family with him.

The Word of the Lord is enough – it was enough for this man, and it is enough for us. For the Word of the Lord is also the Son of the Father. That is how St. John starts his Gospel: In the beginning was the Word, and Word was with God, and the Word was God – and the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. The Word, Jesus, is enough. In all your hardships, in all the unfairness of life in a sinful world: the Word is enough. For the Word himself bore all those hardships and unfairnesses on the cross. The Word himself in the Flesh went down to death so that death itself would hold no fear for you. By his death, death is undone – and in is Resurrection, you have life.

And this life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Word in the Flesh, is

delivered to you. Just like the royal official, the miracles you have asked for are too small. So Jesus turns them away – but in their place he gives you an even more gracious sign and wonder: he speaks his Word to bread and wine and makes them be his Body and Blood. What a sign and wonder this is! The very life of God given up in death on the cross and raised from the tomb is now poured into you. Now because Jesus died and lives again you also will live, you and your whole household and all who believe. For he who lives and believes in Jesus will never die.

In other words, it is enough that what Jesus says to the man today he says to you, “Go, your Son lives.” That's Son with a capital S. Not the son who sits on your knee born from your own flesh – but the Son who took up your flesh from his virgin Mother. That Son lives. He's up from the dead and he is all yours. You live in him. He lives in you. You are filled up with his life. Go in peace – your Son lives. Amen.

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Now the peace of God which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ  
Jesus our Lord. Amen.