

Jesus heals the officials son 4:43-50 also John 5:1-15 The Man by the pool.

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Folly, Faith and Forgiveness.

Follies-

In many parts the world a Folly can be found. A "folly" is usually applied to a small building that appears to have no practical purpose, or the purpose of which appears less important than its striking and unusual design, in English, the term began as "a popular name for any costly structure considered to have shown folly in the builder." These buildings can look impressive, yet can be very deceiving; a few are merely outward representation with no substance, for example, doorways which lead to nothing, others are built as if they are in ruin, some are so out of place from their surrounds that apart from architectural oddity service no other purpose. A folly can bring delight, but in most cases, is of no substance as a practical building. In many ways, a folly can promise much but deliver little. They are not a "real" building.

In the same manner, we can often encounter "faith" which has an outward look of true belief, but when examined more closely offers little beyond first impressions. We need as followers of Jesus to "add body" to our faith, to allow it to fill out in the truth of the character of Jesus Christ, to move beyond, "what can Jesus do for me?", to "How can I serve Jesus as King of his Kingdom?" This faith comes to rest in the person of Jesus Christ, not merely to be impressed with so called miraculous effects that Jesus demonstrates.

The point, "we need to add body to our faith."

Exegesis of John 4- the comparison of the Galileans to the acceptance by the Samaritans. They desired miracles, not Jesus himself. Folly (no substance, not faith)

"In Samaria Jesus has just enjoyed his first unqualified, unopposed, and open-hearted success. Now he returns to his people (cf. 1:11), and, consistent with the pattern developed so far, the response is at best ambiguous. Although in John 2 his disciples put their faith in him (2:11), nevertheless 'the Jews' challenge him (2:18, 20), his disciples do not understand him (2:22), and the many who appeared to believe in him were spurious converts (2:23-25) whose 'faith' was generated in no small measure by the miraculous

signs he was doing” (Don Carson)

We see John writing about two seemingly contradictory statements, in vs 44 and 45 "He himself had said that a prophet is not honored in his own hometown. Yet the Galileans welcomed him, for they had been in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration and had seen everything he did there.”(NLT) John is highlighting the paucity of this type of welcome, and the faith which it often leads to. Jesus has been readily accepted via his verbal teaching by the Samaritan people, yet his own, those he grew up with are less true to His character. They are impressed, but only to the point of self-interest. They are as mentioned previously getting confused with the signposts (miraculous signs), and what they point to (Jesus).

III- sign posts taking the place of the destination.

In Kids water parks one can often find people gathering around a water play area, one which periodically drops water on them. Do we gather in a similar fashion around a signpost, desperately waiting for this to perform, when in reality true life is further down the road and we need to journey.

Getting beyond the folly to faith!

A man has a sick son, and he is now desperate for help for curing this boy. We do not know if this man was a Jew or a Gentile? We do not know his exact position in the government. He would appear to have been a member of Herod's court; And this would have given the man great influence and power. It would also mean that he would have been a man of great wealth. Don Carson writes "The Greek word for 'royal official', basilikos, sometimes rendered 'nobleman', probably refers to someone officially attached to the service of a basileus, a 'king'—here doubtless referring to Herod Antipas. He was tetrarch of Galilee from 4 bc to 39, ad and not properly a 'king' at all; but he was popularly considered one (Mk. 6:14)."

Given the desperate situation, the man is now willing to humble himself and to go publicly to this "man of God", Jesus from Nazareth. Warren Wiersbe puts it this way "This man began with crisis faith. He was about to lose his son and he had no other recourse but the Lord Jesus Christ. Many people came to Jesus with their crises, and He did not turn them away. The nobleman's crisis faith became confident faith: he believed the Word and had peace in his heart."

In this instance, we find in the area a person who was prepared to act on their limited faith, and in hearing the word of Jesus, was prepared to take that word and to trust on it. If as is suspected he served in Herod's court it is but one of many instances when God reaches out with a credible demonstration to the Herodian dynasty in an attempts to show them the true and proper way.

This man, this unnamed man starts to show a faith which moves beyond the superficial, what started at Crisis comes to confidence.

The text then moves us back to Jerusalem, no time is given and the feast that takes Jesus to the place is not clarified, it is in this instance not the main point of the discourse. John is about two things, highlighting the old vs. the new, and continuing the theme that many

failed to show true faith in Jesus.

Religion vs Faith (Old vs New)

If we look at the text up to this point (i.e. Chapter 1 to 5) we can see that "If John intends any symbolism, it may be along the following lines: just as the water from the purification pots of the orthodox could neither produce nor be mistaken for the new wine of the kingdom (2:1–11), and just as the water from Jacob's well could not satiate the ultimate thirst of religious people who may have looked to genuine revelation but whose views were widely viewed as aberrant (4:1–42), so the promises of merely superstitious religion have no power to transform the truly needy." (D. A. Carson)

Exegesis of John 5- What is going on

Jesus heads to the pool which in the locals mind carries mystical properties. The text leads us to understand that Jesus inquired about this man, and proceeded upon his course of action based on his information. We are not sure if this information was given directly from God or via basic inquiry of asking others. Wiersbe says "The pool is situated near the northeast corner of the Old City, close to the Sheep Gate (Neh. 3:1; 12:39). Perhaps John saw some spiritual significance to this location, for he had already told his readers that Jesus Christ is "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29)." The stage is now set, a man who has needed healing for nearly four decades now encounters the living God. As we encounter this text we need to understand that first God is all powerful and "Second, where the Lord chooses He can heal a person before causing faith relating to salvation, or even heal some whose response to Him is not clear in Scripture" (James E. Rosscup)

Jesus asks a seemingly redundant question, "Do you want to get well", one would assume that after nearly thirty-eight years of being carried daily to this location that the answer would be "yes", but all is not as it seems. Many in this world can come to own their cares and worries like a twisted badge of honour; they have held them so tight for so long that the thought of changing and removing them becomes frightening and challenging. To become "vulnerable in healing" is too much for many. "Better the devil you know than the God you don't" so to speak.

Point- Do you want to get well?

It is worth challenging ourselves at this juncture, "Do you want to get well?" Are we desiring the better life that Christ has to offer, are we willing to give up the things which are weighing us down and preventing from moving forward as we were created to be? Do we want a faith that is more than folly? Be assured our faith does not have to be great, just placed in the right person, there is a story told of a good woman who was known for her great calmness in the midst of many trials; And also known for her simple faith. Another woman who was troubled, heard of her and said, "I must go and see that woman, and learn the secret of her strong and happy life." She went, and speaking to her asked: "Are you the woman with the great faith?" "No," she replied, "I am not the woman with the great faith; but I am the woman with the little faith in the great God."

Jesus intervenes in this man's life, he commands the man to get up, this is a powerful statement, one which allows no option but to comply. The man goes from being a burden to others, to being able to carry the symbol of that sickness, his mat.

III- The renowned artist Paul Gustave Dore (1821-1883); Once lost his passport while travelling in Europe. When he came to a border crossing, he explained his predicament to one of the guards. Giving his name to the official, Dore hoped he would be recognised and allowed to pass. The guard, however, said; That many people attempted to cross the border by claiming to be persons they were not. Dore insisted that he was the man he claimed to be. "All right," said the official, "we'll give you a test, & if you pass it, we'll allow you to go through." Handing him a pencil and a sheet of paper, He told the artist to sketch several peasants standing nearby. Dore did it so quickly and skilfully; That the guard was convinced he was indeed who he claimed to be.

- His work confirmed his word!

Jesus confirms who he is, and offers us the chance to exercise faith in him. Jesus takes this man who has been waiting for a mystical healing, and heals him! Sadly the response by this healed man is less than impressive. Upon being questioned it is revealed that this man did not even take the time to discover the name of Jesus let alone his true identity.

Hospitality (we need to reveal of ourselves for the sake of others)

"Jesus' offer of new life comes to men and women who have often been in bondage to paralysing defeat for untold years. For many of us, an invitation to take a fresh start would be heard with doubts and fear. To understand the grace Jesus unveils and see why it is safe to accept His offer, we need to see more clearly the life that Jesus holds out to us."
(Larry Richards)

It might be we can sympathise with this man, and if this is the case, we may need to work on offering Hospitality, to "known and be known", to show others trapped in bondage who Jesus is in our life, to open up about Jesus has transformed us. Our words maybe the catalyst Jesus uses to free those trapped today at this very moment in this place.

It may be we are this "boundary-less" person, it might be we have developed a character which is seemingly unwilling to accept a better future, we might have handed in all hope and sit waiting until the end comes. Be challenged, consider "what are we willing to do to alter this?", are we willing to ask our believing neighbour about the God they put their faith in?

For those of us with a saving and robust faith, are we enabling poor choices or are we helping those without boundaries, what are we putting in place to make them grow?

It can often be a practical way, if someone comes for help, to offer this helps with the proviso that those being helped contribute in some ways.

For example, asking those bound by alcohol to attend an AA program. For those with money issues to "cut up the credit card", we can help those who need help, but it doesn't mean we need to save every issue.

Finally, we discover Jesus returns to this man, and his discussion leads us to understand that the situation he found himself in was of his own making. "Stop sinning" says Jesus. This from the man who happily discussed with a Samaritan woman was a strong rebuke. "Don't go down this way again", a boundary Jesus puts in place! Jesus has healed this man physically; he has "cured" him, but to see him "Healed" the man needs to move from Folly, through faith, to forgiveness. He needs to repent and accept what Jesus has shown to him.

Practical

Beyond Religion to Faith!

Don Carson says "We are all guilty; unless we repent, we too will perish." Have we repented of our sins?

Beyond the signs, You can desire the gifts, for they are tools to help in serving the Lord, but they should never stand in the way of loving the Lord

How do we give body to our faith- getting to know Jesus, to find out who he is?
By instruction (reading and teaching), by Action (repentance), by Experience (listening through the Spirit to how Jesus speaks and reveals himself to us)

There is a shop; they have a sign " If you are on the phone you do not exist", simply put, unless a customer is willing to be "present" in that shop they will not get served. The shop owner has made a choice; they are more important than your phone call.

We need to put Jesus in the centrality of our life. We can no longer look to Him for miracles and bail outs, without accepting the challenge of moving from Folly to Faith, for in this we find forgiveness.

