

There's Your Sign (pt.2-3)

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Preacher: Jonathan Chancey

[0 : 01] Please open up your Bibles this morning to the Gospel of John, and we'll be reading this morning from chapter 4, verse 43, through chapter 5, verse 9.

I know your bulletin says verse 14, I just couldn't do it. So we're going to read through chapter 5, verse 9 this morning. If you're using the pew Bibles there in front of you, this passage can be found on page 836, but you will want a Bible open as we hear from the Word of God this morning.

So follow along with me as I read. After the two days he departed for Galilee, for Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.

So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast, for they too had gone to the feast. So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine.

And at Capernaum, there was an official whose son was ill. When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

[1 : 09] So Jesus said to him, unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe. The official said to him, sir, come down before my child dies.

Jesus said to him, go, your son will live. The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering.

So he asked them the hour when he began to get better. And they said to him, yesterday at the seventh hour, the fever left him. The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, your son will live.

And he himself believed and all his household. This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee. After this, there was a feast of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, and paralyzed.

[2 : 15] One man was there who had been an invalid for 38 years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, do you want to be healed?

The sick man answered him, sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. And while I am going, another steps down before me. Jesus said to him, get up, take up your bed and walk.

And at once the man was healed and he took up his bed and walked. This is the word of God. Would you please bow and pray with me once more?

Lord. Lord, we confess that it is so easy for us week in and week out to come here to open up the word, to hear it read, to hear it preached, and to treat it as ordinary.

Father, this is anything but ordinary. Your word is power. And so we pray now, would you accomplish eternal good in the next few moments that we have together?

[3 : 21] Lord, would you give us ears to hear and eyes to see your glory and your truth? We pray in Christ's name. Amen. If you are wanting to go for a joy ride, I recommend not taking Casson Road in Tracy, California.

The California Highway Patrol, they posted some pictures back in January of a Honda Odyssey that had driven right past the road closed signs and into a giant water-filled hole in the road.

The very next day, the highway patrol, they posted an update that the hole in the road had gotten worse. The road was collapsing. There was now a giant gulf in the road.

And people needed to take the sign seriously. Do not drive around the barricades. Do not ignore the sign. The road is closed. Well, sure enough, a Volkswagen Passat ignored the warnings, drove right past the sign, and it too fell down into the giant hole in the road.

So they posted again, sarcastically this time. This can't be real, they said. If only there were signs, warning drivers that could have prevented this.

[4 : 39] Well, just two days later, a Ford F-150 drove right past the sign, right past the barricade, and it too dropped right into the hole.

In the pictures, you can look them up. It looked like the hole had grown and gotten just big enough to fit the whole truck end to end. It was built for a Ford F-150 to be nice and snug in the hole.

So they posted again one more time, and they said, it happened again. We can't make this stuff up. This was 100% preventable. There is no excuse.

The signs are clear, visible, and unobstructed. Pay attention to the signs. The lesson is clear.

Signs are great if you pay attention to their meaning. We have seen together over the past several months in the Gospel of John that John is writing this Gospel with a purpose.

[5 : 40] His purpose, that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that by believing, we might have life in His name. That we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.

And so all throughout the Gospel of John, He is showing us several clear messianic signs that prove to the readers, that prove to us the identity of Jesus, that Jesus is the Christ.

We've already seen one of those signs, Him turning the water into wine. And today, we get to see two more messianic signs in our passage. The healing of an official son and the healing of an invalid man.

And as we read these signs, the question for us becomes, will we listen to what they say? Or will we ignore them and continue on as if they weren't there?

These two signs, they teach us two lessons this morning. This will be our outline if you're taking notes. Two lessons from these two signs. We see a lesson of brokenness and a lesson of power.

[6 : 51] A lesson of brokenness and a lesson of power. First, we see a lesson of brokenness. To state the very obvious, the world that we live in is broken.

It is not right. We live in a world that is broken and marred and distorted and affected by the curse of sin.

And not only the world around us and outside of us, but we are broken and marred and distorted by the effects of sin. We, as individuals, are sick.

And the symptoms of that sickness are everywhere. And we see just a few of those symptoms here in our passage. Symptom number one, at the very heart of our brokenness, is a lack of honor.

A lack of honor. The number one sign that we are not right, that we're not functioning as we should, is that our hearts do not honor the Lord as we were made to do.

[8 : 01] Look there to chapter 4, verse 43 again. John tells us in verse 43 that Jesus left Sychar, where he had met with a Samaritan woman, and made the journey down to Galilee.

This was about 49 miles by foot. It would have taken two to three days to complete. But John tells us why he went. It's because he had no honor in Galilee.

For, because, for, Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his hometown. Jesus left Sychar, where the whole town was responding to the message of the gospel, where the whole town was receiving him and believing and welcoming him in, to go to Galilee, where he had no honor.

His lack of honor in Galilee is why he went. For, because, Jesus said, a prophet has no honor in his hometown. This was his mission, to demonstrate who he was in order that he might receive the honor that he deserves.

Now, this is a bit odd, though, because when you read the very next verse, what does it say? It says that when he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They seemed glad to see him.

[9 : 16] Now, some critics will read this and point to this as a contradiction in Scripture, as if John just blacked out between verse 44 and verse 45, forgot what he had said.

I don't think that that's what's happening here. He's not that careless. This is a type of welcome, a type of reception, that does not honor Jesus.

But what type of welcome might that be? It's a welcome of provision, not a welcome of person. It's a desire for the signs, not a desire for the Savior.

Though they had seen, mark that word seen there in your Bible. They had seen all that Jesus had done in Jerusalem at the feast, for they too had gone to the feast. They were eyewitnesses of his power, and so they welcomed him in, expecting, hoping, desiring to see more.

Maybe he'll turn some more water into wine. And maybe he'll flip some more tables over. Let's see what he does. They welcomed him in for what he could do for them, not for who he was.

[10 : 29] See, this is how the sinful heart views Jesus. He views him as a means to some other end. And if we're honest, all of us have done this.

How often do we do the very same thing? All of us are touched by this symptom. All of us. How many of your thoughts, even right now, if you're honest, how many of your thoughts, even now, are spent on you?

Your needs, your wants, your desires, what you want to get out of this time here in worship, and how many are spent, are consumed with the glory of Christ?

How he might be honored, how he might be worshiped, how he might be glorified, how you might see him more clearly, how you might receive his word and obey him and follow his will and honor him as he deserves.

This is a symptom of the sickness of sin. How much of our time in prayer is spent asking God to do for you and to solve your problems?

[11 : 42] And how much is spent simply adoring him for who he is? Now, of course, we're invited, commanded even, encouraged to present our requests to the Lord, to pray like the persistent widow and trust that the Lord will give us what we need.

But we have to ask ourselves. And we have to examine our hearts and ask, are we welcoming Christ for who he is or for what he can do for us?

We do not honor the Lord when we welcome him as a means to some other end, to our wealth, to our health, to our success, to our prosperity.

We honor him when we treasure him for who he is. Symptom number one of the sickness of sin is that our hearts do not honor the Lord as we were made to do.

We see another symptom here, don't we? It's the symptom. It's the presence of death. The presence of death. Verse 46 says that when he came again to Cana in Galilee where he had made the water wine, and at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill.

[12 : 59] And this man was likely a royal officer. He was a Gentile who served under Herod Antipas, the same Herod who would have John the Baptist beheaded and killed. And this man, this official, like the others, he had heard that Jesus was coming to town.

He had heard rumor of what Jesus could do, the signs that he performed. And so immediately he went to him and made an urgent request. Come down and heal my son, for he is at the point of death.

But Jesus, instead, he challenges him, and not only him, but all of the Galileans. He sees a bigger problem here. He says to the man in verse 48, unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe.

Do you see the connection John's making here? Jesus is condemning the self-seeking attitude of the Galileans, all of them, toward Jesus.

Unless you, that you is plural, unless y'all, unless you, all of you Galileans, unless you see, you will not believe. But the man pressed further. He didn't have time for theological conversation.

[14 : 08] He says, Sir, come down before my child dies. No doubt this man had tried everything in his power to heal his son.

He was an officer of Herod. He likely had some measure of wealth. I'm sure that he had tried everything in his power. I'm sure he had no issue paying for whatever medical care was needed.

But apparently nothing seemed to work, because here he is in desperation, coming to a man he had never met, who he had only heard about, begging him to heal his son.

This is an urgent issue. I could not imagine anything more urgent than this. The presence of death is, without a doubt, the clearest and ugliest evidence of the brokenness of this world.

It's a cause of fear. It's a cause of separation. It's a cause of anxiety. It's a cause of pain. It's a cause of worry.

[15 : 18] It's a cause of grief. And every one of us has to deal with it. Death is a terrible, terrible enemy.

But we have to realize that even death is just a symptom. It is a wage. It is a terrible consequence that springs off of a much greater enemy, the enemy of sin.

We just read, the wages of sin is death. If we hate death, how much more should we hate sin? If we hate the symptom, how much more should we hate the sickness?

Death is a symptom of our brokenness. But we see one more terrible symptom of our brokenness here. One more. It's the symptom of suffering.

The symptom of suffering. Look down there to the beginning of chapter 5. Sometime after this encounter with the official, Jesus went back up to Jerusalem.

[16 : 20] And verse 2 says that there is in Jerusalem, by the sheep gate, a pool called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. And in these lay a multitude of invalids, individuals who are blind and lame and paralyzed.

Can you just imagine for a moment this scene? This is pitiful. There are sick people, broken people, people who are hurting deeply, just scattered all over.

This is a scene of unbelievable, terrible suffering. And many of them are suffering in hopelessness. Apparently, there was a cultural belief there at that time that an angel would come and stir up the waters to this pool, and whoever was first in the water would be healed of their sickness.

How will a blind man make it to the healing waters? You see how pitiful this picture is? How will a lame man make it to the waters? Or a paralyzed man, how will he make it to the waters?

You can imagine them stumbling their way into this water in hopes that maybe, just maybe, just maybe, today is the day that they are made well.

[17 : 34] It's a pitiful scene to imagine. But here comes Jesus into this scene of brokenness. This is what Jesus does.

And he sees a man there who in his omniscience, he knew that he had been suffering for 38 years. That's longer than many people lived at this point in history.

38 years. This is prolonged, drawn out, painful, even humiliating suffering. You know, church, as I read this account, I thought about so many in our church family who are suffering.

Maybe you're not as bad off as this man, but I know that so many of us in this church are suffering greatly.

Issues with our back. Issues with your heart. Problems with your hips. Problems with your shoulders. Problems with your minds. Just waiting and waiting and hoping and waiting that the doctors will get their stuff together and maybe, just maybe, they can make you well.

[18 : 46] This church knows what it is to suffer. But church, we need to know that this, too, is a symptom of our brokenness.

Our suffering, this, too, is evidence of the curse of sin. Our bodies age. They weaken. Our minds, they fade. We wear out. And to make things worse, we often feel isolated in our suffering because we are the only ones who feel our pain.

We know other people might care, but they can't know exactly what we're feeling. Nobody else shares in our suffering. And it seems like no one can help us. Jesus asked this man what should have been an obvious question here.

Do you want to be healed? Well, of course he did. Look what he says in verse 7. He says, Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool. When the water is stirred up and while I am going another steps down before me, this man was suffering alone, totally dependent with no one to depend on.

It may be that some of you feel that way. All of this, disease, dishonor, and death, all of this is evidence that things are not as they should be.

[20 : 12] We are beaten and bruised by the curse of sin. Do you feel the weight of this brokenness here in this passage? If you do, I have good news for you, church.

The good news of the gospel is that Jesus Christ came to undo all of it. This is the message of these signs.

It's that Jesus Christ came to destroy sin and all of its terrible consequences. Jesus Christ came to restore what was lost and broken by the fall.

Every ounce of pain, every tear, every loss, every struggle, ought to lead us to ask, Who will set this right? When will this be done?

When will I be made well? Who will conquer this enemy? Who will defeat death? Who will put an end to suffering and sickness and sorrow? And the answer is Christ.

[21 : 12] This is the second lesson from these signs here. The second lesson, Christ alone has the power to restore. The second is a lesson of power.

The bad news is we are all broken. We are all sinners. But the good news of the gospel is that Christ Jesus came to heal our brokenness.

And that he's powerful to save. Look what Jesus did for this man here. Jesus, he did not pick the man up. He did not take him down to the water.

He did not tell everybody else to get out of the way and let him go in. Verse 8, Jesus simply said to him, Get up. Take up your bed and walk.

And at once, he took up his bed and walked. This is a miraculous healing. Jesus spoke and it happened. 38 years of suffering are undone in a single sentence.

[22 : 16] In the same way, the official whose son was near death, who was begging Jesus to come and come to his house to heal his son, what did Jesus do? Look back to chapter 4, verse 50.

Jesus said to him, Go. Your son will live. Go home. What would you do in that situation?

Your son is sick. He's at the point of death. You're begging Jesus. It's a last resort. And he said, Go home. Without you. You're not even coming with me.

I'm supposed to just go home. But this man, this Gentile official, he believed the words of Jesus. Your son will live.

And for him, that was enough. And sure enough, as he went on his way back home, his servants came and met him on his way. And they told him, they brought a message that his son was recovering.

[23 : 12] So he asked the hour when he began to get better. He had to know, Was this a work of this man's power? And they told him, and he knew.

It was the exact moment, exactly the same time that Jesus had spoken the words, Your son will live. The crisis of death, undone in a single sentence.

The word of Christ is incredibly powerful, church. How did he heal the boy? How did he heal the invalid man? He simply spoke, and it happened.

What does this tell us about Jesus? Jesus speaks like no one has ever spoken. The word of Christ affects what it demands.

He speaks, and it happens. When he says to the wind and the waves, Be still, they are silent. When he says to the demons, Come out, they come out. They obey his voice. The sick are made well at the sound of his voice.

[24 : 16] The dead rise at the sound of his voice. No one else has this type of power. What does this tell us about Jesus? These events are bright, flashing, undeniable signs that Jesus Christ is God.

That he is one with the Father, who said, Let there be light, and there was light. Who said, Let there be wind and waves, and there was wind and waves.

By the word of the Lord, the heavens were made. He spoke, and it came to be. He commanded, and it stood firm. This is not a sign to be ignored. The book of Hebrews tells us that Christ Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God, and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

The word of Christ upholds the universe. Of course, he can make a sick boy well, and he can make you well, if you would but listen to his word.

This is good news for us, church. Do you know why? It's because Christ Jesus is still speaking. Today, if you will only listen to the words of Christ and believe, then you too will be made well.

[25 : 50] Do you see the power of the word of Jesus here in this passage? Time was no issue for Jesus. One man was desperate, urgent. My son is dying right now.

Will you come right now? Stop talking about anything else. You've got to come. You've got to heal him. The other man had suffered for 38 years. Had given up hope of ever being made well.

But you know what? The word of Christ was enough for them both. Friend, you may have lived in the curse of sin for 30, 40, 50, 60 years, but if you would listen to the word of Christ today and believe, you too will be made well.

Distance was no issue for the word of Christ. It's amazing to me that this man's son was 15, 20 miles away in Capernaum, but Jesus didn't have to walk. He didn't have to go touch the son.

He didn't have to go be in his presence. He didn't have to see him, and yet he was powerful enough to save him from death simply by the power of his word.

[26 : 54] Distance was not a problem. And it's no problem today. You may not see Jesus Christ here physically among us right now, but do you hear his voice?

He promises his disciples in John chapter 11, everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?

Christians are those who, by the grace of God, have heard and believed the life-giving word of Christ.

And Christians are those who, by the grace of God, now go as ambassadors of Christ and speak that life-giving word to a broken and dying world.

church, there is hope for us in our brokenness. These signs are meant to teach us that Christ Jesus is the answer to all of the brokenness of sin.

[27 : 59] Now, if I stopped there, you might make some wrong conclusions, and so I want to caution you before we close.

these were incredible miracles. The official son was made well, the invalid man was made well, but we need to recognize that these are extraordinary events.

It would be wrong to take these healings as a prescription for your healing right now. As if, if you want to be made well, if you want to feel better, just believe in Jesus.

Just pray the right words, just have enough faith. If you want to be healed, if you want to walk right and think right and feel young again, just have enough faith, and it will happen, that is not what is being said here.

Can Jesus heal the sick today still? Absolutely, he can. We've seen it happen. And we pray, we trust the wisdom of God, we trust the sovereignty of God, we pray asking the Lord to heal us when we're sick or broken, when our loved ones are sick, but we do so knowing that we have no promise of this type of healing on this side of eternity.

[29 : 15] Until sin is done away with for good, we will feel its consequences. And church, our hope is not for partial healing here in the present, but for total healing in eternity.

You may have heard, you may be familiar with what's called word of faith theology. Have you heard of this? Word of faith theology is the belief that because Jesus has defeated sin and death, we agree with that, because Jesus has defeated sin and death, because he's conquered our enemies, we have a right to health, a right to wealth, a right to power and prosperity, a right to physical and mental well-being, a healthy marriage, a happy life, our pockets should be full, we should be happy, healthy, wealthy, right now.

If we just believe it and name it in the name of Jesus, it is ours if we have it, if we have enough faith. This type of teaching would have been laughed out of the room in the early church.

Every apostle of Christ, with the exception of John, every apostle of Christ was killed brutally for the faith. Just ten seconds of church history will crumble this teaching to the ground.

Here's what Jesus told us. In this world, you will face trouble, but take heart. I have overcome the world.

[30 : 47] See, these signs are not a prescription for how to be made well now. They are a pointer for how we will be made forever. They are a pointer to a greater promise that Christ has come to fulfill that any who know Jesus, that any who listen to His word and trust Him as the Messiah because He has come will one day totally be renewed from the curse of sin.

Jesus Christ, this is the gospel church, Jesus Christ entered into our suffering. He suffered in our place.

If you ever feel alone in your suffering, would you look to Christ? He knows your suffering intimately. He suffered in our place. He knows our pain. Although He lived innocently and did not deserve death, they crucified Him.

He died in the place of sinners. But we praise God that death could not hold Him. He rose from the grave to conquer sin, to defeat death, to crush the power of the enemy, to put an end to the brokenness of sin, to any who would listen and believe the words of Christ.

And one day He will come again. He will finally put an end to the dreadful curse of sin. Forever. Church, this is our hope.

[32 : 23] There's a man who I just love, who I had the privilege to pastor, who has all sorts of medical issues, issues with his legs, issues with his eyes, you name it, he's got it.

And he would tell me, Pastor, I just want to have one day where I feel well before I die or before Jesus comes back. I just want to have one day where I feel totally well.

And every time I would tell him, you know, the honest truth is that you may never feel well totally again in this life. God may choose to heal you, God may not.

And we pray that He does, we'll trust in His wisdom, we will pray for your healing, but know this, when you die or when Christ returns, you will feel more alive than you have ever felt.

We have to view our temporary suffering in light of eternity, church. The day is coming, we are promised when the dwelling place of God will be with man.

[33 : 31] He will dwell with them and they will be His people and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.

Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away. Church, this is our hope. This is why Christ has come to end suffering, to end death, to restore restore honor to the praise and glory of God.

We have seen the signs, church. How will we respond? Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank You, we praise You for Your victory over the grave that promises any who know You victory over sin, suffering, death.

we pray now, Lord, that as we live in a world that is affected and broken by the curse of sin, that we would put our hope ultimately and only in You and in Your promise that You will restore all things.

We praise You, Father, for the work that You're doing and that You have done. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[34 : 54] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.