

## 17. Touch of the Master's hand

January 24, 2016

Well, it was battered and scarred. And the auctioneer felt it was hardly worth his while to waste much time on the old violin. But he held it up with a smile, "It sure ain't much. But it's all we got left, I guess we ought to sell it too. Now who'll start the bid on this old violin, just one more and we'll be through." And he cried, "One, give me one dollar. Who'll make it two... Only two dollars! Who'll make it three?... Three dollars twice. Now that's a good price! But who's got a bid for me? Raise up your hand. And don't wait any longer, the auction's about to end. Who's got four, just one dollar more to bid on this old violin."

The air was hot and the people stood around as the sun was setting low. From the back of the crowd a gray-haired man came forward, picked up the bow. He wiped the dust from the old violin and tightened up the strings. Then he played out a melody pure and sweet. Sweeter than the angel's sing. And then the music stopped.

And the auctioneer with a voice that was quiet and low, he said, "What am I bid for this old violin?" Then he held it up with a bow. Then he cried out, "One, give me one thousand. Who'll make it two... Only two thousand! Who'll make it three?... Three thousand twice. Well, that's a good price! But who's got a bid for me?" People cried out, "What made the change? We don't understand." Then the auctioneer stopped, and he said with a smile, "It was the touch of the Master's hand!"

Now you know, a man with a life out of tune is battered and scarred with sin, and he was auctioned cheap to a thankless world much like that old violin. Then the Master comes. The foolish crowd, they never understand the worth of a soul and the change that is done just by one touch of the Master's hand.

We will witness five incidents that will happen in a rapid succession. Author Mark and John didn't bother to go into detail about the teachings of Jesus for these incidents, but they didn't miss out what the Master Jesus has done to the people around Cana and the Sea of Galilee with His compassion and love for them.

### A. THE NOBLE MAN IN CANA

*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. 47 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. 48 Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." 49 The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!" 50 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. 51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, "Your son lives!" 52 Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." 53 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. 54 This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.*

The reputation of Jesus had traveled fast and before Him to Capernaum. This father whose son had been sick for sometime and now he was about to die, was willing to do anything and everything.

'Nobleman' is 'basilikos' in Greek which means 'royal official' or 'king's man'. Obviously he was a person of prestigious rank and wealth, this man is probably one of Herod's trusted officers. This time he didn't turn to king Herod, rather he turned to Jesus.

The word 'implore' is 'erotao' in Greek with the nuance of continuous action. In other words, this desperate father was continuously begging Jesus to come over to his house and heal his son. He could have been careless about his royal dignity or other people's stares. The only thing that mattered to him was the life of his son. He was helpless.

Although we can understand his urgency, we should not overlook two wrong things from him:

- 1) The father told Jesus how to handle his need.
  - 2) The father presented the need before presenting himself to Jesus.
- How much better it would have been for him to simply lay himself and his problem at the feet of Jesus and let the Lord handle it HIS WAY!

We need to learn something very important here. We all face trials and tribulations either by our own faults or by attacks of satan with permission from God or sent by God Himself for our training. If we try to solve problems our own way and tell God what to do, we are no different than this father.

By reading v48, some would think that Jesus was too harsh to this desperate father. Besides, we must understand that a circus atmosphere was developing around Jesus by now. Wherever He went, people were following and wanting to see the next miracles of Jesus. To them, He was not much more than a traveling sideshow.

Listen, miracles of God can lead a person towards belief in Him and can validate a heavenly messenger. But God is not the only One who can perform miracles. Satan also can do that.

*2 Thessalonians 2:9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders*

Miracles from our Lord are obviously good things, but they should not form the foundation of our faith. We should not depend on them to prove God to us. In themselves, miracles cannot change people's hearts. The Israelites saw incredible signs of God's presence at Mount Sinai and even heard the very voice of God, yet a short time later they worshiped a gold calf. People tend to seek miracles over the miracle Giver. It shouldn't be.

However, there is something we must learn from this father. Once the Lord Jesus had spoken to him, the father took it at face value and trusted Him so much that he didn't head to home right away. I want all of you to notice a very important progress we should not miss.

- 1) When the father came to Jesus, he came with **CRISIS FAITH** – hoping that Jesus would come to his home and touch his son in person. – v49
- 2) After the word from the Lord, the nobleman's crisis faith became **CONFIDENT FAITH**: he believed Jesus' Word and had peace in his heart. – v50
- 3) The father was so confident that his son would be healed by the word of Jesus. His confident faith became **CONFIRMED FAITH** by the report of his servants. – v51 & 52

4) As soon as he arrived at his home, he told everyone in the house about Jesus, the Miracle Worker and they put their faith in Him. His confirmed faith now became **CONTAGIOUS FAITH** in Jesus. – v53

## **B. CASTING A DEMON OUT AT THE CAPERNAUM SYNAGOGUE**

*Mark 1:21-28 Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. 22 And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. 23 Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, 24 saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!" 25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" 26 And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27 Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." 28 And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.*

You can go to Capernaum today and see the remains of an ancient Jewish synagogue, which still has the foundation of this same building Jesus taught in.

The scribes of Jesus' day rarely taught with authority. They would often simply quote a variety of Rabbis' teachings. But Jesus taught with authority, because He Himself is the Word of God according to John 1.

*John 1:1-2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.*

Some of you may think that demon possession is something that happened during the time of the first century, but no more in this modern day. Think again. If you believe that there is a God and you'd better know that demonic activities are real and they are very much around in this decaying and demonic world.

To be precise, those who are born-again in the Lord Jesus are "the Holy Spirit possessed." Even as the Holy Spirit can live in us, so the people who deny God's Word and take a stand against it can be demon possessed, either consciously or unconsciously. Exposure to things such as spiritism, astrology, ungodly heavy metal music, horoscope, palm reading, New Age movement, occult practices, and illegal drugs are great opportunities for demons to have their invitations to human containers.

It took the presence of the Son of God to expose the demon in that synagogue. Jesus not only exposed him, but He also commanded him to keep quiet about His identity and to depart from the man. The Savior did not want, nor did He need, the assistance of satan and his cohorts to tell people who He is.

The demon clearly identified Christ's humanity – "Jesus of Nazareth" as well as His deity – "the Holy One of God". He also confessed great fear that Jesus might judge him and send him to the pit – a.k.a. abyss.

*James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!*

## **C. THE ONLY MISTAKE BY JESUS?**

*Mark 1:29-31 Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 But Simon's*

wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. 31 So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

Some Catholics believe that Peter was single until he died and they made him the first Pope. As far as the Bible is concerned, Peter was VERY married to have a mother-in-law. Somebody told me that healing Peter's mother-in-law was the only mistake Jesus had ever made. That is a terrible thing to say.

Peter's mother-in-law responded the way we should when Jesus blesses us. She immediately served Jesus out of gratitude.

#### **D. MORE HEALINGS AFTER SABBATH SUNSET**

*Mark 1:32-34 At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. 33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 34 Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.*

The people brought their sick and afflicted, and the Lord healed them all. The Greek verb 'brought' indicates that they "kept on bringing" people to Him, so that He must have gone to sleep at a very late hour.

Note that Jesus didn't pass Kentucky Fried Chicken buckets for donation while He was healing people or beg for faith pledge for healing? For those so-called healing ministers on Christian TV, if there are truly divine healers, they should have received the gifts of healing from the Holy Spirit without any payment to God. Then, why do they ask for money when they do so-called healing services? Better yet, shouldn't they go to hospitals and heal people for free? I don't see them doing that.

*1 Timothy 6:5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.*

#### **E. SPIRITUAL MORE THAN PHYSICAL**

*Mark 1:35-39 Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. 36 And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. 37 When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." 38 But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth." 39 And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.*

We would think that after such an exhausting Sabbath day and evening, the Lord would sleep late the next morning. But late hours did not keep Jesus from His appointed meeting with His Father early the next morning. Isaiah 50:4 gives us a prophetic description of God's righteous Servant as He meets the Father morning by morning. What an example for us to follow! It is no surprise that Jesus had such authority and power when His prayer life was so disciplined.

*Isaiah 50:4 The Lord God has given Me The tongue of the learned, That I should know how to speak A word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.*

Listen, Jesus did not need to pray because He was weak, but because He was strong. The source of His strength was His relationship with God His Father. Jesus knew that pressure and busyness should drive us towards prayer, not from prayer.

What did Jesus pray for? As much as anything, Jesus used this time of prayer for that close, intimate communion with God the Father that He longed for, which nourished and strengthened His soul.

Jesus knew the importance of solitary time with God. While it is good and important for us to join with others in the presence of God, there is much in our Christian life that can only be learned and experienced in a solitary place with God.

### ***F. APPLICATIONS***

**1) We need to seek the miracle Giver over miracles.**

We should not form the foundation of our faith around the miracles of God. They are mere glorious displays of His grace and kindness toward us.

**2) We need to move from crisis faith to confident faith, to confirmed faith, and to contagious faith in Christ.**

**3) We need to have a solitary place and time with God DAILY.**