

## Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Encounters with Jesus: "The Royal Official" John 4: 46-54 by Kathy Mathew, March 2021

In this our last study of "Encounters with Jesus", we look at another miracle. In the other three gospels miracles were a characteristic feature in the ministry of Jesus. In John's Gospel, he deliberately chooses only seven of these as his purpose is to demonstrate that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that we might believe. John is not content with calling them miracles, he calls them 'signs'. Each sign has a special significance. The first miracle was when Jesus turned water into wine and the healing of the official's son is the second miracle. Look through the rest of John's gospel and find the other five miracles when you have time.

In our study this week, Jesus responds to the official's request to heal his son, giving us an understanding of God's perfect timing and that distance is no barrier to Him.

**Q 1. Can you recall a time when you or a member of your family developed a serious illness or injury as a child? What were your feelings at the time?**

**Q 2. What are some of the reasons why people do not turn to God in times of difficulty? Have there been times in your life when you chose not to turn to God to help you through difficult times?**

**Q 3. From the passage that you have just read, what do we know about the official who came to see Jesus in Cana? Can you deduce how this man knew about Jesus? What was the journey from Capernaum to Cana like and how long do you think it would take the official to make his journey? What does this tell us about his faith?**

The royal official has to persist that Jesus come and heal his son who is close to death. He wouldn't take 'no' for an answer. Jesus' response was to rebuke not only the official's faith but also all Galileans who seemed to be more interested in signs and wonders rather than who Jesus was.

**Q 4. Many Galileans only believed because they had seen miracles. Do you think miracles help build faith? Why does only seeing miracles not build a mature faith?**

**Q 5. Have you experienced a miracle(s) in your life? What effect does this have on your life today?**

The distress of the official must have touched Jesus and although he did not agree to go with the man, he reassured him that his child would live. The official has no proof that his son has been healed but on returning home found him fully recovered and this had happened at just the time that Jesus had spoken the words of healing. As a result of this the man and all his extended household became believers. His faith had begun with seen miracles but it has now gone deeper. He believes Jesus' word and sees the results.

**Q 6. Wouldn't it be marvellous if we received immediately whatever we asked God for? How would our lives be different? However, would we begin to see Jesus in a different light? Would Jesus become more like a vending machine to us? What are your thoughts on this?**

Not every person will be healed or delivered from difficult times in their life (recall the session on 'Unanswered Prayer' in *The Prayer Course*). We are called as Christians to be persistent in prayer no matter what happens believing in a God of Love and Grace

**Q 7. What lessons about our faith and belief is John illustrating by reporting this miracle?**

John in writing his gospel, delivered much of his message about the nature of Jesus and who He was and is, through signs. In our lives can we be a sign to those around us that points to God?