

Sermon: Jesus – Healer  
John 4:43-5:15  
“How deep is your faith”  
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# St Phil's

As I read this chapter, I'm reminded of the story of a young man who came to church about 15 years ago. He had been diagnosed with a serious form of cancer. Given 12 months to live. He came to Church to find answers. And he found Jesus. He and his wife put their trust in Jesus in a very real way. Within 6 months, as the church continued to pray for him, he went for an updated scan and it was revealed his cancer was completely gone. It was, in the doctor's words, a miracle. Inexplicable. For us, it was an answer to prayer.

For 6 months, he and his wife continued in their faith. And then they drifted away. They had found faith. They had seen signs. But that faith didn't seem to move to a faith in the person of Jesus. They saw the signs, like Nicodemus, but not the kingdom of God.

At the end of chapter 4, Jesus left for Galilee. He had no honour in his own country. He was a travelling sideshow. People saw the signs, but not the kingdom of God. Judea, Jerusalem, Galilee – no one really SAW who he really was. Except the Samaritans! The first time people saw the real Jesus, and put their faith in the real Jesus, was in Samaria, outside Jesus' own country.

So we sort of know what to expect in this story now he is back in his own country.

- **Faith in times of crisis**

A royal official comes to Jesus. He's travelled over 20 kilometres from Capernaum to Cana. This royal official comes to this carpenter Jesus. He didn't come and say "Look Jesus, I'm very important. I know you can do things. Heal my son."

No. he doesn't do this. This important man comes all the way to see Jesus and, verse 47,

*"he begged him to come and heal his son who was close to death"*

He begged him: Jesus my son is dying. Please come and heal him.

This is a man in crisis. This is a man who is about to lose his child. He is desperate.

And he comes, in faith, to Jesus.

And Jesus says, verse 48:

- ***"Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will never believe."***

Now I don't believe he's saying "Oh! For goodness sake! You guys just want another party trick!"

No. I believe what he's saying is: "You need a sign. I understand that. You need help to believe. You need to see something to help you come to faith."

Jesus understands their needs. And he gives them a sign.

- **Ice skating.**

I love ice skating. I learned to skate at Macquarie ice rink. And you always remember the early days of learning things like ice skating. You strap on these horribly uncomfortable hire skates. You waddle over to the edge of the rink. And you look out and see these professional flying past. Going forwards. Going backwards. And you want to be like them! And then you see the novices. They get around OK. Not too fast. Occasionally falling over. And then you see the beginners. Stepping sideways. Holding on to the side for dear life. Flipping over onto their back every time a person goes past them. And that's you when you step out for the first time. Get down low, hold on up high. Just trying to move somewhere. To the next exit.

But do you know what? You're on the ice! You're actually out there. It doesn't look very professional. But you are out there. You're no longer on the side-lines. You're out there!

Jesus gives this man something to hold on to. Something to get him on the ice. He gives him a sign so that he can make the first step of real faith.

But does he? Turn to verse 53 –

- ***“he and his household believed.”***

He came to faith. With Jesus' help, with a miraculous sign, he and his household strapped on their hire skates and got on the ice. They came to faith. Is that OK? Is that enough? And what happened next? That's what we're left thinking. Then what?

So then we come to the next story in chapter 5 – the invalid at the pool of Bethesda. Here was a whole group of people – the blind, the lame, the paralysed – who would sit around this pool, waiting for an angel to stir the waters. They believed that the first person in the water when the waters were stirred, would be healed. Just to make clear, this is a superstitious gathering. Again, these are desperate people. These are people looking for anything to save them. Putting their faith in a myth, a legend, a magical pool.

And what's interesting is that Jesus approaches one of them. They don't come to him. He goes to them. He sees a man who had been an invalid for 38 years and says, verse 6:

“DO you want to get well?”

Of course, that's an unnecessary question. Of course he does! But he's too low to jump in the water when they stir. Everyone else gets in first.

So what does Jesus do?

Verse 8:

- ***Jesus says: “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.***

Just like that.

Ad what happens when Jesus performs this sign? Well, it was the Sabbath – the day of rest. No Jew was allowed to work on the Sabbath. And this healed man is caught carrying his mat – which is considered work!

And what does the man do? He says: “Some guy TOLD me to carry it! It’s nto my fault!”

“Which man?” they Jewish leaders ask him.

“I don’t’ know!”

Now, it’s almost like Jesus want sot get in trouble here – he FINDS the man, and says: “Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you”

And the man finds out that it’s Jesus and goes and tell the Jewish leaders.

So first of all, Jesus allows himself to be identified here. Almost on purpose it seems. But he also gives the man a warning. You may be healed, but there are worse things that can happen to you. You need to change your life. You need to deal with your sin. If you don’t, something worse will happen. He’s talking, of course, of eternity. These people want signs in the here and now, but they need to think about eternity. These people want healing in the here and now, but they need to think about eternity. They’ve put their faith in the signs and wonders, but they need to put their faith in Jesus. For the sake of their eternity.

- **The object of our faith**

OUR object of their faith needs to be the **person** of Jesus.

We may come to faith through signs and wonders, or through some special event. And that’s OK to come to faith lie that. But the object of our faith cannot be the sign or miracle itself. It must be the person behind the sign. Our object of faith must be Jesus.

Our immediate concerns, our immediate problems, our immediate needs – must give way to our greatest need – we need a King, a Saviour, for our eternal life.

Jesus doesn’t care where your journey begins. But what will you do with it?

Think of the wedding guests at Cana.

Think of Nicodemus

The Samaritan woman

The Royal official

The healing of the invalid.

Everything Jesus does in their life is to bring them to faith in HIM.

Now think about your own faith.

You’ve learned about Jesus.

You've come to understand him more and more.  
You've followed him.  
You've listened to him.  
You've modelled him to others.  
You've been encouraged and rebuked by him.  
You've come to church and listened to his Word.  
You've made him a part of your life.  
Perhaps you've seen his amazing work in your life.

But these are all **signs**.

What if Jesus doesn't do miracles in your life?  
What if Jesus doesn't give you healing when you ask?  
What if Jesus doesn't make your path in life easy?  
What if Jesus doesn't respond the way you expect?  
What if your church lets you down? Your leaders let you down? You let yourself down and feel like a failure?

Will you still trust the person Jesus? Will you have faith in Him as King, and Saviour, and as the one who holds your eternity in his hands?

Jesus wants us to trust him with the eternal.  
He wants us to trust him as King, Lord and Saviour. Wherever our journey of faith started, Jesus wants us to walk away today/tonight saying: "I trust you! Beyond the miracles. Beyond the 'moment' of experience.  
Jesus calls us to take that first step, even if it's a little step of faith. Even if it's because of a sign. Take that faith. That tiny faith. And hold on to it and **keep going**.

The official – verse 53 –

*"he and his household believed."*

Then what? That's what we're left thinking. Then what?

The invalid. Healed. Jesus sees him later and says: "Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you"  
Jesus is talking of the eternal. You've been healed. You've had the sign. Now, change your life. Take that small faith, that small amount of trust, and let God work change in your life. Because something worse may happen if you don't – something worse to do with your eternity!

Some of you are very faithful people. You have a very strong, mature faith. Keep going. Keep putting your faith in Jesus. Keep growing and maturing. Keep encouraging others.

Some of you have a tiny faith. A young faith. Maybe not a very mature faith. Let me say to you, and all those around you who may even judge you for your 'small' faith...

Jesus says: **It is enough.** If the object of your faith is Jesus – it is enough. It is enough for your eternity.

Among us are the weak and the strong. Infants and adults in the faith. Mature and immature. But if the object of your faith is the person Jesus, IT IS ENOUGH. Now keep going. You're on the ice. Hold on and keep going towards Jesus. And don't let others judge you for how good you look on the ice!