

*Re-membered by the Light*  
*John 4:46-54[5:1-18]*

As John is telling the story of Jesus, this story of a child being cured is a sign, the second sign of Jesus' ministry. He reminds us of the first sign, when Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding. Serving the best wine last. Both signs happened in Cana.

Turning water into wine and healing are two very different signs that happen in this community. That happen *to* the community. But both are extraordinary. Both break the laws of the physical world so that something in the spiritual world can be seen, revealed. And experienced. Join me as we "come and see," as we look for the Light to shine into and through this story, lighting up our lives and beings.

This is a healing story. Jesus cures a boy. The child is at the point of dying and Jesus gives him life. Stories of healing can be uncomfortable. We all have stories of people we know and love who pray but are not cured. So this story healing can reinforce our sense of failure, that we must not have had enough faith. Or that our prayers were somehow wrong. Or maybe we're just not good enough. So we may be tempted to keep this story at a distance.

But our invitation is to "come and see." To get close and let the Light shine! So let's look again...and see if we can discover another way to hear and see this story, one that offers us good news...and shows us the way into a fullness of our humanity.

One thing to stop and see is Jesus' response to this man who comes asking for help. The man works in the palace, so we assume he has some high-ranking job, that he's a person of means, with power and position. He's also a father whose son is dying. Whatever position or money he has, they can't help him here. But he's heard about Jesus. Perhaps he's heard about the community of Cana, the stories of a wedding where the best wine was served

last...and the way the community was changed after that wedding...and about the man who turned the water into wine.

The man seeks out Jesus and when he finds him, we can be sure he's relieved and full of hope and anticipation. And Jesus? There's no greeting. No sympathy expressed. No, "How can I help you?" Or "How did you hear about me?" Instead, Jesus hears the man's request for his son to have life and Jesus answers, "Unless you *all* see signs and wonders you *all* will not *trust*."

That's a rather curious response. A father is asking for his sick child to be cured and Jesus is talking about trust?! If we were watching this scene on a stage, we'd see the man, full of emotion, approaching Jesus and asking his question. And then we'd see Jesus turn away from the one man and talk to his disciples. The "you" is plural. On the stage we'd see two things going: the man anticipating a healing for his child; and a conversation Jesus is having with his disciples. A conversation about trust. We've heard some of that conversation about trust in prior stories.

The man trusts Jesus. He knows, in his flesh and spirit and with his actions, this man *knows* that Jesus *will cure* his son. So when Jesus tells him, "Go, your son will live," the man heads home. On his way, we watch as the household servants come running and meet their master with the good news that the little boy is indeed alive! They add the detail that the fever lifted at 1:00 in the afternoon. The child came to life at the 7<sup>th</sup> hour.

And here is John's cue for us that this sign is about creation. This is about the new creation that Jesus is revealing. Jesus, the Light of the world, God's Word-made-flesh is showing us the fullness of creation, the fullness of our humanity as part of creation.

When Jesus called the disciples, he invited them to "come and see." And as they have been moving from place to place, from encounter to encounter, Jesus is showing

them...he's showing us a new creation story...a story in which he, and we, are active participants.

At the 7<sup>th</sup> hour, the child is given life. In the story that immediately follows this one, Jesus heals a man by the Sheep Gate. That healing takes place on the Sabbath, the 7<sup>th</sup> day. In the Genesis 1 story, creation happens on days 1-6. On the 7<sup>th</sup> day God stops creating because creation is done. Yet here, at the 7<sup>th</sup> hour, on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, there are healings. What is Jesus telling us...showing us about creation?

Here are some things that I'm starting to see:

Jesus said, "your son will have life" and the boy had life. "Let there be light. And there was light." "In the beginning was the Word.... And the Word became flesh...." Notice that Jesus didn't lay hands on the child. He didn't say, "Get up and walk." He didn't pray over him. He didn't ask the boy's father to pray. Rather, Jesus spoke a word...and the boy had life. *It isn't just that Jesus is God's Word-made-flesh, but Jesus is speaking as part of God's creativity in the world, now. Jesus is speaking life into being. The word is being made flesh. The word becomes a reality.*

Another thing I'm seeing is something about the nature and power of trust. This trust that Jesus is showing the disciples...and us...is a trust that happens, not with our heads, but we trust with our hearts and minds, with our spirits and bodies. This man *trusted* the creativity and life-giving and life-changing power of Jesus. He headed home without any proof of healing. He didn't need proof or assurance because he trusted Jesus. He had heard the stories from Cana...he had witnessed the abundant life in that community...and he trusted that Jesus' word would make it so.

Too often I wait for proof. When I have proof that the Spirit of God is at work in my life, then, only then I trust. Here we see someone trusting that the Spirit of God can breathe

life into this impossible circumstance, that the breath of God can breathe life where we see death. And he walks away with the confidence that it will be so.

But this story isn't just about a child being cured and not dying. It's a sign...pointing us to something bigger and more profound. There is something here about the fullness of our humanity. This story is pointing us to a fuller vision for what is possible. Part of that vision is seeing that as long as people among us are sick and dying, creation is incomplete. In John's creation story, it may be the 7<sup>th</sup> day, but creation is still happening. Jesus is showing us that God's Spirit is continuing to breathe new life. It isn't enough that we're *not* dead, creation is about having *life*. It is about being given life—abundant and thriving, life! Communities of joy and grace.

The healing in this story is a sign. It's the means for Jesus to show us what's possible when we created into the fullness of our humanity, when we are living into the fullness of our spirited and fleshed beings. In this story, we see the leveling of social hierarchies in the new creation. A man at the top of the social ladder, working in the most powerful space in the community is brought to his knees. In this new creation, the walls that separate "us" from "them" disappear. It doesn't matter that Jesus is a Jew and the man a Gentile. It doesn't matter that he has a home with servants and Jesus is an itinerant preacher. The man recognizes something in Jesus. The spirited being of this man recognizes in the spirited being of Jesus a shared identity: they share the same spirit; their shared breath comes from Creator God. It is from this place as one beloved child of God to another, that we see his humility, his love, and his willingness to ask for what he wants.

We're watching and following Jesus so that we can "come and see." And for the most part we know and trust that Jesus has the Creator's life-giving power. But we're likely to think that it's reserved for Jesus. That this thriving, abundant, life-changing power and reality

is meant for Jesus to give, possible for him, not for us. But listen again to what John writes in chapter 1, beginning v 10: “He, [the Word], was in the world, and the world came into being through him.... To all who received [the word], who trusted in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.”

Dear ones, it is a mystery and a miracle. Surely this story is inviting us to receive and trust God’s Word spoken into the world. We are being shown a sign. This healing is a sign...it is not the thing. It’s pointing our eyes toward the new creation, a creation in which we are active participants!

But how do we receive and trust the word the way this man did? This is when we remember that Jesus talked to the disciples about trust. He didn’t talk to the one man, but to the community of disciples. The man had already witnessed the aliveness in the community of Cana.

We receive and we trust God’s creative word in the world as a community. Together, as a community, we remember—we remember with and for each other—that God’s word of life has been spoken into the world. And we remember—we remember with and for each other—that *we are children of God*, siblings of Jesus, born of flesh and born of spirit. We too have the power to speak God’s word of life and creativity into the world.

Are we willing to trust God’s ongoing creation in the world, a creation and creativity in which we, as a fellowship of hope, are participants? Are the words we speak to each other words of life? Do our words as a community reflect our trust in the creativity and possibility of God’s Word? As a community, in our collective body and spirit, are we trusting the power of God’s creating word to us and for us?

May we, as a community, claim and receive God's creating Word in our bodies and beings.

As a community, may we trust that God's Word is creating us into a community of aliveness and generosity, of abundance and grace, of hope and love.

May we, at every opportunity, speak words of life to each other...for each other.

May it be so.