

Victory of the Lamb – March 31, 2019 – What if

John 4:46-54 What if we believed without seeing – Pastor Bill Limmer

Most parents will do just about anything for the kids. And when someone does something special for their child, parents melt and beam often at the exact same time. This past week a little girl named Lilly took a Bucks Jersey to be signed by Giannis. Who politely obliged. And then the little girl wanted to do something for Giannis, inf act she wanted to do it for a long time. She wanted Giannis to have some of her artwork and so she brought it along and after the jersey was signed she gave it to Giannis. Who received the gift with great honor. He got up from the table he was sitting at and went around and hugged Lilly and began to have a conversation with her. Parents and others were so touched as cell phones recorded video of the interaction. Lilly and her parents will remember that day for a long time.

As we lean into God's Word this morning, we discover a father who was willing to do just about anything for his son: John 4:46 **Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.** So Jesus is back in Cana where he rescued the events coordinator of the wedding by changing water into wine. When a father of a sick boy heard that Jesus was back in the area he went to go see him. The distance he traveled was about the same distance as it is for us to go from here to Burlington, minus the car. This man was a royal official. This meant this was a man who was rich, famous, military background, hero, family the whole nine yards . . . except his son, his dearest treasure was sick, not with the common cold but was so sick that he was close to death. The boy had no mobility, he was gray, he couldn't lift his head, he found fun in nothing but pain in everything. This man was besides himself as he saw life leaving his son. And so he made the trip, probably by horse, to see Jesus because he had a God sized problem. As he made the trip his heartbeat in fearful hope as he prayed hoping that Jesus would come and heal his son before he dies

Sometimes God will allow hardships in our lives to bring us to him. This man wouldn't have come to Jesus if his life is going great. Do you have a pain or a problem in your life? This could very well be God's megaphone calling you to come him. If so, going to Jesus is what you need to do.. It was the middle of October in 2003. A ten year old girl was running out of steam as she lay in her hospitable bed at Children's hospital. After coding a couple of times on the helicopter flight from Green Bay to Children's, after coding numerous times during surgery, when she came out of surgery she had three medical poles that held over 40 different tubes that ran into her body, her temperature went to over 107 degrees, the doctors offered experimental medicine but said it could be a placebo as well. A couple of hours later the doctors came in and said, we can't offer the experimental medicine because too much is wrong with her and it will skew the study. All that was left time and a prayer just like for the royal official.

John 4:49 The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." ⁵⁰ "Go," Jesus replied, "your son will live." Positionally in the culture the royal official would be considered more in power than Jesus. But the man humbled himself realizing he needed help, he needed mercy, he needed grace. His words were simple, and probably all he could say. It was a heartfelt exhausted begging, pleading, crying, prayer request. And with authority here is the response to the prayer: **"Go," Jesus replied, "your son will live."** And the response to the response: **The man took Jesus at his word and departed.** The father had originally come looking for Jesus to come back home with him so that Jesus could perhaps heal his son. At that time, he didn't realize he could heal from a distance. God always does a "little more" goes

“an extra mile.” And so that man departs **Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.** The man left in faith in God with a healed son because God said so. Romans 10:17 **Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ.** What the royal official knew about Jesus would probably fit on a 3X5 index card and there would still be plenty of white space. But the man knew that Jesus had authoritative power. He could say something and it was so. The man acted on what he knew about Jesus.

Here is that part: **While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living.** ⁵² **When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, “Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him.”** ⁵³ **Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.”** Is there a word in this paragraph that puzzles you or blows you away? Maybe not. But the word that caught my attention was “yesterday.” Yesterday. It was one in the afternoon, and with or without a horse this man could have made it back home even if it was winter by dark or close to dark. Apparently, the man left Jesus but didn’t go straight home. What? Was he too tired physically, mentally, emotionally to go another step? How did he sleep, did he sleep. After the stress of it all, did he just need a beer and he ended up staying the night Ritz Cana? Whatever the case, he was on the way back when some super excited servants of his met him on the way with the great news that his boy was living! When did that happen? Yesterday afternoon at one. And the royal official, the dad knew, that this was the exact time at which Jesus told him, **“your son will live.”** Wow. Pretty amazing. Little light bulb moment there.

If you have ever been in a place in life when you needed to hear good news in a dire situation you know the sound of your heart beating wildly that arises when someone is walking to you to bring you news, because you don’t know if the news will be good or bad. Back to 2003. So the doctors withheld the experimental medicine because it would skew the study. And all that was left was a little bit of time and a whole lot of heartfelt prayer. The next evening the little girl’s church of about 1500 held a prayer service. And people came from all over the greater GB/DePere community. Many lumps in the throat, many crying, all begging, all pleading, some so broken they couldn’t say a word. And as they prayed, at the very hour, the little girl’s vital signs took a turn for the better. It was at that exact time that God began the miracle healing process for the little girl. You know how I know it was the exact time, because that little girl is my little girl. Praying in Green Bay healing in Milwaukee, you don’t have to see to believe.

Jesus cares about your kids. He told his disciples, let the little children come to me and do not hinder them because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Jesus cares not only about your kids, he cares about you. He not only cares about you physically, mentally, and emotionally, but also spiritually. **John 4:53 Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and his whole household believed.** Our faith isn’t based on what we can see. Our faith is based on who God is. Once again, God did more than was requested, more than expected. The little boy was not only healed but the whole family came to faith. The royal official came for his son, but Jesus came for the entire family. And the family came to faith. You know that Jesus has come for you as well, right?

Have you ever had a child who was sick? A child who didn’t make it. I still remember when my grade school principal came into my fourth-grade room and told my teacher that my classmate, Mike Brown had died. I remember the tears, the emptiness, the confusion. If that’s you, or someone you know, know that God knows exactly what that is like. It is now how God intended things to be but he is not at the mercy of our circumstances. He sent his son. He had hopes and dreams for him as well. God’s plan and

dreams for his Son was to die. And that is super offensive until you understand that God sent his son to heal and die you. And then it is a super crazy, radical kind of love. The healing that Jesus brings is not just for this life but also for eternal life – in the thing that we can't see just yet. You see, it is too small a thing for Jesus to be here for you just for this life. He is here for you for the next life too. God always goes a little farther than we ask or expect.

And while Jesus did die for us, he didn't stay dead. Who would want to worship a dead person? Who would give their life for a dead person? Who would pray to a dead person? Jesus said, John 11:25 **"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;** We have limitations, God doesn't. God's grace is unlimited. When we see our limitations, our brokenness, we understand the absolutes of God – his commandments are exact, his promises are sure, his ways and timetable are entirely his own, and his provision is complete.

When my kids were little, every now and then they would get sidewalk rash from wiping out. Their would be an interruption of screaming and tears as the scrapes turned red and the blood began to flow. I would run out to them and kneel down by them and ask: what happened? And I would ask them, where does it hurt. And I would wipe away the tears from their eyes. What has skinned not only your leg but your heart? What has you screaming and crying? What happened? Where does it hurt? Know that Jesus is with you and this is what will happen one day, **Revelation 21:4 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death'^[a] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.**" Our faith isn't based on what we can see. Our faith is based on who God is. When you can't see a way, there is still God's way. Because of the resurrected Jesus, like the royal official, you can believe without seeing.