

ALL SAINTS CATHEDRAL MORNING GLORY PRAYER AND DEVOTION

TOPIC:The faith of a noble man

TEXT:John 4:46-53

SERMON NOTES

Faith defined-Examples and importance

- Substance of things hoped for (Hebrews 11:1)
- Evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1b)
- The foundation of our spiritual life that determines our strength,just the way a foundation of a building guarantees its strength
- A medium of exchange between the natural and the supernatural realm,just the way money is in the physical realm
- The only spiritual ingredient that pleases God(Hebrews 11:6)

Background to the Text

John 4 begins with the departure of Jesus from Judea to Galilee because the emphasis among the Judeans was on how many he baptized ,not on his main purpose on earth.

- God's presence will depart whenever emphasis is on anything other than God's priorities
- God's emphasis is on quality not quantity; individual believers not how many they are.

On his way to Galilee, he went through Samaria where he was delayed for 2 days following his ministry to the Samaritan woman and her subsequent testimony that brought the whole community to see Jesus and believe in him.

- God will abide with those who give him attention and focus on what is important to him

Prior to his arrival to Galilee, where he had been raised up, he expected a cold welcome from his kinsmen.

- Being acquainted with His Humanity and not with His divinity affected their attitude towards him and consequently their faith in him.(John 1:11;John 1:45-46)
- Being familiar with church tradition and programmes to the extent that one takes God for granted insulates one from growing in the area of faith(Romans 1:21-22)

Galilee was the location Christ's ministry headquarters, a place which was of a cosmopolitan nature, being a beehive of trade and a gathering place for business people from all corners of the known world at that time(Galilee of the Gentiles-Isaiah 9:1b)- a perfect center for the great commission(Matthew 28:19)

- God's priority is, and continues to be the great commission and should be the priority of every local church. It is what attracts him, the object of our faith (Hebrews 12:2)

The Galileans were addicted to His miracles and not him as such (John 4:45)

- Miracles excite and inspire faith but do not sustain faith. They are an appetizer, not the main course meal.
- Israel experienced Miracle after Miracle in Egypt and in the wilderness but perished in the wilderness because miracles could not sustain their faith, they just inspired faith for a moment and once the excitement of the moment was over, they would go back to their normal complaining and murmuring personality. (Psalm 106:7-26)

On arrival in Galilee, he went to the place he had turned water to wine –why?

- to remind them of What God had done in the past; that He is the same yesterday, today and forever.
- He desired that they learn to focus not on the act but on Him. (John 4:46)
- Psalm 103:2-Forget not his benefits.
- Forgetting what He did in the past and continues doing short-circuits faith.
- He desired that out of the turning of the water to wine, they would see Him in the water as the word and in the wine as the outcome of the word.
- Everything God does, is for the purpose of revealing Himself so faith can grow, because faith comes from the revealed word (Christ himself)

The royal officer-a typical Galilean also addicted to miracles

- He wanted a fix for his problem, not necessarily to believe in Christ but to have the problem solved, to get a miracle.
- The fact that he was Royalty did not insulate him from challenges that only God can solve, A reminder that every level comes with its challenges that only God can handle, hence a need for a consistent, daily walk of faith in the God of the impossible whether challenges are present or not.

Christ's response to this urgency seemingly discouraged focus on miracles

- Because miracles do not sustain faith.
- They can give an initial dose of faith
- Only communion with the Word (Christ) sustains and increases faith.
- To illustrate the Limitation focusing on miracles other than the God of miracles, Matthew 12:38-40, is an account of his insulting rebuke to those who asked him for a sign to prove himself.
- He focused them on the Jonah experience in the belly of the whale which prefigured Christ's death, burial and resurrection.
- Focusing on Christ and him alone crucified is the birthplace for abiding faith because if he went through that suffering for us, there is nothing he cannot accomplish in us and for us

The Lord finally speaks the word about the Royal officer's child's healing and the officer believes

- showing the word as the raw material for abiding faith, not the acts(Miracles)
- The Lord watches over his word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12).
- The word is the container of faith, our believing is what permits the word to work.
- He sent his word to heal the officer's child, but the officer had to give this word permission to work through his believing (John 4:50)
- Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God(John 10:17)