

Jesus passed through Samaria on his way to Galilee. For the past three weeks we have studied his encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob. There was a remarkable response in her village to her testimony, and then a more remarkable response by the villagers to their encounter with Jesus himself. Later on, at another Samaritan village, he was not so well received (Luke 9:51-56). They continue their journey to Galilee and reach Cana, the town of his first miracle.

: 43-46a *After the two days he departed for Galilee. (For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.) So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast. So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine.*

Here Jesus quotes a familiar proverb concerning a prophet in his hometown. However, instead of being repudiated, the Galileans welcomed him home. They had been at the Passover Feast in Jerusalem because all Jews who can manage it try to get to three key feasts in Jerusalem each year. They are Passover, Pentecost (or Feast of Weeks), and the fall feasts: Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashana), Day of Atonement (Yom Kipper), and Feast of Tabernacles (Succoth).

: 46b-54 *And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. So Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." And he himself believed, and all his household. This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.*

Capernaum was as close to a hometown that Jesus had. He no longer returned to Nazareth, but to Capernaum, the home of Peter and Andrew, when he wanted to get refreshed.

We do not know whom the official was that went to Cana to find Jesus. News of Jesus return certainly went ahead of him, so that the townspeople of Capernaum knew that he was back in Galilee. Could he have been a member of Herod's court, or possibly a Roman official, or was he a Jewish leader who was familiar with Jesus from his earlier visits?

In Matt 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10, Jesus heals the servant of a Centurion living in town. Some scholars have suggested this was the same healing, but the location, language, circumstances, and diseases are different, so they must be different events. Certainly the first may have prompted the second, but they are not errors in reporting the same event.

Matt. 8:5-13 *When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.”*

And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.”

But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.

Jesus came to save us all. Last week, not only the woman at the well was saved, but many of the villagers found salvation in Him as well. They said: *Now we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.*

In this episode he saves the son’s life, but also the father, and then the whole household, finds salvation through faith in Him. Cyril of Alexandria says:

The one command of the Savior heals two souls. In the official, the Savior’s command brings about unexpected faith even as it also rescues the child from bodily death... When the official learned that the sick child’s recovery coincided exactly with Jesus command, he is saved with his whole house. He attributes the power of the miracle to the Savior Christ, and he is brought to a firmer faith.