

Jesus and the Nobleman of Capernaum *(Pastor John T. Kurian)*

When Jesus is in Galilee, he heals the son of the Nobleman. The illustration of the nobleman of Capernaum shows a gradual development of belief. Though it is not stated, the man is called as a nobleman either for the largeness of his estate or the extent of his power. The position or title of honor is not a firm security to people or families from the assaults of sickness or death. The stages of the development of faith in the nobleman are as clearly drawn as in the case of the woman in Samaria.

The nobleman is not a theologian and probably not a religious person. He is simply a human being in desperate need, and he appeals to Jesus as he would appeal to anyone else. It is a long distance from where this nobleman lived in Capernaum to Cana, where Christ is now; yet the sickness of this man's son created a desire that compelled him to go so far to reach Christ. He could have sent his servant to Christ but he comes by himself in order to show his respect for Christ. The greatest men, when they come to God, must become humble. At first, his faith regards Jesus as merely a worker of miracle that Jesus could heal his son who was at the point of death. He requested Jesus to come down with him to Capernaum and affect the cure on his son. The father is so deeply anxious for the welfare of his son that no other consideration weighs upon him. Jesus says, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." It was difficult for the official to leave Jesus whom he had hoped to bring to his house.

The nobleman did not think that Jesus would be able to heal his son at a distance. He begged Jesus to come down and heal his son. His faith was just like Naaman who came to Elisha for healing. Also, his faith was weaker than the centurion, who said, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof." (Mathew 8:8). Real faith in Christ rests upon the fact that he who is God became a Man, and in getting to know him, the Son, we are able to know the Father. Jesus did not perform any miracle in Samaria yet they heard his message, saw his behavior, and accepted him as the Savior of the world. There are so many people who want to see some sort of outward demonstration of power in order to believe in God. Jesus Christ wants to be received and trusted because of what he is in himself, apart from any temporal benefit that might come from knowing him. The work of the Holy Spirit today is to make Christ known to men and women in order that they may trust him as their Savior.

The nobleman now believes not merely the reports of the power of Jesus but he believes upon the word of Jesus and accepts Jesus as his Saviour. Previously, the man had known enough about Jesus to hear him as a wonder worker, but now he goes his way. His countenance is no longer sad and he has peace. He is not yet reached the full belief to be described in verse 53, but it is true belief because it is based on the word of Jesus. The word of God has power and bares fruit of faith and obedience. Then the nobleman's faith increases to a greater level when he encounters his servants on the way. The child's recovery is sudden and not gradual and the healing is at the very hour when Jesus gave the promise of hope. Now he sees no sign or wonder, and yet believes the wonder done. Like the boy, we have never physically met Jesus but that does not limit his ability to minister to our needs. Faith is a living thing that grows and develops.

Just like the nobleman, it is good to furnish ourselves with all the corroborating proofs and the evidences that may be, to strengthen our faith in the word of Christ, that the faith may grow to a full assurance. The healing of the boy brought salvation to the noble man. He believes the word of Jesus to some extent and now he believes as the Messiah promised. Not only the noble man, but also the whole family believes in Jesus Christ. Christ has many ways of gaining the heart of the sinner. Christ here gives an instance that not only could heal, but also could heal with so much ease. The cure is sooner and happens in Christ's way. His power is exerted by his word. Christ said, "Thy son liveth" and the man believes him.