

Sermon Title: Your Son Lives!
Scripture Text: John 4:43-54

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 4-8-18

I told you that today we would be returning to the Gospel According to Mark, and I'm going to keep that promise, sort of; I'm going to mention Mark several times this morning, but—as shocking as it might be—I actually have some standards. One of them has to do with how much I love preaching my way through books of the Bible, and I don't ever want to give you anything that is half-baked; I want to make sure that I've been able to spend the amount of time that I need to spend to do that. And you probably know I'm leaving for Russia tomorrow morning, and you know what that week is like before you take a big trip—it seems like you've got so many things to do, and this week has been, probably, the worst of any of those leading up to the big-trip weeks. And so, I was thinking about how to make good use of our time, and I figured out a way to cash the proverbial check twice, because next weekend, I will be teaching a class on the entire life of Christ, so I've been thinking that way, preparing that way, reading that way, and looking at the big picture of the flow of the life of Christ, and I realized that there is a passage that supplements perfectly where we are in Mark.

I've told you in Mark's gospel that we're in the section which is kind of the backbone of the ministry of Jesus during His first coming: We call it the Great Galilean Ministry; it's about a year and a half that He spent mostly in Galilee. And I thought, how good to help us keep the flow of the context and understanding everything by taking you somewhere else, and we'll reinforce what we're learning in Mark.

As you read any portion of any of the gospels--Matthew or Mark or Luke or John—you know why every single paragraph is there, and if you need a refresher, it's what John said at the end of his gospel: John 20:30-31—"Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (NASB, and throughout, unless otherwise noted). Mark said the same thing when he began his gospel: This is "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Now, all this stuff is written for you to believe that He *is* the Christ—the Savior, the Messiah—that He *is* the Son of God, and to have life in His name.

Now, you know that Jesus stated His own plan for spreading the message of salvation; He gave this just before He ascended to heaven. We see it in Acts 1:8; that's where He says, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you"—that happens in the next chapter—"and you shall be My witnesses"—in other words, you're going to testify on behalf of Me—"both in"—now, look at this progression—"in Jerusalem, and in all Judea"—that's the area surrounding Jerusalem—"and in Samaria"—that's the other side of the tracks...that's where those people are that you don't like, that you don't get along with—"and even to the remotest part of the earth"—that's the people that you don't even know well enough to hate yet. That's His plan.

So Jesus gives the instructions, but I want to show you something today: He also sets the example. This will, indeed, augment our studies and Mark. We're going to be in John Chapter 4, and as John has put his gospel together—and it's the most different; Matthew, Mark, and Luke, they call them the "Synoptic Gospels"; they're from the same view, they're more the chronological story of the life and ministry of Jesus. John's is more of a theological

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presentation of who Jesus is, but he puts it together in a very orderly way. And in John 2 and in John 3, Jesus had dealt with Jews in Jerusalem and in Judea, in the area surrounding there. Then, in John Chapter 4—the first 42 verses—Jesus took His message to Samaritans.

And I want to show you a scene today that's going to round out His example. Yeah, He preached in Jerusalem, did miracles in Jerusalem. He broke every custom and legalistic rule of the leaders of the Jews of His days by intentionally going through Samaria; when they had to go from Jerusalem in the south or Judea in the south up to Galilee in the north, they would add a whole lot to their trip and cross the Jordan River twice, just so they wouldn't ever set foot on Samaritan soil—that's how much they loved their neighbors (see Lev. 19:28). And Jesus did an in-your-face kind of thing to go through Samaria and then, guess what follows right after that. Guess what's in our story for today. John 4:43-54, Jesus is going to deal with a Gentile. Now, true, He didn't go to the uttermost parts of the earth to take the gospel of this guy—he came to Him. But the example is there.

So think of it as a flashback to where we are in Mark Chapter 3, and I want show you how this fever pitch of excitement about Jesus got rolling in Galilee. The theme of this is, "Your son lives"—you'll see that right in the text—and here's our outline: Verses 43 through 45, the circumstances for a miracle; 46 to 49, the candidate for a miracle; and 50 to 54, the consequences of a miracle.

We start with the circumstances of the miracle, Verse 43—"After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee." What two days? Well it's in the context, takes you back to verse 40; Jesus stopped off briefly in Samaria, He reaped an amazing harvest of many souls in the city of Sychar, where He visited, met that woman at the well, and she was His immediate evangelist. His disciples heard, beyond doubt, the testimony of the Samaritans who had believed and that Jesus—they should now be beginning to understand—is "the Savior of the world" (Jn. 4:42; cf. 1 Jn. 4:14). So, now He's come into Galilee; He'd been down in Jerusalem—we'll tell you why in a minute—and verse 44 of John 4: "For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country." Now, "his own country" is the region of Galilee; that's where Nazareth, is that's where He had grown up. So this verse might seem a little obscured until you see how it fits in; it sounds, at first blush, like Jesus is saying, "I want to go where I don't have any honor. I want to go where people won't listen to Me." It sounds like He's not expecting to get as much honor if He goes to Galilee, and that's the reason that He's going there, and that doesn't make sense at first. But, when you understand that that's exactly what He meant, and you see there's a good reason for it, it *will* make sense.

If you look back at the context of John, you can make a connection. The beginning of this chapter—Chapter 4, Verses 1-3—it says: "Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), He left Judea and went away again into Galilee." Now, put that in context: The Pharisees had gone out to be baptized at the Jordan River by John, right? And remember how John welcome them? "I'm so honored that you, my esteemed rabbis and scribes, have come and we're pleased to have you among us today..." That's not how it went, was it? How did he greet them? "You bunch of snakes! You brood of

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vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Now, go and get and bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance!" (see Matt. 3:7-8; cf. Acts 26:20). In other words—"abandon everything you believe, admit you were wrong, and repent!"—that's how *he* treated them. John was a major thorn in the side of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Well, *now*, they're hearing that Jesus has *an even greater* following than John, and they know that He was preaching exactly the same message that John preached. So, Jesus went to Galilee saying, "A prophet has no honor in his own country"—it wasn't because things weren't going well in the disciple-building category; it wasn't because He had failed in Judea—He went there because, in Galilee He wouldn't have to deal with the same political hysteria that constantly surrounded Him in Judea and in Jerusalem. If He'd remained there, He would have brought on a premature collision with the Pharisees and created a crisis which was not supposed to happen until the end of His ministry. So, He was willing to go up to Galilee, where He was *fully* aware of the shallowness of the reception that He would get there—that there would be massive numbers of people, and very few conversions. Most of the people who came to Jesus during His ministry didn't come to Jesus—they came to the miracles.

So, He was willing to put up with that; this was part of building His Messiah-resume, if you will. He was already fully the Messiah, but this is demonstrating the will of God; He was in charge of every detail of His life and ministry, and by going to Galilee, Jesus was continuing, according to the Father's plan, so that—based upon everything He'd done there—when He would return to Judea when the time what was right, He would go to the cross at *exactly* the time of God's chosen plan (see Jn. 7:30; 8:20).

So, Verse 45—"When He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast." So before this, Jesus had been in Jerusalem; He was there for the Passover and in the seven days following, which is the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:18-19; 23:14-17)—many from Galilee would always come to Jerusalem for the Passover—they had seen miracles that He had done there, so He was welcomed back in Galilee...but never truly accepted, by the majority, for who He really was. They *loved* Jesus the miracle-worker, but they didn't honor Him as they should (see Jn. 5:23). Eventually, they were going to grumble when they didn't like something that He said—you know, the "commitment" part—and they would finally walk away from Him in droves; you can read about that in John Chapter 6.

I just wanted to share this with you because this is the beginning of what we call this Great Galilean Ministry of about 18 months. John covers, in his gospel, very little of this. He only deals with the healing we're going to look at today, one other healing, and the feeding of the 5,000. But you are probably more familiar with things that Jesus did in His Great Galilean Ministry than anything else, because there's so much recorded of it in the other three gospels. So, they had gone to the feast, they had seen it—that's recorded back and Chapter 2 of the Gospel of John—and most of their response to Him when He came back to Galilee was a superficial pseudo-faith based upon fascination with miracles, but lacking true repentance. So there's the circumstances for this miracle; Jesus comes back to Galilee and the people are going to respond to Him similarly to how they did in Jerusalem earlier, but by and large, they're not going to understand who He truly is.

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Secondly, let's meet the candidate for this miracle. John 4:46—"Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine"—that's the first miracle that John included in his gospel, John Chapter 2—"And there was a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum." Now, you might have to consult the book of Maps; you know, after the book of Revelation comes the book of Concordance and then the book of Maps and then the back cover of your Bible. Cana was the original hometown of Nathanael, James, and John—James and John being the sons of Zebedee, or the "sons of thunder," as Jesus nicknamed them (Mk. 3:17). It was the place where Jesus did that first miracle—turning the water and wine at the wedding feast. This is a "royal official"; he's someone probably attached to the service of Herod Antipas, and I'll tell you who he is in a moment—he ruled that area. This guy who's called a "royal official" was probably something like a cabinet member to the local Roman governor; that's what his royal official status would be.

Now, let me give you a little background here: Who is Herod Antipas? Well, you remember King Herod—the one who humbly called himself "Herod the Great, the king of the Jews"? He's the one who was reigning in that region on behalf of Rome when Jesus was born. Herod the Great was an amazing man, both for his brilliance and his wickedness—he fits both of those very well. When he died, which was in, probably, the winter of 5 / 4 B.C., his mini-kingdom was divided between his three sons. Now, if that made a brain cell fire your thinking—"Wait a minute, he was the guy, when Jesus was born (Matt. 2:1), how was Jesus born "Before Christ"? Because 5 / 4 B.C. is "Before Christ," right?" Well, OK, in adjusting the calendars, they swung and missed—there's an error there. Jesus was born before Christ—5 / 4 B.C., that time, and King Herod was still there, died shortly after that.

Now, when King Herod died, his little mini-kingdom—under the Romans—was split between his three sons. Archelaus ruled Judea, Samaria, and part of Idumea—that's south of Judea—from 4 B.C. until A.D. 6 (Matt. 2:22). Apparently, he wasn't very good at keeping things together kingdom-wise. He was deposed and there were a series of Roman procurators who succeeded one another; one of them who succeeded Archelaus was a guy named Pontius Pilate. He's the one who the Jews manipulated to get Roman authority for the crucifixion of Jesus (Jn. 18:31). Then there is King Herod's second son, Phillip—sometimes called "Philip the tetrarch" (Lk. 3:1)—he ruled the area east and northeast of the Sea of Galilee, so Philip's territory was pretty much out of view of most of Jesus's ministry.

And then, there is Herod Antipas. Herod Antipas—and it's interesting, "Antipas," if the name is to be translated, it means "against all"...against all odds, against all people, against all circumstances, I don't know, but, it's just an interesting name. Herod Antipas ruled Galilee—that's the northern part, with Samaria in between Judea in the south, Galilee in the north, that's Israel; he ruled Galilee and Perea—that's the area to the east of the Jordan River from there—and he ruled from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39, so he was a very stable ruler. And, when you read anywhere in the gospels except the birth of Jesus, and you see the name Herod, it's referring to Herod Antipas. It's almost certain that this "royal official" was one of, like the cabinet, I said, of Herod Antipas. We know for sure he is high up because of his title—"royal official"—he's high up in the Gentile power structure, and whoever he was, this Gentile was aware of who Jesus was, and you can imagine, these guys did know who Jesus was because their job was

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to keep the peace among the Jews so the Rome wouldn't be upset with them and they wouldn't lose their little grip on their little part of the world (see Jn. 11:48), so, he knew who Jesus was and he sought Him out. He had at least heard who Jesus was; maybe he had seen for himself, maybe not. But anyway, he has a son who is "sick at Capernaum." Capernaum is about 15 to 20 miles away from Cana of Galilee. It was not an easy journey from Cana to Capernaum because the terrain is pretty hilly in some of those places. So, now, we've explained to you in Mark that Jesus established His headquarters in Galilee at the home of Peter and Andrew in Capernaum, so this is before that—this is when He just came there, He hasn't yet established His place in Capernaum; He, for some reason, came back to Cana. This guy makes the trek—a difficult trek—from Capernaum up into the hills to Cana because his son is deathly ill. So this sets up an interesting circumstance: This is going to be the first of Jesus's recorded long-distance miracles, because He wasn't present where He did the miracle. Try to fathom that! That's pretty cool.

Verse 47—"When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him"—so he went from Capernaum all the way up to Cana—"and was requesting Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death" (NASB, 1977). He was near death, and the text refers to him as "*the* son"—the way it's worded, it's likely he was an only son, and another word that's used to refer to this son describes him as a "young son." So he couldn't even bring his little boy to Jesus because he was that sick—he couldn't even carry him to Jesus. So "when he heard that He had come out"—"Come, please, heal my son. He's at the point of death." Notices it says he was "requesting him to come down." "Was requesting"—that's worded to make it clear that he was *repeatedly* asking Jesus to come to Capernaum to heal his son. So he was persistent about this. And he has no standing with the Jews; he wouldn't have been welcome in a synagogue. He had to seek Jesus out, and maybe he was showing his ID card as a Roman royal official, we don't know, but he kept coming and asking. He had enough faith to believe that Jesus could heal his son, if He wanted to. There was certainly a dose of desperation in his motive. You ever had a really sick child? You'd do anything to stop the pain and to bring about recovery.

Now, obviously, he didn't expect Jesus to do the miracle the way He did it. And Jesus first responds—after being asked many times—in an unusual way: "So Jesus said to him, 'Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe' " (vs. 48). And you're saying, "Well, wait a minute—it seems like the guy believed enough to make a hard walk to climb up into the mountains to come and find You..." Well, here's the key to that. The word "you" is plural. Yes, Jesus said it to him, but He was talking everybody present. And that tells us there were other people present. That's why the modern translations added "*you people*"—they put in "people" to make sure that you knew Jesus wasn't just talking to this guy who made the request; He heard the request and He's going to respond to the request, but He was speaking collectively to the Galileans to make a point: "You came to see signs and wonders." Those are two different ways of describing miracles. A "sign" points to something; that describes a miracle according to its purpose—it is to point you to God (Ex. 34:10), it's to point you to who Christ is (Jn. 10:38). The word "wonder" is never used without the word "sign"—it describes the way a miracle operates; the way a miracle operates is, it strikes awe in people. People see it and they say, "Wow! Did you see that? That guy was blind for 38 years, and he can see!

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This guy hasn't walked in his adult life—he's walking!" Of course, the Pharisees then get upset that he's carrying his little pallet with him—his little roll-up bed. But what Jesus is saying is, "You simply will not believe except for the signs and the wonders." Now, that's how the New American Standard translators rendered a double negative in Greek; they said "you simply will not believe."

Greek isn't like English. When we put two negatives together, they cancel each other. If I say "not never," what does that mean? "Sometimes." It means the opposite—they negate each other, the negatives do. In Greek, double negatives reinforce each other, so our idiom would be something like, "No way are you going to believe anything but the signs and wonders. You're coming for the miracles." He was saying that the spiritual temperature of these people, in general, was such that their so-called faith only showed up when there was an immediate, earthly, physical reward in it for them. Now, there *were* individual exceptions; some people did believe, and were about to see one of them here. But that was His general assessment of the people of Galilee at that time.

Now, look at Verse 49: "The royal official said to Him"—we don't know how many times he asked; finally, Jesus is addressing him, and beyond him, the crowd, and so he says, "Sir, come down before my child dies." Come down to Capernaum—Capernaum's down at the seashore, they're up in the hills, so everything is "down" to Capernaum from where they were. So here's this guy with struggling seedlings of baby faith. Certainly he lacks full understanding of all that Jesus is, and he's desperately concerned for his beloved little child. He pours out his heart to the Lord: "Sir, *please* come down before my child dies."

Well, the table is set: We've got the circumstances for a miracle, when Jesus came back into Galilee; the candidate for the miracle is this little boy. Now, I want you to see the consequences of a miracle: Verse 50. Jesus said something—I guarantee you, this was not what the guy expected to hear. Verse 50: "Jesus said to him, 'Go; your son lives.'" The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off." Now, I'm sure the guy hoped that Jesus would say, "Yes, I will come with you right away." Surely he was afraid that Jesus might say, "No, I came to the lost sheep of Israel. I'll pray for you," or whatever. He figured a "yes" or a "no"—he didn't expect a remote-control miracle. But in that instant, Jesus healed the son's body and He began to heal the father's soul. The fact that his heart was genuinely reaching out to Jesus is evident by his courage to do as Jesus told him to do. "I've got to get to Jesus, I've *got to get to Jesus* to see if I can save my son's life!" He gets to Jesus and Jesus says, "Go back." Ah, but He said, "Go back—your son *lives*." That's pretty clear. He didn't say, "Your son's going to live." He didn't say, "I'm pretty sure he'll pull through." At that moment, He healed that boy—10 or 15 miles away—instantly. The slide toward death was halted; he didn't get any worse—as a matter of fact, it was instantly reversed—he was well.

Verse 51. He's headed down the winding path to Capernaum, and it says, "As he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living." Now, the servants in Capernaum—and that gives you an idea this guy was pretty high up; he had slaves in his home—the servants saw the sudden, remarkable recovery, and so they were so full of excitement, they couldn't wait to tell their master. So they take off to track him down and tell

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him the news. They knew he would be coming the shortest way; they went to meet him, and it kind of gives you a hint he was probably a pretty pleasant master to work for, that his slaves would be sharing that much joy over the recovery of the little boy. So Verse 52: "So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, 'Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.'" He asked the logical question: "When did he get better? Was it right after I left the house? Has it been getting better since I've been up there knocking on Jesus's door? How did it go?" And in they said, "The fever left him"—that's an aorist tense: point-in-time. "The fever just *left*. Your son *lives*," and that also is an aorist. He turned around—he was, by all human standards, on his way to death and, all of the sudden, he's *fine*.

Well, I believe that it was at that moment, that the man heard that from his slaves, that this man came to salvation. "Oh, it was yesterday at the seventh hour." Now, you can count Jewish time, Roman time, whatever it is—the whole point of this is, it was exactly at that moment that Jesus said that. Verse 53: "So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, 'Your son lives'; and he himself believed and his whole household." Here's another aorist. It says, "He believed," meaning, there was a definite moment that he came to faith. The immediate evidence that his faith was genuine is that—what did he do? He went on back to his house and he evangelized his whole household! That probably include his wife, his servants, any extended family who might have lived there, if there were other children—if this wasn't an only-child—all the children. They all came to salvation promptly, so like I said, He healed the boy's body; He healed the father's soul.

And then John wraps it up with Verse 54: "This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee." Now, he doesn't mean that that's the second miracle that Jesus ever did. Chapter 2, Verse 23, tells us that He did other miracles while He was in Jerusalem, but this is the second one that you'll find in John; this is the second one you'll find that is done in Galilee, and John chose to include these two in his gospel. I inserted it here at this point in Mark so that you'll understand how the excitement and all those crowds built in Galilee for this time which was the backbone of Jesus's earthly ministry. And then He went on, set up His headquarters in Capernaum; remember, right away there were *huge* crowds. Well, this tells you how the word had already spread like lightning.

Now, make a couple observations and applications from this. If you were working your way through John—and we're not, we're working our way through Mark, but this is worth noticing—notice the contrast from the first sign that John mentioned—turning the water into wine—and the second sign that John mentioned: First, he shows He's Lord over creation—turned water to wine...He's really good at physics and chemistry. He created all that stuff. The first miracle deals with things; this second miracle deals with people. The lesson is that Jesus is both Creator and Lord of all things (see Jn. 1:1-3; Col. 1:13-16; Heb. 1:1-2, 8; cf. Ps. 95:5). The first miracle was done in the presence of Jesus; the second miracle was by remote-control—I love those miracles, they're just spectacular. The lesson is, Jesus as God is both omniscient and omnipotent; He knew *exactly* who that boy was, He knew *exactly* where he was, He knew *exactly* what his condition was, and He healed him in an instant. The first sign dealt something physical; the second sign dealt with spiritual things and has spiritual consequences.

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Would you notice also, the contrast between the faith of this Gentile and the pseudo-faith of the thrill seekers who came to Jesus? True faith shows up in repentance and commitment: "Go; your son lives,"—and he went! He obeyed Jesus a whole lot better than the people who *knew* a whole lot more than he did. That's true faith—true faith is faith that works; it shows visible results in a person's life (Jas. 2:18, 26; cf. 1 Jn. 2:3-5).

And I want you to notice, above all, how Jesus deals with people from all points on the spectrum of belief and unbelief, and He deals with people of all kinds. Some people came to Jesus with tender, prepared hearts like Peter and John (Matt. 4:18-22); some people came to Jesus wrestling with intellectual questions like Nicodemus did (Jn. 3:1-2); some didn't seem to be seeking anything at all, but they respond when they see Jesus, like Thomas did (Jn. 20:28), or the woman at the well (Jn. 4:27-30, 39); some are apathetic and indifferent, but God plucks them out of their indifference, like the blind man that Jesus heals in John Chapter Nine, or the man that was sealed by Peter and James and John in Acts Chapter 3—he's asking for alms, and they said, "Ah, haven't done any change today, so I'll just have to give you what I've got: Pick up your bed and walk"—healed him; some are openly hostile, persecuting believers and justifying their hatred, like Saul who became Paul (Acts 9:1-19; 13:9). You're going to encounter people in all of those various stages of belief and unbelief toward the Lord. Understand—every one of the needs to hear the very same gospel (Acts 4:12; 17:30-31); they need to see it lived out in your life (Phil. 2:15; Titus 2:10; 1 Pet. 2:12); and then you speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15; cf. Pr. 3:3). That's like singing the words accompanied by the music of the way that you live (2 Cor. 1:12). People are all different, they're all finding different ways to display their sinfulness, they're all finding different ways to mask their lost-ness, or to pretend that they're righteous, but we know there's none righteous—not even one (Rom. 3:10; cf. Ecc. 7:10); there's no man or woman who seeks God on his or her own (Rom. 3:11; cf. Jn. 6:44-45), but we have the one message for all those people in all of those circumstances (Jn. 14:6).

I also want you to realize who this guy was. He was a *Gentile*. The Pharisees—they wouldn't even step on the soil of the Samaritans, who were half-Jews. They wouldn't do that! Well, Jesus reached out to them, reached out to people who weren't Pharisees as well, but were under their influence; and then He *intentionally* traipsed right through Samaria. And when He was there, He broke another one of their rules—He spoke to a woman *in public*! "Oh...we don't do *that*." And then, He goes into Galilee, and in the midst of all of this birdbath-deep, shallow response of the thrill-seekers, Jesus zeroes in on one Gentile who comes to Him. My friends, we have one message for everyone of every background (Acts 15:11; Rom. 1:16; Gal. 3:28; cf. Rev. 5:9). Jesus violated countless manmade rules against engaging across the lines of ethnic or national boundaries when He treated this Gentile with the same compassion and grace and miracle power, just like He had that woman.

I thought I'd comment on something here. This past week, one of our people had something handed to them and, passed it on to me to validate that it was what we thought it was. It's something I haven't had to deal with in years, and brought up a whole lot of feelings I had from what I did have to deal with it. It's the idea that one race of people is superior to others. Do you know, there are people who believe that the Bible supports that notion? No one who knows the character of God, no one who knows His Son Jesus, no one who understands His

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Word would ever think such a totally blasphemous thought (see Acts 10:28, 34-35; cf. Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Ex. 12:48; Lev. 19:34; Num. 15:14-15; 1 Kings 8:41-43; Is. 19:25; 56:6-7; Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15; Acts 15:7-9; Rom. 3:29-20; 10:12; 15:9-12; Gal. 3:8, 28; Col. 3:11; Rev. 5:9). But I'm afraid that that belief system is alive and well. If you encounter somebody who did that, you may tell them what I said about it and refer them to this sermon or refer them to me. Every single attitude of racial superiority or inferiority is purely, openly *Satanic*. Now, was I clear enough about that? That is from Satan--*he* is anti-God. The fact that such ideas permeated the false religion of the Jews in Jesus's day, who wouldn't step on Samaritan *soil* (see Jn. 4:9), *let alone* have dinner with a Gentile—they were even upset with Jesus for having Jewish sinners in the dinner-company that He kept at Matthew's house!—that shows how openly apostate their whole system was. There is no such thing as racial superiority because the whole idea that there are such things as different races—*that* is anti-God, *that* is anti-Bible, *that* is an invention of Satan!

Now, I know—after the flood, after the Tower of Babel, shifting continents, confusing the languages, isolating people in different places and breeding in that way—yes, I know, there are different physical characteristics. I love how it's said in "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner"—"We seem to have a pigmentation problem here." Many of us are sorely deprived in that category; some of them are average, some have more. There are different characteristic, there are different general things, but there are not different races! There is *one* race—*only* one race: God created it all from one man that He directly created, and if you don't believe that, if you don't know that, Acts 17:26—Paul was preaching on Mars Hill; he says very clearly: "He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation." Every single one of us comes from the very same gene pool. If we traced our family trees back far enough—I mean, go to, what is it, DNA-dot-com? See if they can go back this far—you'd get to Adam, with a giant bottleneck at Noah (see Gen. 3:20; 9:18-19). All of the diversity that you see in all of the human race over all of the world now was on the Ark, and it all came from Adam and Eve.

Christians ought never to have anything to do with putting up barriers between classes or colors or ethnicity or cultures. We have one and only one message, and it needs to be squarely on our shoulders that we take it as our responsibility to *cross* those barriers, to preach the one true gospel (Gal. 1:8-9), which is the only thing that brings true reconciliation and true unity (Gal. 3:26, 28). It's our job to put ourselves out, give our time and resources and energy to the downtrodden, to refugees, to the isolated ones of the world—the so-called "unreached" people-groups. Same principle: start with your own people, like Jesus said—"You're going to be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea"—they said, "Oh, okay, yeah...we'll go outside the city limits." And then He said, "And Samaria [astonished gasp] and to the remotest parts of the earth" (see Acts 1:8). Take the gospel to everybody you can reach in your circle of influence right now, and then put yourself out to take the gospel across the barriers to the people that you don't even like, and then do everything you can to help get the gospel to the people that you don't even know well enough to not like yet—"the remotest parts of the earth." As for me, I'm going to Russia tomorrow—what are you doing? [Laughter] They're not very different from us, by any way that we would count "different."

Sermon Title: Your Son Lives!
Scripture Text: John 4:43-54

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 4-8-18

What's the principle? Paul wrote it at the beginning of Romans. He says in 1:16-17—"I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it"—you might say "it alone"—"it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek"—Jew or Gentile, it doesn't matter—"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith.' " We all are human, we all have exactly the same needs, and no less than Jesus Himself set the example. He came to His own people—they rejected Him (Jn. 1:11); but He kept talking, He kept preaching, He kept telling them the good news, and He took the gospel to Samaritans and to Gentiles. Aren't you glad somebody got around to the Gentiles? That's who we are! That's who we are—who were, according to Ephesians 2, "formerly far off," and now we have been drawn "near" (vs. 13).

Let's pray.

Father, I can't imagine what that man thought when he heard Your Son say to him, "Your son lives," and then to find out that in that moment, his life was spared. Thank You, Father, that that's just a picture of Your ability to call the dead to life, to bring about new life in Christ, even though we're dead in our trespasses and sins. You've made us alive by Your grace. Put this message ever on our lips, ever on our hearts, and remind us that there is nothing we have to do which is as important as taking the good news of Christ to all, wherever You give us opportunity to do that. We thank You for what You've done for us. We pray that You will do what You need to do through each of our hearts for Your Glory, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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