



Devotions for Nov 9-15, 2024

"Faithful Surrender"

Close Message Series, Week 6

Scripture: Read John 4:46-54

What we do when we're powerless, at the end of our rope, with desperation sinking in, reveals the core of what we truly believe. When the most important things in our lives are at risk of being lost, how do we respond? Where do we run? Reflecting on these moments can reveal a great deal about our faith.

A Desperate Father

Few things make us as vulnerable as the desire to protect, heal, and help our children thrive. This brings this father face-to-face with his limitations and the reality of what he can and cannot control. His child is gravely ill and he is desperate for a miracle. His journey to Jesus reflects not only his love for his child but also his willingness to believe in a power beyond his own.

This father, an official with likely access to resources and influence, humbles himself to seek out Jesus. In his vulnerability, he approaches Jesus with a simple, heartfelt request: "Sir, come down before my child dies."

Reflection Questions

- 1. Is there a situation in your life that feels hopeless?** Perhaps a dream you've set aside, a relationship that seems impossible to mend, or a loved one who seems far from God. Remember, no situation is beyond God's reach. No matter how "gravely ill" a situation may seem, God can intervene.
- 2. When I feel desperate, do I turn to Jesus or deny, detach, or distract relying on my own strength?** Reflect on moments of crisis in your life. Did you bring them to Jesus, or did you try to handle them on your own? How might you practice bringing your needs to Him more intentionally?

Bring Your Loved Ones to Jesus

We can't change people, but we can bring them to Jesus. The father in this story doesn't give up or "throw in the towel"—he fights for his child by seeking out Jesus. This act of faith highlights the importance of creating pathways to Jesus for those we care about, even when we don't have all the answers or know the outcome. This calling isn't just for desperate moments but also for the everyday, mundane in-betweens of life. Bringing others to Jesus can be as simple as sharing our faith, praying for them, or encouraging them in ways that reflect His love.

Reflection Questions

1. **Have I given up hope for healing and restoration in any area of my life?** Are there relationships or situations with family or friends that feel “gravely ill” or beyond repair? Is taking action or reaching out to mend a relationship something God may be calling me to do in this season?
2. **Parents and Grandparents:** How can you intentionally lead and love your children/grandchildren to Jesus?
 - **Model your daily faith and create family routines** that include prayer, Sabbath, or devotionals together.
 - **Bring them to church and get involved in JWKids or Greenhouse YTH**, where they can learn about Jesus and grow in community.
 - **Share personal stories of faith**, teaching them how God has been present in your life and guiding them to recognize His presence in theirs.
 - **Pray for your (grand)children regularly**, asking for God’s guidance, protection, and presence in their lives.
 - **Invest in learning to better support and connect with them.** Check out our books in the Resource Center, including *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt and *It Starts at Home* by Steve Stroope and Kurt Bruner.

Expect Jesus to Surprise You in the Lives of Your Children

The official’s journey with Jesus invites us to see beyond our limitations and expectations. By trusting Jesus’ word, he opens himself to the miraculous. Often, our children or loved ones are on their own journeys, facing struggles and growth areas we cannot control. As we bring them to Jesus, we are also called to trust that He is at work, perhaps in ways that surprise us.

Reflection Questions

1. **How often do I expect Jesus to surprise me in the lives of my children or loved ones?** Sometimes it takes years or even decades to see change in the lives of those we love. How does this story encourage you to trust that Jesus is working, even when you can’t see it right away?
2. **What steps can I take to entrust my family to Jesus with greater faith?** Like the official, are there areas where you need to let go of control and trust Jesus with both the big and small details of your family’s life?
3. **What examples of God’s past faithfulness (surprises) can strengthen my trust now?** Reflect on times when you’ve seen God work unexpectedly in your life or in the lives of those around you. How can these memories encourage you to expect Jesus’ continued involvement in the lives of your loved ones?

Closing Prayer

"Lord Jesus, thank You for Your power and presence in our lives and in the lives of those we love. Teach us to bring our concerns, our children, and our loved ones to You with trust and humility. Help us to expect Your surprises, trusting that You are always at work in ways we may not immediately see. Deepen our faith so that we can be a light of hope and trust for those around us. May our families come to know You more deeply through our faith and surrender. Amen."