

Jesus said, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." Why should we? Why should we believe in Jesus and every word that comes from His mouth and risk looking like fool without signs and wonders? What good is faith in Jesus if it does not deliver? If faith does not cause mountains to jump into the sea shouldn't it at least make the allergies and a sore throat pocks go away? Where are the flames that lit upon the apostles' heads at the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost? Where is the towering column of fire and of smoke that lead the people through the wilderness? Why were the signs and wonders, that we want, given to the people of the Old Testament while we, today, are rebuked?

The nobleman had left his dying boy to bring home a miracle worker. That took some faith, some latent hope, some burning ember of belief that Jesus could help. But the miracle worker who turned water into wine, at the wedding in Cana, would not go with him. The nobleman's authority was not enough to command Him and only earned him a rebuke. To the noblemen, it must have seemed as though the faith and hope, the desperate prayers had all been in vain.

Jesus would have surely failed at being a pastor today. In the face of such desperation Jesus dares to preach the Law. Jesus sees that the nobleman's faith is still lacking, still imperfect, and Jesus will not pretend that it is good enough, that He is impressed. Jesus will not be polite. Jesus will not be patient or seemingly even kind. Jesus will not meet felt needs. Rather, Jesus sees into the man's heart by the man's words and so He rebukes. Jesus brings faith to its knees. He makes the father come to full desperation and forget his nobility. Then Jesus commands: "Go your way" and all He adds is "Your son lives." But what does that mean to a father so full of fear? Does it mean that his son lives in heaven? Does it mean he lives right now but will die within the hour? Or does it mean, does he dare to hope, that the fever has left him? The nobleman is not told. Nothing is explained. No promise is made. Jesus does not say, "Your son will live." But rather, "Your son lives." That is it. Nothing more. Take that and go on your way.

Miracle of miracles: that sentence changed the nobleman. He had tried to command Jesus. He did not ask. He commanded: "Come down before my child dies." But Jesus said: "Your son lives" and everything changed. It was not the nobleman who believed. It was the man, the father of the son. His nobility was stripped away. After Jesus says: "Your son lives" it is not the nobleman who be levied, it was the man, who believed. The Word of Jesus changed him. He went on his way. He obeyed and believed as a simple man, stripped of self-importance, no longer glorying in his faith, no longer making demands of God, but resting in the Word of Jesus. He still doesn't know just what it means, but Jesus said it and that is good enough. This is how faith lives, without signs or wonders. That is how it is today. We do not make demands, we fear love and trust in the Word of God. We do not make ultimatums, we believe what Jesus says. That is good enough.

So go on your way this dying, autumn day. Take the words of Jesus with you, "Your Son lives." Not the son that has come from your loins, not the one who calls you "Dad" or "Mom." A different Son, a Son more fully yours than those temporarily placed into your care. Your Son lives - even if you are yet a child or never had a child. For this Son is your Son, but you are not His father or mother. He is the Son given to you in the waters of Holy Baptism. He is placed upon your tongue in the Holy Communion. You are His and He is yours. He has caused Himself to become your Lamb, slain for your sins and raised for your forgiveness. You've come in this place today, not where water is turned into wine, but where wine carries the Blood of Christ and makes your hearts glad. There is your miracle and sign. It is the Body and Blood Jesus. Be strengthened and encouraged in that miracle and then go on your way. Go back to your homes and your daily lives. Jesus says, "Your Son lives." So will your children. So will you. Jesus lives. This is enough for faith. It will see you through. In ✠ Jesus' Name. Amen.