

Celebration Services (February 23rd & 24th, 2008)
"Facing the Facts of Life"

John 4:46 - 5:17

INTERVENING IN THE FALLEN/BROKEN WORLD OF MAN

... In these passages we have a couple of important elements being played out—

- (1) The Personal Drama of Real People with Real Needs
- (2) Helpful Theology of How God Interacts with Human Need

THE NOBLEMAN

- **Needs Bigger Than Our Resources** (It's a Fact of Life)..... In this story an official with resources faces his own inability to alter the reality of death and sickness in the life of those he loves

[This was also the case for **Jairus** (ruler of synagogue) daughter; **the Centurion** and his servant]

“ There are many things money cannot buy. Money can buy a king-sized bed, but it cannot buy sleep! Money can buy a great house, but it cannot buy a home! Money can buy a companion, but it cannot buy a close friend! Money can buy books, but it cannot buy brains! Money can buy a church building, but it cannot buy entrance into heaven! And as our text suggests, money cannot buy life and health.” **Kent Hughes**, “John”, p. 138

Whether it's MONEY ... FAMILY NAME... PERSONAL INFLUENCE.... PERSONALITY (whether Charming or Manipulative)— **At some point you won't have enough power to Make Life What You Want it to Be or to Rescue You From the difficult "FACTS OF LIFE"**

What Do We Do When Life is Bigger Than Our Resources?

- **Running to Christ — the Ministry of Intercession!**
 - The Experience of Intercessors
 - The Nobleman's Encounter in Interceding (a Rebuff)
 - The Syrochenean Woman's Encounter (Ignoring and Discouraging Argument)
 - Mary's Encounter (Jn 2) ("Unwillingness")
 - The Invalid's Encounter (a Question)

" Much Intercession is Not Immediately Successful— but is Awaiting the Ingredient of PERSEVERANCE "

A Spiritual Lesson for Parents— Particularly Fathers

What do you do when the condition/need of your children is beyond your resources and influence?

“...at the news of Jesus’ arrival in Cana, the nobleman felt a glimmer of hope. ... So he quickly made preparation and set off in a gallop to Cana, ... I like that nobleman. He went himself! He did not send a servant. He did not send his wife. In that nobleman we see a man who was involved with his family, who was so wrapped up in his children’s destiny that he did not send someone else but went himself.” **Kent Hughes**, “John”, p. 139

NOTE for INTERCESSORS: Jesus answered his request— but not in the way he asked

- **The Impending Threat of Death** (It’s a Fact of Life) – In this story the reality that death can visit the young and the old (Adam & Eve experienced this... as did Job, David, etc.)

THE INVALID

- **Not Living the Dream Life** (a Fact of Life)... In this story we find a man who has lived an “Undreamed/unwanted” Reality for 38 years.

There is the potential that life won’t be what we had hoped it would be— that we may be “Crippled” in an area of life that we had hoped to be much better at

How Do You Deal with “Dashed-Dreams”?

... Our Culture Tells us to “DREAM BIG”, we’re Living the “AMERICAN DREAM”,
– **AMERICAN IDOL** — Millions Dreaming, Hundreds of Thousands Trying Out, 24 Hopefuls, 1 winner
– **NBA Basketball** — Millions of Young Boys Dreaming, 450 NBA players

... You Don’t have the Dream HOUSE ... the Dream CAREER... the Dream MARRIAGE

How Are You Doing Facing a “Non-Dream Reality”?

These Stories Illustrate Job’s Observation about the Human Existence:

Job 5:6-7 For affliction does not come from the dust, nor does trouble sprout from the ground, 7 but man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.

“...life begins with pain, as the child, who for the first nine months of its life has rested warmly and comfortably within the uterus of its mother, is suddenly pushed and pulled into a hostile environment in which his first independent act is to cry. For a time after birth the mother cares for the baby’s needs. Yet, as the child grows up, the years progressively knock away the props of life and the child is forced increasingly to depend on his own resources. He must learn to eat and clothe himself. Eventually he must go to school, then earn a living. In time there will be the failure of his plans and the dissolution of cherished relationships. There will be pain and sickness. Death will inevitably come to friends and family, and at last the person himself will face his own death and that which lies beyond. ... I’m not pointing this out to spread gloom. There is enough sorrow in this world without emphasizing it. Rather, I am writing in this way to start us thinking about how you and I will react to such events when they come to us. What will we do? Will we be beaten down by them? Or will we triumph over them in complete victory?” **James Montgomery Boice**, “The Gospel of John”, vol 1, p. 342

John 16:33 | I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

THE REDEMPTIVE WORK OF THESE FACTS OF LIFE

- **The Immediate Work Jn 4:46-47, 53** ... it was this tragic circumstance that put him in touch with Needing Christ and that ultimately provided the opportunity for him to BELIEVE

“Affliction is one of God’s medicines. By it He often teaches lessons which would be learned in no other way. By it He often draws souls away from sin and the world, which would otherwise have perished everlastingly.” **J.C. Ryle**, “Expository Thoughts on John”, vol 1, p. 255

- **The Eternal Work ... Rom 8:18-23** ... Groaning that helps to keep our hope fixed in the right place

– If we’re not careful we are easily prone to **TRANSFERRING Our Hope** into something Temporary (Health... Possessions.... Grabbing “GUSTO”...)

... Jesus Entrance into these Life Stories represents Man’s Need for God to **INTRUDE INTO OUR HISTORY**. The Remedy to that “trouble” lies **OUTSIDE OF US!!** (In Jesus’ Intervention and in Eternity with Him)