

Jesus Unleashed

Session 1: Jesus, I'm Begging You. Please Help.

Unedited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning men. Please turn in your Bibles to John chapter four verse 43. As we begin, we're starting a new series, as you can see here, **Jesus Unleashed**, a six week series. We'll begin with doing a shout out to a group called Men of Hope. They are part of Living Hope Community Church in Peoria, Illinois. Whatever. They're led by Dan Archdale. These are 12 men. They've been meeting for three years on Wednesday evenings. Last month, Dan, the leader, was the host at his church for a No Man Left Behind training. We're really excited about your leadership, Dan, in multiple areas. Man in the Mirror does leadership trainings. We have done 400. This is a little report that I get. We've done 422 leadership training events, attended by 15,782 leaders, and representing 4,958 churches.

So about 5,000 churches that have been trained using these No Man Left Behind principles. Dan is the person that has been putting that together. By the way, if we haven't given you a shout out, we have hundreds of groups that are meeting. Every week, it seems like we find out a new one that's been meeting for three years we didn't know about like this group right here. Send an email to patrickmorely@maninthemirror.org and we'll be happy to give you a shout out. In the meantime, why don't you join me in giving Men of Hope a warm, rousing Man in the Mirror welcome? One, two, three, hoorah. Welcome, guys. We're glad to have you with us. The series is Jesus Unleashed. Today, title of the message: Jesus, I'm Begging You, Please Help.

There's nothing more refreshing than to have a relationship with somebody when they tell you they're going to do something, that their word is their bond, that you can trust them. There's also nothing more unrefreshing than someone who gives you their word and repeatedly doesn't do what they said that they're going to do. Proverbs chapter 20 verse six says, "Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?" This whole area of trust and being able to trust people and to trust Jesus is what we want to get at this morning in this topic, **Jesus, I'm Begging You, Please Help**. The reason that this is a big deal is because there are situations that we come upon that are so desperate that we have nowhere else to turn.

You know, you go to a doctor and when you go to a doctor and you just have the absolute confidence that they're going to be able to help you, what do you end up doing? You basically, you sigh, you relax, and you, basically, you surrender or even fully surrender yourself to the care of this doctor because you don't know what to do. Your situation is so desperate. You have nowhere else to turn. When you can find the doctor who's going to make you well and makes that promise and you believe in him for whatever reason, experience, the testimony of other people, but you trust him, this makes all the difference in the world. We come upon a story today in which there is a man who is so desperate that he has nowhere else to turn.

SITUATIONS SO DESPERATE THAT WE HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO TURN

Let's read the text, John chapter four. We'll begin at verse 43. We're picking right up after the story of the citywide revival in the city in Samaria. They'd asked him to stay for a couple more days. Verse 43, "After the two days, he left for Galilee." Jesus himself had pointed out that prophet has no honor in his own country. We'll just leave that for another time. "When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him." Why did they do that? "Because they had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, for they also had been there." The Galileans had gone to the Passover. What's that about? Back over in chapter two verse 22, it says that ... That's not the verse I wanted to go to. I don't even remember the verse I wanted to go to. Verse 46, "Once more, he visited Cana in Galilee." He had done the first miracle of turning water into wine at Cana and then he had gone to the Passover. Then he had talked to Nicodemus. Then he had spoken to the woman at the well. Now he's come back to Galilee where he had turned water into wine.

Here we go. "There was a certain official there whose son lay sick at Capernaum. When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and he begged him to come and heal his son who was close to death." It's a situation so desperate that he has nowhere else to turn. Just think about this man for a moment who has a son at the point of death. Perhaps some of you have been there before where you've had a family member close to death. You're distraught. You've spent all your money on the doctors. The doctors have not been able to help. Your wife is weeping herself to sleep every night. You're trying to put on a brave face for the rest of the children, but all the siblings are distraught. The aunts and uncles don't know what to do. The entire community is behind you, but they don't know what to do. They don't know how to help. Then you hear that you can go to Jesus, that Jesus is available. So he went. Then he begged Jesus to come and heal his son.

Jesus said in verse 48, "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, you will never believe." There was a sense in which, especially the Jewish culture, they wanted to see signs and wonders. They wanted to see miraculous signs and then believe. Jesus has used the approach that works for him. He would rather have you if you could believe, and then he will show you miracles, signs, and wonders, but if you need some evidence that he is who he says he is, then he seems to be willing to do that, but you can see from this text and other texts too that he really would rather that you believe and then let him show you his glory, but if you need to see his glory so you can believe, he'll do that too. "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, you will never believe." This is not a nasty comment on his part. It's just an observation, I think. To me, that's the most probable way of reading it. It's not the only way, of course.

We have this man who's in a situation so desperate, he has nowhere else to turn. I have to tell you that the way I operate in my work, I end up having real authentic conversations with men about real things that are going on in their lives. I realize not everybody has that kind of a job. You may think if you have a job like in selling where everybody's trying to put on their game face and look their very best all the time every day that other people don't have big problems. Let me tell you. I talk to someone every day, usually multiple people, either through voice or email communication or some other, I communicate with at least one man every day who's feeling death in some way.

I just made up a little list of the guys out of the last few days. One man just found out that his wife has breast cancer. Another man told me that he, and this happened four years ago, he was having some operations and so he had a pain stimulator thing installed in his back with a little lever that he could push. They cut some kind of an artery. He bled out. He was unaware of what was going on, but several days later, he woke up and he looked up and there stood his wife and his five children. One of his children said, "Dad, wiggle your toe," because they didn't know if he was going to make it or not. I have

a niece who has a child, a little baby, and has been in and out of the hospital several times with respiratory problems, didn't know if she's going to make it. She's going to be fine. Didn't know if she was going to make it. That's something current.

Another man just told me about a friend who died. Another man has been talking to me about his wife who has a mental illness. Another man, several men have been talking to me about children with addictions, drugs and alcohol. Another man, a son who has lost his faith and doesn't know what to do. There's so much desperation. In fact, I would even go so far to say is that if I will continue to ask the real questions, even the most hardened person ... Let me restate that. Even the person who looks like they have the best possible life, like no problems, trust me, there is the smell of death somewhere in their life. Every man has some situation that just feels desperate to him.

When you go to the doctor and they say, "Well, what's your pain on the scale of one to ten?" I always tell them the same thing. I say, "I can't answer that. That's just too subjective." If I say seven, what does that mean? If I say two, what does that mean? What I always tell them, I say, "Look, let me just tell you on eight cylinders, I feel like I'm running on seven." I can relate to that. That's not subjective to me. There's some kind of an independent standard. Well, if the person, nurse, doesn't know what a V8 engine in, that doesn't help, but it helps me. Everybody I know, everybody I get a chance to actually get real with, I don't know anybody that's running on all eight cylinders. I just don't. The people who are running on eight cylinders is more like a pendulum that's swinging from side to side. As it passes the point where it is running on eight cylinders, the pendulum just keeps moving. That's just the way life is. Now, most of life is fabulous, joyful, exciting, but there is this other side. There are these situations that are just so desperate that we have nowhere else to turn.

Why did the Holy Spirit preserve this story in the Bible? It's because we, you and I, do face these same kinds of trials and he wants us to have a template for how we can respond to these kinds of situations. What did we learn here that's applicable? Verse 49, the royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son will live," and watch this. The man took Jesus at his word and departed. While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, "The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour." Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." He and all his household believed, had faith. This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus performed having come from Judea to Galilee.

Just as a theological aside for those who are interested, this is not his second miracle. He's done many other miracles. It says, "At the Passover feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed." Then, in the passage about Nicodemus, Nicodemus says, "For no one could perform the miraculous signs you're doing if it were not for him." This is the second miracle that he's done in Galilee. He did the first one that was the very first of all in Galilee, turning water to wine. Many others at the Passover. Now the second miracle in Galilee, just for a little clarification theologically there. Now, we have a bit of a problem that we need to deal with here. It says the man took Jesus at his word and departed. He gave himself fully in trust to Jesus, but you and I have a problem because we have done this before and it hasn't worked out. You have asked Jesus for something before. You have taken him at his word and you weren't healed. Your financial situation didn't turn around or whatever it is.

44 days ago, I was reading Matthew. I'm reading this harmony of the gospels, so I'm reading passages chronologically and side by side if there's more than one account. I was reading about how Jesus had withered the fig tree and the disciples wanted to know about that. In Matthew 21, he tells them, "If you

have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but you can also say to this mountain, 'Go throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done." That's hyperbole, right? That's hyperbole. He doesn't literally mean that. He's trying to show there's great power in prayer. Then, verse 22 in Matthew 21. Matthew chapter 21 verse 22 says this, "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." In my notes, I wrote I said out loud, "That's not true." "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." I said out loud, "That's not true." Why did I say that?

Last summer, on the July fourth weekend, we had grandchildren in town. I was pulling them behind our jet ski for several days. Of course, the end of the week, I began to feel pain in both of my hips. I just assumed it was because I'd been like riding a horse for several days and that that would go away. Well, it didn't go away. It began to also move up into both of my shoulders. Then I began to feel fatigue and malaise and stiffness and joint pain. By December, I decided I better go see a doctor. I got on some medicine, some steroids, and started feeling a little better, but they could not give me a diagnosis. I have some kind of an autoimmune disease that is undiagnosed. In January, I went to the Mayo Clinic to find out. Because there are some atypical symptoms, they just have not been able to give me a diagnosis. I have no inflammation, which is interesting, but I do have some kind of an autoimmune disease.

44 days ago when I said, "That's not true," the reason that I said, "That's not true," because I was seven and a half months into a situation where I've been praying, believing that God's word says that if you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer. I believed and still believe that God could heal, but nothing was happening and so I said, "That's not true." You've been there, right? Might be there right now. Then, I'm reading from the note, I immediately asked God to rehabilitate my theology of prayer. I immediately asked God to rehabilitate. I said, "Uh oh." I immediately asked God to rehabilitate my theology of prayer. Guess what. That took less than 10 minutes.

He used 1 John. It's not in your notes. You might want to just jot down this address. He used 1 John chapter five verses 14 and 15 to do that. The scripture says, "Jesus said, 'And the counselor of the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name will teach you all things and remind you of everything I said.'" This came to me by reminder. I remembered this verse that I had memorized many years ago, 1 John chapter five verses 14 and 15. This is the assurance we have from God. If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. If he hears us, we know we have the thing of which we have asked from him. Here's the resolution for me. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer. By the way, there are many other verses in the book of John. John doesn't say much about prayer. In fact, he doesn't say anything about prayer until John 14, but it says ...

I'm just going to read these, "And I will do whatever you ask in my name so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask for anything in my name and I will do it." Is that true? Chapter 15, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you." Is that true? Chapter 16, "In that day, you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth. My Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now, you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be complete." Is that true? When we ask in his name and when we ask in faith, to ask in his name is equal to or synonymous with asking for something that's in accordance with his will. That's the prayer of Jesus in the garden. "Father, here's what I want, but not what I want, what you want. That's what I really want. That's my submission to your will." I don't know. Just supernaturally, I can't explain it. Just supernaturally, what 10 minutes earlier I had said, "That's not true," 10 minutes later, I could say, "Okay, that's true." I don't know how you explain that except for the intervention of the Holy Spirit. There are many such scriptures like that.

Here's the **Big Idea** for today for each of us. For each of us, here's the big idea for the day. Looking at situations so desperate that we have nowhere else to turn and we've been praying, doesn't seem like anything's changing, doubt's creeping in, just messing up our life. **Lord, I'm begging you to rehabilitate my theology of prayer.** I hope that you can say that, if you need to say it. Lord, I'm begging you to rehabilitate my theology of prayer. Turn me into a person who believes that you do answer prayer so that I can be like this certain official whose son was sick to death. I can take you at your word. Lord, I'm begging you to rehabilitate my theology of prayer.

REHABILITATING OUR THEOLOGY OF PRAYER

Let's talk about this subject of rehabilitating our theology of prayer. What is the one question that best captures what needs to be asked and answered at this moment? I think the question is this. What has to happen for me to be able to take Jesus at his word? Now, in 32 years, we've never said amen out loud, but that's something you ought to say amen about. What is it? We're not going to start doing that either, by the way. I mean, you know. We're trying to attract guys here that don't think we're a bunch of Jesus freaks even though we are. We're not going to act freaky. We're going to think freaky, but we're not going to act freaky. I think there are two pieces of knowledge in order to be able for us to take Jesus at his word. The first one is just to have a right concept of God.

You remember when we did the first miracle, the water. Some of you were here when we did the water to wine. I showed you a little chart. We handed it out. These are actually a page out of my notes from my seminary class like, I don't know, 20, 25 years ago. Something like that. On this one, the worldview where God, there's an opening between the cosmos nature and God. God moves freely between where he is and the creation where we are. To have a concept of God that God is able to intervene in nature, that things that happen are not confined to naturalistic causes. It's not a merely material world. There is also the immaterial, the supernatural, which is able to intervene. This God is both great. In other words, he's powerful enough to intervene. He's great. He's knowledgeable. He's omnipotent. He's omniscient. He knows everything so he knows what you're going through. He is good. God is great. God is good, and we thank him ... Yeah. If you just get that far, the greatness and the goodness of God, that's enough. Well, there's more, but that's enough. It's a start, but there's more, but it's enough. The greatness and the goodness of God and that he actually can intervene.

The first thing that needs to happen for us to be able to take God at his word, to take Jesus at his word, is to have a right concept of God. Then, the second thing we need is we need to be confident of what God has promised. We need to be confident in what has been offered, what has been promised, so when we read these scriptures like whatever it was, if you believe, you can get anything you want for it. If you ask for it, believe it in prayer. You need to be able to understand what it is that's being offered. What is the promise? If you think something has been promised more than it has been, then that is pretty much a formula for disappointment because expectations are not going to be met. As I've said here a thousand times, all disappointment is the result of unmet expectations. I think if you have those things down, then you'll be able to fully surrender yourself into his hands. **The Big Idea today: Lord, I'm beginning you to rehabilitate my theology of prayer.**

DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH FAITH TO TAKE JESUS AT HIS WORD?

Finally, do you have enough faith to take Jesus at his word? Do you? Do you have enough faith to take Jesus at his word? What do you think Jesus would like for you to take away from this story today? What do you think for you personally? What do you think he might want you to take away? Here are my

suggestions. Number one, the man went to Jesus. Come to Jesus. Go to Jesus. When you have a need, a desperate situation, go to him. Number two, he went to him and then he begged Jesus. There's a petition here. There's an entreatment here. There's this word. It's more than just ask. Some of your versions say ask. NIV says beg. Begged is good. Begged is right. Asked is right too, but begged is even better because there's a sense of earnestness, an earnest petition here. Go to Jesus. Beg him for help. Understand the character of the God that you're asking for help. Go to a Bible study and learn what it is that's actually being promised, what it is that's actually being offered so that you're not putting yourself into the hands, fully surrendering yourself into the hands of a bad doctor. Understand what the doctor's really offering, what he can really do.

Then, it says the man took Jesus at his word. Take Jesus at his word. I think these are the things that he wants you to take away from this story. How will you get to that point? The big idea gives us the answer. If you ask for anything in prayer believing, you will receive. Lord, I'm beginning to rehabilitate my theology of prayer. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, our dearest Father, we thank you for all the themes that are in this short and powerful story. Help each of us to understand what it is that you would like us to take away from this story. Then, Lord, through your Holy Spirit, give us the power to be transformed by this story in ways that might be explicable, but also in ways that might not be explicable. We ask this in your powerful name, Jesus, because we take you at your word and we pray in your name and we believe. Amen.