



DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

Week of February 6, 2022 (John 4:46-54, 5:1-18)

Prayers for Groups & Personal Devotion:

Lord Jesus: healer, restorer, reconciler, hear our prayers for our world, our community, and for ourselves. We pray for your creation, Lord, our home and source of life, a world of so much diversity and beauty, a world of abundance that reflects your overflowing generosity and hospitality. We pray for people within our communities, Lord, who know, even this very day, heartache and heartbreak, for families that have torn apart, for relationships broken, for the burden that grief brings, for the isolation that loneliness entails, for the unwell and for those with life-limiting illnesses. May we strive to bring healing to those who are suffering, hope to those whose dreams of fulfillment lie shattered, new beginning to those

Devotions for Life A LifeGroup Resource

The Story: John 4:46-54, 5:1-18

Context: We continue to move through John's narrative. Jesus has completed his journey from Jerusalem, through Samaria, and back to Galilee. In our first story, he's back in Cana, where he turned water into wine, and news has spread about his signs and wonders. There's an important geographical note: The "royal official" that begs Jesus to heal his son is from Capernaum. Capernaum is about 20 miles from Cana and requires a 1,600ft climb up the Galilean hillsides. It could not be done in one day.



Another thing to point out is that this royal official is of Herod's court, which means he is a gentile. The "world God so loves" continues to expand. In the second story, Jesus is back in Jerusalem. It's important to point out the pool having healing powers is likely local folk lore. In fact later manuscripts added information about the waters'

who are ready to give up, and may we recognise any part we might have played in the pain of others and seek reconciliation and restoration. Now hear us, Lord, as we take time to bring to mind people and situations into which we can breathe your healing grace, and convict us to action.

Silence

Now hear our prayers, healing Lord, as we bring them to you, in your holy name. Amen.

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Acts of Compassion & Justice:

- It's a new month! This month we are raising funds for Small Sums (www.smallsums.org), whose sole purpose is to help homeless individuals, who have found jobs, with the specific things they need to start back to work. They provide clients with such things as required work clothes and shoes, trade tools, professional licenses or union dues, and bus passes. Consider donating to them via the donate link at www.aldersgatemn.com.

healing power, but then that was pulled out because it was determined to be, well, "fake news". This is why there is no verse 4. Did you notice that?

Reading the Story: We have two healing stories here. Like with Nicodemus and The Samaritan Woman, it can be illuminating to compare and contrast them. Who are central characters? How do they identify? How does Jesus respond to them? But for the purposes of your own study, you may also choose to merely focus one.

Questions for Discussion & Reflection:

- If you could ask a Biblical scholar one question about this story, what would it be?
- Why is it significant that the man asking Jesus to heal his son is a "royal official"?
- What do you think of Jesus' response to the man's request, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe"? (Note: the "you" there is plural. It's "y'all".)
- At what point does the man believe that his son is healed? What might be important about this, particularly in light of Jesus' response to him?
- What do you make of miraculous healings such as this? How do we square them with all the times people aren't healed?
- What do you think of verse 5:4?
- To what degree do you think this man exhibits faith? How does he respond to Jesus, and what does he do and say after being healed?
- How do we feel about Jesus saying, "don't sin any more, lest anything worse happen to you"? What do you think he means here? How might the meaning change if we understood "sin" as "unbelief" or having a lack of relationship with God?
- What might be an overarching take-away or point of either or both of these stories?

