

## The Seventh Hour

Dates and times can be very important, especially when extraordinary events, life-changing events, happen in our lives. Such was the case with a prominent man in Capernaum. At 1:00 in the afternoon his life was forever changed. What he experienced each one of us needs to experience.

### John 4:46-54

46 So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. 47 When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. 48 So Jesus said to him, “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.” 49 The official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” 50 Jesus said to him, “Go; your son will live.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. 51 As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. 52 So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” 53 The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” And he himself believed, and all his household. 54 This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.

Here is what we must do to experience what he experienced:

#### I. **Take your troubles to the Lord (vv. 46-49).**

The last thing we want is troubles, yet we all have them. Even successful people like the royal official in this text. He was obviously a prominent man with significant wealth and several servants. He also had a family about whom he cared very much. His son was not only ill, but on his deathbed, and the man was desperate. This was the time to find the Lord! The man walked 20 miles and climbed 1500 feet in elevation to find Jesus and beg him for the life of his son. Although Jesus initially rebukes him and everyone else for our “sign-seeking attitudes,” the man continued to insist that Jesus come and help his son.

#### II. **Take the Lord at his word (vv. 50-53).**

Look at Jesus’ response in verse 50. He reciprocally commands the official to “go,” because “your son will live.” Amazingly the man simply believes what Jesus has said, even though it is a “long-distance” healing. As the man goes, his faith in Jesus is verified, for he discovers that his son was healed at precisely the moment Jesus spoke. When he discovers that his son is alive, we are told that “he himself believed,” suggesting that his initial faith had now gone to a deep, personal level. He had become a real disciple. But notice that his faith was not only for himself, but, in his love for his family, he shared it with all of them that they too may have life—not only in this life, but in the life to come.

#### III. **Take the signs Jesus gives you (v. 54).**

In John’s gospel we find the word “sign” 17 times. It is an important word for John because the works of Jesus point forward to something even more important. In his commentary on John, Dr. Leon Morris says that these signs point to “man’s weakness and God’s all-sufficiency.” These signs in John’s gospel teach us over and over again that we need the power of the deity. That is why 1:00 in the afternoon — the seventh hour — was the most important moment in this man’s life.

Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
and grace my fears relieved,  
how precious did that grace appear  
the hour I first believed.

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**Discussion Questions**

1. Describe an experience when a personal trial drew you closer to the Lord. How long did it take you to realize what God had done through your trial?
2. Why do wealth and privilege sometimes hinder our relationship with Christ? How can we counteract these dynamics in our lives?
3. Once the official gave credence to Jesus' Word, how did his faith then grow? How does our faith become deeply personal, as did his? (see verse 53).
4. Why is the phrase in verse 53, "and all his household," vital to this text? How can we minister to the faith of our own households?
5. John uses the word "sign" 17 times in his gospel to describe the mighty works of Jesus. What is the purpose of these signs? (Cf. John 20:30-31).

**Going Deeper**

1. What trouble are you now facing that you need to bring to the Lord?
2. How do you think God might want to use this particular trouble in your life?