

Season 4, Episode 9: Glorious Power (4:43-54)

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Felicity: Hello and welcome to Two Sisters in a cup of Tea. My name is Felicity and I live here in the US and this is my sister Sarah and she's in the UK. Hello, Sarah. Hello. How's the cup looking today? Is it full to the brim or have you already drunk it?

Sarah: Full, quite full. Just a Yorkshire. Yorkshire today. Yeah. It's been our twin's birthday recently and just a bit caked out, so I haven't got anything to go with my teeth.

Felicity: Well, it's funny to talk about cake, actually, because my biscuit is actually a bit of a mixture between the cakey topping and a digestive. Because I'm lacking a bit on my biscuit, stocks have been diminished and so I'm left with the plain old digestive, which for the American listeners is a fairly plain standard kind of solid choice. Solid choice, yeah. And I thought, well, I've just baked an iced a cake recently, so I've got some of that buttercream icing left over, so I thought, well, I'll make my own chocolate digestive. So I thought, well, actually, it's actually worked quite well, apart from it was in the fridge, so it's cold. And then I put it in the microwave and I left it in there too long and then oh, no, I think the microwave I know, I realize now that that was not a good idea.

Sarah: Oh, disgusting.

Felicity: Well, not disgusting. I mean, it's all tasted okay. It just had a funny old texture going on today. Well, I was the only recipient of such a treat.

Sarah: Okay.

Felicity: So we were chatting a bit earlier and saying, well, you know, it might be that you hear us chatting and you think, well, all you need to do is just open up the Bible and that's it, job done. And we're thinking about prayer and actually there's a whole lot more going on, isn't there, as we dig into the Word. But that's challenging, isn't it? Can you help us at all to think about just praying? How do you pray? Big question like that.

Sarah: It's a big question, isn't it? Essentially, praying is talking to God, isn't it? He's responding to his Word by talking to Him. So I find it quite hard to pray in my head precisely. So I always write down my prayers. If I'm on my own, say for example in the morning Bible time I'll write journal and write my prayers. But more and more I found myself just kind of praying through the day more and more and trying to intentionally just kind of remember something that we're reading in the morning. I'm carrying Jon's Gospel in the morning as well and just trying to pray that through the day as a way of just trying to cement it in my heart. I guess that's it. But that's something I'm trying to grow in. It's not a natural thing for me to do that. How about you?

Felicity: I think that's right. I don't find it very natural. In some ways it's more natural to open up the Bible maybe because it feels more dewy, doesn't it? Like you just kind of get the Bible from but I think the prayer but the more and more I read the Bible, the more I think God is so big and I'm not and so I need to be praying more. I agree. I try and write down but also I find that then if I only think about writing down it just takes too much time and then I don't pray because I haven't got time to write it down. So I think I'm sort of going along the lines that you're saying as well, just trying to pray more deliberately throughout the day. I've actually just got myself a little notebook to not to journal, but to write down things to pray for. And I have it in my handbag and I can always grab it. And if I have a

moment, try and be deliberate about praying for others and for this and for people. Things to be talking about, isn't it? And to be encouraging one another in.

Sarah: Yeah, definitely. Well, we're doing the end of chapter four today, aren't we? So we had the kind of astounding mercy, the glorious mercy of the Lord Jesus last week and this week we're going to be reading verses 43 to the end of the chapter listing. John, read that for us.

Felicity: Absolutely. So chapter four, verse 43 after the two days he left the Galilee. Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country. When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover festival, for they also had been there once more. He visited Cana in Galilee where he had turned water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay ill at Capernaum. When this man heard that Jesus arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son who was close to death. Unless you people see signs and wonders, Jesus told him, you will never believe. The royal official said, sir, come down before my child dies. Go, Jesus replied, your son will live. 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, yesterday at one in the afternoon, the fever left him. Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus said to him, your son will live. So he and his whole household believed this was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

Sarah: Thank you, Christie. So it's a much shorter passage last time, isn't it? I felt like last week we just, like, rushed through it, but there was so much to think on. But I don't know about you, but I've been dwelling on this this week. This is still very rich and there's still a lot here. Even though it's a much shorter account of his encounter with this world official, I think.

Felicity: Yes, and because partly because it's just such a miracle. What an amazing thing that just with a word with the person not even there, Jesus brings life. I mean, that in itself is astounding enough to kind of just dwell on for a while.

Sarah: Let's start at the beginning, though. Don't get there yet.

Felicity: I'm sorry.

Sarah: We haven't tracked that far yet. Let's start at the beginning. He's coming out to the Marriott. He's going back to Galilee, which is his hometown, as he points out. As he says in birth 44, Jesus himself has pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country. So he's kind of going back to those people, but he's kind of saying, I have no honor there. It's kind of reminiscent of the prologue language of his people do not receive him.

Felicity: Yes. This idea of welcome and honor and whether you're accepting Jesus or not, that seems to be kind of coming back to that theme. I agree. Yeah.

Sarah: But then it's really strange, because then in verse 45, it says, when he arrived there, they welcomed him. And you're like what? That's just that contradicted what he said is going to happen, it seems.

Felicity: It seems, yeah. Not the full story.

Sarah: Yeah, that's what got me as I was really reading it through, I was like, Whoa. That's kind of the surprise. And that kind of got me thinking about, as you're saying, about welcoming honor. And then we keep going and we see that unpack a bit.

Felicity: Yes, and I think that's right, because I got hung up on that verse for quite a long time, really, before I realized what was going on. As we then get and I think the key then is as we get. Well, it's interesting because it's a bit of a sandwich, isn't it? Because he arrives in Cana, and it makes this really big point that this is the place where the water and the wine happens. That first back in the beginning of chapter two. And then you get the royal officials mentioned in The Sun Lies III. And then you've got this kind of verse 48, unless you people see signs and wonders, do something you will never believe. So you're thinking, well, these guys, they did see the sign, like the first sign, the water and the wine. And then you've got this official and his son's kind of lying ill, and you're like, well, is Jesus going to give them a sign? Or?

Sarah: He's asking for a sign, isn't he? The fisher is asking for, like, what everyone else has been asking for, like a miracle. He wants his son to live, but his son isn't there. So people aren't going to see this sign if it happens.

Felicity: Yeah. That is fascinating, isn't it? This is, as I was saying at the start, a miracle of grand proportion, but it happens out of sight. And it seems to be, as you're saying, Sarah, a part of what's going on in verse 48 and how Jesus is perceiving these people. Can you unpack that a bit more for us?

Sarah: Yes, I think the kind of welcome they're giving Him isn't a true welcome because they're wanting the impressive signs and wonders, but they're actually not believing his words and they're not believing in Him. And that seems to be the criticism that he's coming with. So then he kind of yes. So then what happens? There are official plea to them, says, come before my child dies. And Jesus responds really surprisingly and with extraordinary grace, because he doesn't come. He just says and he says, Go, your son will live. And I just think it's extraordinary because there's been no interaction, really, between the royal official and Jesus. It's just been, Come, my son's dying. And with an extraordinary word of grace, he says, Go, your son will live. And the key is then the man took Jesus at his word and departed. And that is, I think, the key, isn't it, to understanding this context of welcome and what his own people are refusing to see and what the royal official does see and do.

Felicity: And that's part of the surprise as well as them, because this is a royal official. So we assume that he's probably not part of the hometown. I mean, he might be part of Herod's kind of household or whatever, but the likelihood is that he is an unlikely person in this sense. Is he Jewish at all? I don't know. We don't really know that. But he seems to be as much of a kind of outsider as the Samaritan woman or people we've encountered along the way. And yet it's Him who takes Jesus at his word and life comes through Jesus words. Isn't it?

Sarah: Amazing?

Felicity: Amazing thing. Simply through a word, as we know, that shouldn't surprise us, should it? Because that's what Jesus has been doing all the way through. But here we have it in such technicolor, a word and life is given. And I love verse 50-53, just that realization. Oh, that is exactly when Jesus spoke.

Sarah: Yeah. It's so beautiful, isn't it? It's so cool. And the fruit of that, the fruit of trusting Him at His Word was that he and his whole household believed. So at that point. It's not only that life has been given to His Son who was on his deathbed, it's eternal. Life has been given to the whole household, the whole family. Presumably, that means, like any servants as well, is artificial. I mean, that's just extraordinary because life in John's Gospel is never just life on this Earth. It's always so much bigger and so much richer. It's so wonderful. And then it puts into stark contrast his own people in Galilee who are just wanting a sign. They're just wanting a wonder. They're just wanting a little bit of the kind of celebrity Jesus. They don't actually want life. They don't want to believe.

Felicity: Yeah, that's an issue, wasn't it? Because they probably do if they thought about it. They do want life, but then they're missing where life comes from. And this word is absolutely the means, the word from this person, this Son of God. And it's going to be unpacked more and more, isn't it, in the next chapter? But that, as you say, the enormity of what happens as Jesus speaks and the playing out of that in this household is quite remarkable. And it's just so abundantly graceful. It's full of grace, isn't it? It's literally like we saw in the program, grace and truth in action right here.

Sarah: Yeah. I don't know about you, but I've been really surprised at how much I feel like I'm reading this through the lens of that prologue. Each time I come to see the next passage, I begin to see more of the depth of that first 18 verses and more of those scenes coming through each point. And it's wonderful, isn't it, to see that through that lens? I think I'm really enjoying the fact that this is right after the Samaritans who again, he didn't show a sign of wonder to her or to them. He believed she took Him at his word. They took him at his word. They believed that he was a savior of the world as he shared His Word with them. And then this is the same that's happening here. And I just think it's just beautiful, isn't it, as you're saying, like all these different people who are unexpectedly coming to know Jesus because they're seeing Him truly and hearing Him rightly.

Felicity: Just beginning to drive it to our own hearts. I feel like what a gracious thing that it is not about having been there to see Jesus signs and wonders, but it is about His Word, because we have His Word right here. And as we hear His Word, we are also hearing the word that brings life. And I think that's been a challenge to me to really consider whether that's how I perceive the Word. That's what I think about Jesus words. What power do I really think they have? If I really thought that's what was going on as Jesus speaks, as I open up the words, I think I would hold it in higher esteem, do it more, get it open with other people more. You know, that kind of the more we get that the bigger deal it is.

Sarah: Yeah, no, I think you're right. I think I've been also challenged, John. Am I obscuring it from others? Am I assuming God isn't in the business of saving the unlikely person in the mind in a way that the Samaritans and the artificial are just not on the Jews top list, are they, of people who will be in Jesus kingdom? I think I'm just like how inbuilt are my preconceptions of who I think will respond, who maybe would be more hungry for a conversation about this, who I'm likely to kind of just talk about my faith more with. I think I've just been challenged on that as well in terms of who I think who am I to say who's going to accept it?

Felicity: Absolutely. And who am I to say that the Word is not going to like, this is God's word. Whoever receives it, life will come. And that in itself, why would I hold it back from some people? Just because I'm thinking they're probably not going to like it's really challenging on that, isn't it? I think. And then, yeah, as as Russia, you're saying at the start, a short passage that has yet again blown us away with what Jesus is doing and how he's doing it and what that means for us.

Sarah: Yeah, big time. It's just simple in one sense, isn't it? But it's really valuable. And I think as we start to kind of look back the last couple of chapters and just to see what's been going on, as you say, between the first sign that's mentioned in this village with the water being turned into wine. It just feels that every point we're kind of just like getting this view of Jesus expanding expanding as to who he is and how rich and deep and beautiful he is. And there is a bit of a bookmark there, isn't there, with 54 said, this is the second sign you just performed, so it does seem like there's a kind of BOOKMARKS of signs. Would you say that?

Felicity: Yeah, I think because at the start, we get the first sign, water into wine. That's at the start of chapter two. And I think John makes it really clear when you say the bookmark, the kind of the language that he's using to make us realize this is the first time, first sign and the second sign at the end of chapter four here. And that helps us as readers to take chapters two to four kind of together. And I think the heart of those chapters is the identity of Jesus. But the identity of Jesus, not just meaning the signs, that kind of he's the signs and wonders guy, but because of who he is, because of those signs and wonders. So his word is where it's at. That's the power. That's how we know that he is the Son of God and all those names. It's like this kind of definition is just being kind of expanded, isn't it, of who Jesus is. And the Word therefore expands in power as we get more and more of who Jesus is.

Sarah: Yeah. Although going back to that first prologue, it can't expand more in power than being the Word is God.

Felicity: No, that is true. That is true. Maybe it's just filling out that definition. You read that and you're like what that means. Yeah.

Sarah: Good.

Felicity: Correction. You can't get bigger than that. It's a fair point.

Sarah: Christie, would you pray for us as we tie up what I'm just chatting about?

Felicity: Yes. Love to. Heavenly Father, we praise you for Jesus. Thank you for how clearly you show us who he is. And as we see him, so we hear his word. And we pray, Father, that in our hearts, with all of who we are, would we be those who hear and believe. We love what we see here at the royal official in his household. And we pray that you give us soft hearts to be able to respond to Jesus Word. And we pray that we'd be eager to hold out this word of life to others without prejudice, without thinking already who might respond. We pray that we'd be trusting you and the power through your Word. In your name. Amen.

Sarah: Amen. Well, another one wraps up. We've got one more chapter to go, which we're going to do. We're to going do over two episodes, aren't we? For that next week, do sign up for our newsletter if you haven't already. That just gives you some more foods of thought about John's gospel and what we're dwelling on outside of these short and sharp 20 minutes episodes. And as ever, we've got questions in the show notes for you to discuss if you're doing this with someone else.

Felicity: And we look forward to being here next time.

Sarah: Take care.

Felicity: Bye. Bye.

Sarah: Bye. Thanks for listening to this episode. It's sponsored by Tenorbose.com. Check them out for great discounted resources that point to Judith.