**Thesis:** Every person has or will go through tragedy in life. Moments where all hope seems lost and we’re left with what only feels like desperation. But even in our loneliest moments, God is with us. In *Psalm 139* David writes, *7 “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.*

When all feels hopeless, God is there to restore our souls as we depend on him, experience his goodness, and hold fast to his promises.

**Introduction:** You’re listening to the The Jesus Podcast, a year of stories showcasing the depth of Christ’s love and the glory of God’s truth. I’m \_\_\_\_ your host from Pray.com. It’s a joy to learn and worship with you. Follow the podcast as we continue learning about the miracles of the Messiah

**Context:** Today’s story takes us to John 4. In our first two episodes, Jesus performed his first miracle at the wedding in Cana. Afterwards, he ventured to Jerusalem with his disciples to celebrate the Passover, as was customary for all Jewish men. There, instead of performing more miracles, Jesus clears the temple; a stern reminder that God’s house is a house of prayer. A place of God’s glory, not man’s personal gain. After the holy day, he decides to return to Galilee, his place of origin. We’ll find him once again in Cana. But it isn’t long before he has a visitor, a royal official with a personal request. Though likely a surprise to the disciples, it was an encounter Jesus was waiting for: The platform for his second miracle. Another chance to display his power and plant seeds of faith in the hearts of men and women.

**Message:** Whether you believe in God or not, nobody can deny the brokenness of creation. Externally we see the pain of sickness and the sting of death. Internally we bear the weight of loneliness, depression, guilt, and heartache. The Bible tells us this brokenness is a result of sin, brought into the world through Adam and Eve, but continued through every human who has ever walked the face of this earth. Every human but one. In *1 Corinthians 15*, the apostle Paul calls Jesus *“the second Adam”*. The one man who could put an end to sin and restore the brokenness that haunts God’s good creation. As Jesus embarks on his public ministry, we see glimpses of this restoration through his miracles. An upside down creation being put rightside up. As the Messiah, Jesus came to fulfill God’s promise of rescue. But this promise wasn’t only for the Jews as many thought. This promise was meant for anyone who would believe in him. The hurt, the broken, the desperate. God sent Jesus to save them all.

This is what makes the story of the royal official so powerful. Here was a man who sat in great authority under Rome’s rule. He had power, wealth, and security. But what he didn’t have was invincibility to sin and its consequences. Just like everyone else, he, too, knew and felt the brokenness of creation. And likely knew it even more so as he watched his son writhe in pain from a fever that had all but killed him. No money or militaristic demand could change this. He was at the mercy of nature. Or so he thought. As Jesus’ miracle at Cana, his teachings to crowds in Samaria, and his scene at the temple began to spread, the royal official found one last hope to save his son: The rabbi from Galilee.

We know from John 2 that Jesus had made his home in Capernaum, the same city the royal official lived. But as Jesus traveled back from Jerusalem, he stopped in Cana once again. These two cities lie about 20 miles from each other. It would have been easier for the official to wait for Jesus to come back to his home in Capernaum or send out servants to find Jesus in Cana. But desperate times call for desperate measures. When we’re hurting, we can’t delay going to Jesus personally. The longer we wait to bring him our brokenness, the longer we hold ourselves back from experiencing his healing. The longer we withhold his care. The longer we prevent ourselves from knowing his abiding love. When we’re feeling truly broken, it can feel debilitating, and maybe that feeling prevents us from going to God right away. We put aside our times of devotion, we find it hard to formulate words for prayer, and we pull back from others who want to help direct our gaze to God. And so we wait. Maybe that waiting is hoping that we’ll feel better on our own. Maybe it’s waiting for all of those things to seem easier to do. But we should understand that going to Jesus right away with our brokenness is always the right call.

*Psalm 34:18 reads: “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”*

That should bring us comfort. To know that God is not far off in our pain. He is already near to us. Crying out to him isn’t about getting his attention. It’s about reminding ourselves that he’s already with us. He already knows what we’re going through. And before we even realize it, he is already working to heal us.

This is the case for the royal official. He didn’t know Jesus, but Jesus knew him. Jesus expected him. But the royal official had to break down the barriers that would prevent him from humbly calling out for Jesus’ help. This was no small act for the official. He was going against every social expectation. He could have used his authority to demand Jesus to come to him right away or sent out servants and soldiers to seize him if he didn’t obey. But brokenness brings out a different side in us. Desperation brings us to our hands and knees. Any humiliation that would have been a factor before was left at the door. This was a personal request and he was going to make it on his own. No longer was he a Roman coming to a Jew for help. He was an empty man looking for hope from God. And in allowing himself to be brought low, Jesus was ready to lift him up by performing his second recorded miracle in the Bible.

But as we’ve mentioned, miracles were about building faith. Rather than come back to the home of the royal official, Jesus sends the man on his way with nothing but the word that his son was going to live. Without knowing if this was true, the official was left to travel back home and hope for the best. All he could do was obey. And we learn that his obedience wasn’t in vain. Just as Jesus said, his son was made well. But it’s interesting to note that as the official is discussing his son’s miraculous healing with the servants, the timing of his healing is noted as the moment Jesus spoke this promise. It wasn’t after the official obeyed. It can be easy to fall into the trap of thinking that God only blesses us when we’re obedient. But God doesn’t just bless us for our obedience, he blesses us through our obedience. The goodness of God in our lives cannot be earned. It is always undeserved and given as an act of grace. Even non-believers experience the blessings of common graces like breathing fresh air that sustains their lives, knowing the delicacies of different flavors, and experiencing powerful emotional bonds like love. Don’t believe that God only cares for you when you’re at your best. But also know that he wants to lead you out of your worst moments. And the only way we can work our way out of those moments is by obeying him when he tells us what to do next. Our obedience isn’t a way to convince God to love us. It’s a response to the love that Jesus shows.

And what we learn from this story is that his love has no boundaries and knows no prejudice. Here was an official of Rome, the enemy of God’s people. But Jesus doesn’t turn him away. He couldn’t. It’s God’s heart that none would perish. Jesus was tearing down the dividing wall between people and God.

Paul alludes to this when he writes in *Colossians 3:11 “Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.”*

When we come to Jesus, we don’t do so as an American or European. As a wealthy business owner or a struggling student. We come to Christ as broken people who are made whole and are united in Christ by His Spirit. It doesn’t matter how we have or haven’t treated Christ in the past. What matters is how we respond to him now. What matters is how we let his word penetrate our hearts. What matters now is our openness to yield our lives completely to him. The love of Jesus is available to anyone and the depths of his love are unimaginable.

Like the royal official, we should be desperate for the power of God in our lives. We should remove every barrier and obstacle that would prevent us from coming to him. We should be okay with admitting our brokenness with the hope that, as God, Jesus can perform a miracle in our lives and give us everything we could possibly need.