**Christian Morale**

Based on [John 4:46-54](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Jn4.46-54)

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The Twenty-First Sunday after Trinity

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Remembrance day is about remembering the sacrifice made by those who fought in the military for the cause of our nation. The church is at war right now, and will be until the end of the age. Only w*e do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.* We are christian soldiers; and soldiers need more than marching orders. Soldiers need morale. In order to fight the good fight, soldiers need to sincerely believe that someday they will have the victory.

Jesus came again to Cana in Galilee, where he previously turned water into wine. A man from Capernaum heard, that Jesus had come to Galilee and went to ask him to come and heal his son who was at the point of death. So Jesus said to him, “***Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe***.”

The strongest faith is the faith that follows Jesus with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength simply because he is Jesus. But we are frail, fragile and weak creatures. Like soldiers in wartime, our willingness to fight the good fight depends on morale-the belief that victory can and will come. And such a belief requires signs of victory. Such a belief it justifies the current struggle and builds morale.

In the United States, the Vietnam War lasted about 20 years, and it was a drain on the morale of the people and the soldiers sent to fight. It happened because, as the war dragged on, there was less and less indication that there would be any real victory...even as more and more people were sent to fight and die. Regardless of whether it was a just cause or not, the It came to a point in the war where nobody seemed to even know what a victory would look like, let alone whether it could happen.

Morale is needed in wartime. It’s based on the belief that the war can be won, and that there are indications that it will be. It’s a sort of positive thinking, but not in a vacuum. That positive thinking needs to be grounded in what is actually seen and heard, not just at the start, but continually. If it’s not, morale will fall and the fall will be great.

Christian morale needs to know that Jesus has the power to forgive sinners and raise the dead. Christian morale has this knowledge when it knows that Jesus actually, historically, in real time came down from heaven and everywhere he went, he reversed the course of death for people who came for healing, and those who had died he raised. Humanity needed these signs and miracles from Jesus, to our shame perhaps, but needed them nonetheless.

The man went to Jesus knowing only that Jesus can give life. He went to get that healing for his son from Jesus. And here’s the important point: Jesus promised “Go; your son will live”. And the man believed at Jesus’ word, before he even saw his son healed.

“Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe.” Our faith is founded on the fact of certain signs and wonders. Our morale is sustained by the fact that 2000 years ago, Jesus came down from heaven and healed people and promised a way to eternal life for all who come to him. And to finish of his ministry, he submitted to death and then healed himself by being raised from the dead.

God infiltrated humanity, came down from heaven, and gave us signs and wonders upon which to build our faith. And as we continually hear this word of forgiveness and resurrection; as we receive baptism and return to it daily as we partake of the true body and blood of Jesus in remembrance of him, we participate in these signs and wonders of God.

So what are the signs for us to sustain our morale today? I’m glad you asked. Because I am eager to preach to you what will strangle our morale. Our faith is strangled when we wait upon Jesus only to heal our sick relative or to give us what we want in our lives. Morale is mortified when people who define victory in terms of a growing congregation and church budget, rather than when two or three gather together in true faith according to Jesus name. Jesus did not come so that we can conquer this sinful world and find our home here. He came to give us a basis for the faith in a vale of tears, a morale that carries us to the victory that is to be revealed in our death, and when he comes again.

What are the signs to sustain our faith? Don’t look for heavenly sign and wonders. In these last days, it is the cosmic powers that control this present darkness, and false prophets who dazzle the imagination. No our signs are the marks of the cross. Our signs are given us in the beatitudes. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, the peacemakers, you who are reviled, slandered and on the receiving end of lies on Jesus account, for your reward is great, and so they treated the prophets of old.*  And so they treated the apostles who after they were beaten for proclaiming faith in Christ, they left the council, *rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.”* Our signs are when we do and say what Christ did, and receive the same treatment as him...looking to the victory that comes from heaven.

Soldiers must believe they can win the war in order to keep fighting. Those those who die, are willing to do so only for the sake of the victory to come. Wartime morale requires believing the victory before seeing it. So the man believed his son was healed before he saw him. So Jesus believed his father would raise him and make a way for all men before he went to the cross. And so we believe that, as we sojourn in this vale of tears, we look back to the resurrection and promises of our Lord, and we wait patiently for the deliverance that will come with a blessed death and the return of the Son of Man.