

(This week will look in depth at one miracle of Jesus)

**Monday, June 15 - Read John 4:46-49** Consider that immeasurably brief moment just before the beginning when there was nothing and then there was something. Is it really possible for something—energy or matter—to come out of nothing without the causal action of a nonmaterial entity? People who trust Scripture’s testimony believe God’s Word sheds light on that shadowed moment just as the universe began. Whatever you may believe about the timing of creation events, Holy Scripture declares one paramount fact: the only true God created everything by the power of His word. Keep this in mind as we focus on the miracle of Jesus healing the royal official’s dying son. But first, to see this text with fresh eyes, you must paradoxically and intentionally put yourself in the dark. Sometimes in order to see what you’ve never seen before, you have to forget whatever you’ve heard before. Think of it this way. When you watch a movie with a surprise ending the second time, you can no longer be surprised. You probably won’t watch with rapt attention as you did the first time. You might even go get a snack while the movie still plays, because you know you won’t miss anything. In the same way, we tend to read familiar Scripture passages with less than rapt attention. So, the secret to approaching this and many other familiar passages is to pretend you’ve never read it before and you don’t know how it turns out. That’s hard to do, but as you will see in this case, everything hangs on not knowing what you already know. This miracle began with a royal official whose son was dying in Capernaum, a town about eighteen miles from where Jesus was staying in Cana. In a last-ditch attempt to save his son’s life, the royal official sought out Jesus to ask Him to go back with him and heal his son. That’s as far as we should go now or else we will start dragging in ideas we need to forget. You’ll see what I mean as we dig deeper over the next few days.

**Tuesday, June 16 - Read John 4:50-51** Our first task is to reconstruct this miracle’s timeline. So let’s hunt for time references in the story. Here’s what we find: “When he [the royal official] inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, ‘Yesterday, at one in the afternoon’” (John 4:52). Notice there are two key reference points. The word yesterday tells us the story spans two days. The first day—let’s call it Monday—is the day the royal official found Jesus and asked Him to come heal his son. That happened at what Jews of that day would have called the “seventh hour,” which is equivalent to our 1:00 p.m. At that moment, Jesus said to the man, “Go....your son will live” (v. 50). Then sometime on the second day (Tuesday) “while he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living” (v. 51). Simple enough. However, if we make a couple reasonable assumptions consistent with the facts of the story, you’ll be surprised at what we discover. We need to ask the following two questions: When did the man leave home to go find Jesus? And when did the man head back home after meeting with Jesus? The first question is the most important to our fresh insight. When did the man leave home? Let’s assume he felt a sense of urgency and left home early in the morning on Monday, the same day he found Jesus. Why? This is the second of only seven miracles John reported, and he elevated love throughout his gospel. So maybe John was moved by this desperate love for a son, a man not wanting to leave his child’s bedside any longer than necessary. Many of us played the waiting game as a member of our family is dying. They weren’t conscious, they didn’t make any movement to let us know they knew we were there. But there was no way we would leave their bedside. What if they did rouse and we weren’t there for them? Now transport that fact into this story, along with the more compelling reality that the key persons are a young boy and a father who would do anything to save his son. For the father, the idea of leaving his son’s side, of not being there in case he roused for a few minutes, would have been unthinkable. Unless ... there was a slight possibility ... a last hope? Put yourself in the father’s place. He heard that Jesus—who many people assumed was some kind of prophet with healing powers—was in Cana. You’re going to leave your suffering son, and make the trip as quickly as you can to try to bring help. But you would do everything in your power to return as quickly as you could. That’s what the father must have had in mind. So when did he leave for Cana to find Jesus? It’s reasonable to assume he did not leave until Monday morning. The facts located in both the text and in the geography of the area support that theory. Capernaum, where the boy lay dying, was eighteen miles from Cana, where Jesus was. Walking at a steady pace, the father could be in Cana in about six hours. If we assume he left Monday morning, a six-hour trip would put him in Cana—you guessed it—right around the “seventh hour” (adding a little time for him to locate Jesus once he got into town). Fits the text, doesn’t it?

**Wednesday, June 17 - Read John 4:47-51** Now let’s add to the timeline, and you’ll see something puzzling. The man and Jesus had a brief conversation that couldn’t have taken more than two or three minutes. Here’s what Scripture records: “When this man heard that Jesus had 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’” (John 4:47-50). After that brief exchange it was probably about 1:05 p.m. What did the man do next? Remarkably, the text says, “The man took Jesus at his word and departed” (v. 50). At this point the text rushes us right along, and we tend not to pause and put two and two together. The next verse says, “While he was still on the way ...” (v. 51). If we read too quickly, we picture the man leaving Jesus and immediately heading home. But that’s not what he did. How do we know? Because he didn’t meet his servants on the road until the next day. This is incredible! He did not rush right home. He could have made it. It was only 1:05. Yes, he had already walked eighteen miles that day, and another eighteen would have been a challenge. But again, who cared? His son was dying! If we were in that situation we would glance at our phone, calculate when we could get home, realize we could be there before nightfall, and take into consideration that it would be an easier and quicker trip being a downward slope from Cana to Capernaum, and would have hightailed it. Within a mile of home, we would have quickened my pace even more, probably breaking out into a sprint when we neared our street and saw our house in the distance. Then we would have burst through the front door, breathlessly shouting, “Is he alive? Is he alive?” Yet a loving father who went to desperate lengths to seek Jesus’ help on the chance He would drop everything and come heal his boy didn’t head home on Monday. He waited around Cana until Tuesday morning with no email or phone to check on his son. His hope rested in Jesus’ word, and he took it to heart. That’s remarkable faith! I’d love to have that kind of confidence in Jesus’ reassuring words. But hold your horses; you know too much. It’s not the kind of faith we think it is. Let’s move on.

**Thursday, June 18 - Read John 4:51-53** There’s one more crucial observation. Notice the father’s reaction when he met the servants on his way home. John, our gospel writer, was very clear that the man did not actually “believe” in Jesus until after receiving word about his son’s recovery. Wait a minute! If he didn’t even believe until then, what was going on when he “took Jesus at his word and departed”? Now is the time to forget what we already know about what happened. We know (because we’ve seen the movie) that Jesus healed the boy long-distance. The royal official did not know that. Jesus did not say, “You may go; I will heal your son long-distance.” All Jesus said was, “Your son will live”. How would the royal official have understood what Jesus meant? In the same way you understand a doctor who comes into the waiting room after performing critical surgery on your loved one. He walks in, you put down your magazine and lean in for his report, and he says, “You can all rest easy. The surgery went fine. Your dad is doing well. You can see him in a couple of hours.” In that moment, you are not hearing him claim to have performed a miracle. You’re hearing a report from someone who you believe has the necessary experience and knowledge to give you accurate and authoritative information. He knows what he’s talking about. That’s what puts you at ease. You take his word and depart for some supper in the hospital cafeteria.

For a complete study guide, visit [covenantdothan.org/messages/archive/get-your-life-back/](https://covenantdothan.org/messages/archive/get-your-life-back/)

# THE COVENANT HAPPENINGS

## WORSHIP AT COVENANT

06.14.20

### Sundays

8:15  
AM

**Traditional Service** Sanctuary  
**CovKids** Main Building  
Birth - 3 years old - Nursery Hall

9:45  
AM

**Contemporary Service** Sanctuary  
**CovKids** Main Building  
Birth - 3 years old - Nursery Hall

11  
AM

**Contemporary Service** - Collide  
Christian Life Center Gym

### Wednesdays

6  
PM

**1st Wednesday**  
Once a month  
**Bible Study**  
Weekly

### Online

No matter where you are on Sundays, you can join us for worship on our Covenant app, on our website at [covenantdothan.org](https://covenantdothan.org) or on Facebook at [facebook.com/covumcdothan](https://facebook.com/covumcdothan).

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Covenant is excited about our plan for a *gradual* re-opening on campus beginning with worship services only. For your safety, we will have limited seating during each service and childcare for ages 3 and younger will be available (reservations requested). Children ages 4 and older as well as students will worship with their families. All of our services are available on our online campus.

**Sundays** 8:15 am, 9:45 am & 11 am Collide

**Wednesday Night Bible Study** 6 pm

Livestream: [covenantdothan.org/messages](https://covenantdothan.org/messages)

Facebook Live: [facebook.com/covumcdothan](https://facebook.com/covumcdothan)

YouTube: Search Covenant Dothan UMC

## Giving to Covenant

We are called to practice generosity in every area of our lives. Through your continued support of Covenant we are able to unleash compassion and share the love of Jesus with our hurting world. Visit [covenantdothan.org/give](https://covenantdothan.org/give) to see how you can partner with us during this time.

## Baptism

We believe baptism is an important step of obedience in our faith journey. It shows that we have personally trusted Jesus for our salvation, and just as Jesus was baptized on earth, we do this to follow his example. Your baptism symbolizes the new life you have found in Christ just as Jesus rose to life again. If you have questions about baptism or would like to be baptized, contact Rev. Kyle Gatlin at [kyle@covenantdothan.org](mailto:kyle@covenantdothan.org).

## COVENANT growthtrack

We are excited to offer a virtual Growth Track class on Sunday, June 28. God still has a plan for your life, and Growth Track is designed to help you discover your

purpose! If you’d like to join our June class or have questions, contact Shawn Shirley at [shawn@covenantdothan.org](mailto:shawn@covenantdothan.org).

## CONTACT US

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THE COVENANT APP  
Search & download  
“Covenant UMC Dothan” on  
any phone or tablet device.





## Wednesday Night Bible Study

Join one of our pastors each Wednesday evening at 6 pm as we stay connected through God's Word. We will study the book of James and look at practical ways to live out our faith.

Livestream: [covenantdothan.org/messages](https://covenantdothan.org/messages)

Facebook Live: [facebook.com/covumcdothan](https://facebook.com/covumcdothan)

YouTube: Search Covenant Dothan UMC

## It's Complicated - YouTube Channel

The unprecedented circumstances we have found ourselves in can be credited for causing harrowing fears, worries, and spiraling anxiety, just to name a few. As we struggle to balance work, children, household responsibilities, and the stress of daily life, it can take a toll on our relationships. Relationships are complicated and unpredictable, and navigating this journey of maintaining healthy relationships will require more than our effort alone. We thought you could use a refresher about healthy relationships right now, and we've uploaded some previous messages to our YouTube Channel (search Covenant Dothan UMC) for you to revisit! God is love, and He desires to be the guide of our lives and our loving relationships.

Make time to listen to the inspiring messages from "It's Complicated." We hope they bless your lives, and your relationships come out of this season healthier and stronger than ever!

## CovGroups

**New Study** Do you desire a deeper relationship with God? Join us for an eight-session study examining scriptural realities that teach believers how to develop an obedient love relationship with God. "Seven Realities for Experiencing God" demonstrates how God uses ordinary people to experience Him in extraordinary ways and explores Biblical truths such as "God is always at work around you." This group will meet via Zoom on Wednesday evenings at 6 pm, beginning June 24, and is great for new believers or those looking to deepen their relationship with Christ. Group will attend First Wednesday service together each month and meet on Zoom the remaining Wednesday evenings. For more information, contact Wendy Hicks at [wendy@covenantdothan.org](mailto:wendy@covenantdothan.org).

**Right Now Media** Our church has access to an extensive video library called Right Now Media. It's like the "Netflix of Video Bible Studies" and contains a HUGE library of faith-based videos that can be accessed from anywhere. We believe Right Now Media is a tool that can serve you as you live out your faith at home, work, and in your neighborhood. There are videos for everyone - kids, students, & adults - aimed at helping you grow in your faith. Contact Wendy Hicks to sign up.

## Covenant News & Happenings

Are you interested in receiving a weekly eNewsletter along with other Covenant news by email? This is a great way to stay up to date on upcoming events, registration, prayer concerns and more. Email Courtney Hardy at [courtney@covenantdothan.org](mailto:courtney@covenantdothan.org) to sign up.

## Care Ministries



**Celebrate Recovery** Celebrate Recovery is a Christ centered recovery program for everyone who struggles with a hurt, habit or hang-up. Join us on Facebook at [facebook.com/covumcdothan](https://facebook.com/covumcdothan) on Thursdays at 6 pm. For more information contact Sherry Koogler at [sherryk@covenantdothan.org](mailto:sherryk@covenantdothan.org).

**Grief Support** Grief Support is a safe, confidential, loving and Christ-centered environment for sharing one another's burdens. We begin with a short presentation on a topic connected to grief and then break into small groups for discussion and sharing. Grief Support meets on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of every month and is currently meeting via Zoom. If you are interested in joining or would like more information, please contact Jim Hicks at [hicksje@graceba.net](mailto:hicksje@graceba.net).

**Stephen Ministry** Stephen Ministry is Christ caring for people through people.



If you are going through a difficult time, contact Kyle Gatlin at 793.4440 or [kyle@covenantdothan.org](mailto:kyle@covenantdothan.org). The care you'll receive is confidential, free and very helpful.



**CovKids Grab Bag** Make plans to drive through under the portico at church this Tuesday, June 16 between 2:30 and 4:30 pm for a fun grab bag with an awesome Father's Day craft. **Stay connected with our CovKids!** Be sure to check out everything CovKids has coming up on Facebook & Instagram - live devotionals, book readings, crafts & more!

Facebook: [facebook.com/CovKids](https://facebook.com/CovKids)

Instagram: [instagram.com/covkids\\_](https://instagram.com/covkids_)



We have a special experience coming up for our CovStudents! This two-day event will include worship, a guest speaker, and diving deeper into His word. Our 6th-12th graders are invited to join us June 22 & 23 at 6 pm for a time of worship with our student band and a guest speaker. During the day, we will have serving opportunities for our 9th-12th graders in various places around our church and community. Contact David Burnham ([davidb@covenantdothan.org](mailto:davidb@covenantdothan.org)) or JoBeth ([Jobeth@covenantdothan.org](mailto:Jobeth@covenantdothan.org)) to sign your student up today.

Facebook: [facebook.com/CovStudents](https://facebook.com/CovStudents) · Instagram: [instagram.com/covstudents](https://instagram.com/covstudents)

## Rummage Sale

Just a reminder that we have storage space available if you have donations you would like to give to the Rummage Sale. The Rummage Sale benefits our Celebrate Recovery program as well as other missions in the Wiregrass. Contact Sherry Koogler at [sherryk@covenantdothan.org](mailto:sherryk@covenantdothan.org) and she will set up a time to meet you to drop off donations.

## Covenant Concerns

### Sympathy

The Pastors and congregation would like to express our deepest sympathy to

- Philip & Susan Mizzell on the death of his mother, *Myrtice Fields*.
- David & Amy Williams on the death of his mother, *Linda Williams*.
- Family & Friends of *Chester McKin*, upon his death.

### Congratulations

- Chad & Emily Barrentine on the birth of their daughter, *Mila Ray*. Grandparents are Robert & Meshell Carroll.
- Caleb & Hailey Bannin on the birth of their daughter, *Koa Grace*.
- Jerron & Caroline Tidmore on the birth of their daughter, *Baylor Elliott*. Grandmother is Fran Schrader.

**Recent Prayer Concerns** Beth & Tom Sherrer, Ronnie Brannon, Molly Tew, Tom Renshaw Sr., Margaret Wilson, David Cunningham, Linda Griffith, Chris Smith, John Babinski, Tim Koogler, Linda Avera, Carrie Williams, Beverly Youse, Kathy Kerecman, Sandy Lisenby, Danielle Simmons, Tammy Reese, Family of Patsy Bowling, Johnathan Berry, Carla Lawrence, Wallace Family, JJ Price Family, Alan Tidwell, Quinton Snellgrove, Terri Daughtry, Lori Burns, Dr. Bill Lies, Lisa Silcox, Natalie Faulk, Christy Goodwin Bullard, Mary Lisenby, George Stokes, Mark Arrington, William Brown, Peter Collins Jr., Jill Walden, Sue Reynolds, Hays McKay, Helon Scott, Jeanne Stringfellow, Dutch Holland, James Salter, Lois Axtell, Thomas Evans, Lucy Cline, Carolyn Benton, Kim McNeill, David Johnston, Yvonne Reid, Cher Hicks, Happy Fox, Pete Shelley, Lisa Henry, Karen Medley, Gayle Moores, Lamar Spence, Martha Jane Shannon, Jerry Dooling, Tipton Family, Kathy Clark, Wynn Arkle, June Granberry, Evie Riley, Tony Justice, Richard Duncan, Sarah Grantham, Charles Meeks, JoAnn Gamble, Laurie Axtell, Allwyn Nilsson, Trip and Haley Moseley & family, Avery Wells, Jeffrey Bostwick, Scott Berry, Jennie Lawson, Scott Brown, Angie Goodson, Janis Caddell, Shelby Clark, Kendrea White, Kelly Armstrong Smith, Bobby Simmons, Michael Buntin, Bernice White, Beverly White, Audrey Miller, Carolyn Thomley, Bob Drummond, Connie Moore

**Recently Deployed** Jerrad Anderson

**Have a prayer request?** If you have a prayer request you would like to add to this list, please email Kyle Gatlin at [kyle@covenantdothan.org](mailto:kyle@covenantdothan.org).