

TAKING JESUS AT HIS WORD

John 4:43-54

You may have heard about **the child** telling a friend:

“Faith is believing something you know couldn’t be true!”

Faith isn’t like that!

Faith isn’t checking your brain at the door!

Hebrews 11: ***Faith is being convinced something is true,
even when you can’t see it.***

Have you been in a position where it seems your heart’s desire is about to come crashing down?

–where the only thing left is to trust God?

–it looks like HIS plan isn’t going to produce what you’re hoping for?

This morning we’re going to meet a man who faced that.

His son is about to die.

His only hope doesn’t appear likely to solve the problem

–at least there’s no guarantee that He will.

2nd of 7 SIGNS: *That we might believe Jesus is Messiah and God,
that we might trust Him and receive the gift of eternal life (John 20:30-31).*

The evidence is **sufficient** for anyone looking for the truth!

BACKGROUND 4:43-46a

Jesus is going from the Passover Feast in Jerusalem to Galilee.

Along the way, he stops for a couple of days in Samaria.

Jesus spends two days in Samaria,

Jesus meets a woman at the town well.

She trusts him and goes around telling everyone about Him.

Many trust Him because of her words.

Many trust Him because of *His* words.

4:39-42 ***Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”***

The Samaritans believe in Jesus

After two days, Jesus continues his trip back to Galilee.

Galileans receive Him because they’ve seen the signs He did at the feast.

< 2:23 ***Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name.***

4:43-45 ***After the two days [in Samaria] he left for 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 Feast, for they also had been there.***

The Galileans believe in Jesus.

He goes there instead of to Jerusalem
because His own people aren't ready to receive Him.

His own people don't believe in Him.

Historical reality: a prophet isn't respected among his own people 44

Jesus goes back to Cana where He did 1st sign:

Turned water to wine **46a** *"Once more he visited Cana in Galilee,
where he had turned the water into wine."*

People in Cana believe in Jesus—they remember (< 2:11)

2:11 *"He REVEALED His glory—His followers (disciples) believed."*

At least the servants and the disciples remember!

You can bet they told their story to their friends!

[In 46-54 we meet a "royal official"

—most likely a key politician in Herod's court]

THE ROYAL OFFICIAL'S PROBLEM 46b-50

The official hears about Jesus

46b-47 *And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. 47 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.*

Capernaum—his home town—is about 20 mi. from Cana.

He hears that Jesus has come back,
so he goes there looking for Him.

His son is dying and he's desperate--he'll try anything!

The official asks Jesus to come heal his dying son 47b

Jesus helps the father define what he's expecting:

Why did he come to Jesus? What did he think He could do for him?

Was he just looking for a miracle, or did he want something more?

Is this a last ditch effort to try anything that might work?

Jesus introduces a theological problem:

48-49 *"Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe."* 49 *The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies."*

[Imagine the father's thoughts;

he's desperate for help and Jesus wants to discuss theology!]

Some people are only interested in signs and wonders.

They aren't interested in Him—they just want signs.

Signs and wonders make a great show, but they don't often bring people to genuine faith in Christ—even in N.T.!

The official isn't interested in "signs and wonders."

The man's desperate; he has no interest in a "side show"

or in engaging Jesus in theological debate.

All he cares about is his dying son!

He isn't ready to deal with theological implications of who Jesus is.
Though he hasn't made a commitment to trust Jesus, he's desperate;
this is his only hope to save his son.

It's worth a try—he's heard a lot about Jesus' ability to heal.

"If He can do this for my son, I'll trust Him."

Jesus' *rebuke* would be appropriate—yet it's **a challenge to trust Him**.
Problem people have with faith: *we have to see it to believe it!*

"Unless you see signs and wonders, you won't believe!"

Jesus calls on us to believe *without* seeing.

**Faith that counts with God believes what He says,
even when we can't see the answer!**

Jesus tests his faith. 50

What does the official *think* has to happen?

Official assumes the way to heal is to GO to the boy.

Twice he asks Jesus, "*come down . . .*"

What does Jesus ask him to do? 50a

Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son will live."

"If you believe me, leave me!"

"If you really trust me, take me at my word

—go back home and see what I've done for you."

This isn't what he expected—healing isn't suppose to work this way.

Why would He ask that?

As long as Jesus is with him, he can hang on to the expected result.

If Jesus leaves him, he may never find Jesus again.

He might not get back through the crowd to get His attention!

He has to trust Jesus enough to go home empty-handed.

Could Jesus heal him long distance (by remote control)?

Will that work?

Shouldn't he *touch* him to heal him?

Or, *at least speak to him*, command him verbally to arise?

When God asks us to trust Him to meet a need,

He doesn't always do what we expect Him to do!

He doesn't always do it the way we think He should,
or *when* we think He should!

He asks us to trust Him with all our heart, not lean on our own understanding,
acknowledge Him, and THEN He promises to lay a straight path before us—that
goes where HE wants to lead us.

Would the official trust Jesus enough to go for plan "B"?

How does the official respond? 50b

"The man took Jesus at his word and departed."

The official takes Jesus at His Word.

He believes Him and heads for home! *That's faith!*

Had he not responded by faith to what He *did* know about Jesus,
he never would've discovered how much greater Jesus is!

Sometimes we need to be stretched to a *greater* crisis than we expect,
so we can learn how great our Lord really is!

THE ROYAL OFFICIAL'S SOLUTION 4:51-54

His servants find him and give him good news

51 *While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living*
“His son is alive!”

He didn't just *begin* to get well!

He's *suddenly* well.

The official checks out the story. *What does he discover?*

52-53a *When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, “The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour.” 53 Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.”* This isn't coincidence!

The healing occurs at the exact time Jesus announced it.

How does he respond?

The official is convinced and trusts in Jesus 53b

So he and all his household believed.

When he sees his son healed,
he's ready to entrust himself to Jesus.

His whole household is convinced.

Writer concludes: this is 2nd demonstration of Jesus' glory.

54 *This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus performed, having come from Judea to Galilee.*
Again, those who observe it trust Jesus.

So, how should WE respond?

We can trust Him for eternal life.

We can trust Him to meet our needs

–to satisfy our heart's desire.

We should take Him at His Word!

God deals with all levels of society: fishermen, a religious leader,
a woman with a shady past, and a politician.

It makes no difference who you are;

if you have a need this morning, God wants to meet that need.

Sometimes God allows us to face a need so we will seek Him.

The official never would have left his home to seek Jesus,

if his son hadn't become ill.

Sometimes God brings hard times into our life to bring us to Himself.

The nobleman takes Jesus at His Word
and receives His heart's desire!

Jesus responds to the man's desperate situation.

But the nobleman has to take Him at His Word.

Jesus has promised to give us eternal life.

He has promised to satisfy the deepest desire of our hearts.

A number of years ago, some friends of mine came to a crisis
when the husband discovered he was dying of cancer.

We had the opportunity to tell them about Christ
and see them trust Him

He is now with His Savior. She continues to walk with the Lord.

The crisis was a difficult time in their life.

But if they hadn't faced the crisis,

they might have never turned to Jesus and trusted Him.

God sometimes sends a crisis, to cause us to come to Him.

The great desire of God's heart is to bring us to Himself.

Jesus requires "blind faith" from the nobleman.

He couldn't see what Jesus had done for his son.

He had to go home without any guarantees, taking Jesus at His Word.

***Faith that counts with God believes what He says,
even when we can't see the answer!***

Heb. 11:1: "Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. . . . 6
Without faith it is impossible to please God, because in order for anyone to come to Him,
they must believe that God exists, and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him."

You'll never come to Him unless you trust Him!

That's what we have to do about the issue of eternal life.

Lots of voices prescribe lots of ways to get there.

Jesus says, "Trust Me!"

"I AM the way to the Father."

"No one comes to the Father but by Me."

You can't see the result until life is over.

If you're wrong, it's too late!

**So you have to take Jesus at His Word and go home
Take Him at His Word!**

When you get home you'll discover His Word IS true.

You'll discover He's able to fulfill the deepest desire of your heart.

But you have to trust Him enough to take Him at His Word.

Have YOU trusted Him?