

Jesus and the disciples are still on their way back from the first Passover Feast of Jesus' ministry. They stopped to baptize for about a month in the Judean wilderness. (John 3:22) When the Pharisees learned Jesus surpassed John in the numbers of people that were coming to be baptized, He headed back to Galilee stopping in Samaria. (John 4:1) Our text today begins by telling us Jesus just finished two days of ministering to the Samaritans who believed Jesus to be the Savior of the world. (John 4:42) <sup>43</sup> *After the two days he left for Galilee.*

**Commented [notes1]:** 22 After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. John 3:22 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** 1 The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, John 4:1 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** 42 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." John 4:42 (NIV)

**Commented [notes4]:** 24 "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. Luke 4:24 (NIV)

The next verse tells us that Jesus did not expect to be welcomed in Nazareth. Samaria was despised by the Jews, yet they were the first to openly accept Jesus as Savior. <sup>44</sup> *(Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.)* In Matthew, Mark and Luke, this statement was made in conjunction with Nazareth's rejection of Jesus. I think John inserted this text here to tell us that this was chronologically when Nazareth rejected Jesus. (Luke 4:24) John is giving us accounts that the other writers did not include so he skipped the story of the rejection but inserted a clue about the timeline. It fits in well here because the Nazareth rejection contrasts with the Samaritan's reception.

It has been said that an expert is anyone from over 100 miles away with a laptop. We are so ready to hear anything new and different because we are so jaded toward anything local out of familiarity and past disappointments. That is human nature. Jesus emphasized the point by telling the Nazareth audience that Gentiles often received the prophets. That infuriated them to the point of trying to push Him off a cliff. (Luke 4:28-29) That just proved His point. We tend to downplay the importance of those we constantly come in contact with, and idolize those we don't know. It's a lack of faith in God's ability to transform and work through the individuals we know, and at the same time, an overestimation of the wisdom and insight of those we don't know. (John 6:63)

**Commented [notes5]:** 28 All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. 29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. Luke 4:28-29 (NIV)

**Commented [notes6]:** 63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. John 6:63 (NIV)

Jesus walked through the mob and headed back to Capernaum through Cana. It was time for the second miraculous sign. The first miraculous sign was turning the water to wine. The abundance of God's kingdom was present. The second sign was the clearing of the merchants from the Temple, but that was not a miraculous sign. (John 2:15) Now, back in Cana where the first miraculous sign took place, Jesus is about to perform the second miraculous sign. (Isaiah 35:5,6)

**Commented [notes7]:** 15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. John 2:15 (NIV)

<sup>45</sup> *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.* Outside of His home city of Nazareth, Jesus is welcomed with open arms. What did they see that excited them? John has told us that Jesus cleansed the temple and that he performed miracles. We assume those miracles were healing the sick. The cleansing of the Temple was especially welcomed by Galileans because Galilee was the home of the zealot movement. Cleansing the Temple was the overtly militant kind of stand they liked to see. Jesus was a hero, for the moment.

**Commented [notes8]:** 5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. 6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Isaiah 35:5-6 (NIV)

<sup>46</sup> Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. As Jesus visited Cana, a royal official sought Him out. We don't know anything about this official, but we do find toward the end of Jesus' ministry, in the Gospel of Luke, that a woman named Joanna was a supporter of Jesus' ministry. Her husband, Chuza, served Herod Antipas. (Luke 8:3) If this was the same man, he may have been what was behind Herod's curiosity about Jesus. (Luke 23:8)

**Commented [notes9]:** 3 Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.  
Luke 8:3 (NIV)

The official came from Capernaum, where he had left his sick son. The news of Jesus healing people in Jerusalem gave him hope that Jesus might be able to help his son. <sup>47</sup> 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. Some of you don't need much imagination to put yourself in this man's place. If the doctors don't give your child any hope to survive an illness, you become desperate for help. We all face times of desperation when our only hope is that the Lord will hear our plea. On hearing of Jesus' return and the miracles in Jerusalem, he thought this was one last hope to save his son. He went the 18 miles to Cana and begged Jesus to heal his son. The tense in Greek shows not a one-time request but a continued pleading.

**Commented [notes10]:** 8 When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle.  
Luke 23:8 (NIV)

That is pretty humbling for a royal official to be pleading with a carpenter. All his wealth and fame could not do a thing for his son. The best things in life can't be purchased with money, things like health, relationships, love, peace, and joy. They only come from the gracious hand of God. (James 1:17)

**Commented [notes11]:** 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.  
James 1:17 (NIV)

In some ways, we are all in this official's place of independence and self-sufficiency, not feeling any urgency as if we can handle the things life throws at us. Then one day something hits us that is out of our realm of our control. I've been there many times and I'm sure most of you have too. And though we are like little kings, we have to humble ourselves and kneel before the carpenter and beg for His help. The difference is that we know the generous and loving nature of this carpenter and His willingness to answer prayer. There are times when His answer is not the one we want to hear, but we know that even then, He will walk with us through whatever has come our way. (Jeremiah 33:3)

**Commented [notes12]:** 3 'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'  
Jer 33:3 (NIV)

<sup>48</sup> "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe." Jesus was rebuking all within the sound of His voice for their lack of faith. This was a last ditch effort on the part of the official, not a solution he thoroughly believed in. He ran to Jesus because nothing else worked. Is that the way you treat prayer? (James 1:6)

**Commented [notes13]:** 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.  
James 1:6 (NIV)

Is your attitude that if all else fails, pray? "I guess it has finally come to that! We'll just have to trust the Lord." What will it take for us to really believe? How many signs and miracles do we need? I've seen so many in my life that I had better believe and run to Jesus first. I really believe that He will give us all that we need to convince us. The question comes down to this, will we believe or will we refuse to believe even when we see His signs?

<sup>49</sup> *The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies."* To the official, it wasn't a matter of faith. It was a matter of desperation. Jesus was saying faith is essential whether you are desperate or not. If you have faith in the everyday things of life, then when the times of desperation come, you will know where to turn. You'll turn there automatically because you know He is your source of help. (Psalm 46:1)

**Commented [notes14]:** God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Psalms 46:1 (NIV)

The official's prayer was to come down to Capernaum before his son dies. Jesus wanted to bring the official to belief in His ability as Lord of creation. The official just didn't want to lose his son. Jesus wanted his whole household to have life. (Ephesians 3:20)

**Commented [notes15]:** 20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, Eph 3:20 (NIV)

At first glance, you would think that Jesus was hardhearted. That rebuke, about needing signs and wonders to believe, seemed a bit cold when the son was dying. We need to see that Jesus always desires to give us more than we are asking. (Ephesians 3:20) The official wants to save his son. Jesus wants to save the whole family. I think we often make the same mistake in misunderstanding the Lord's reaction to our prayers. We can be sure He always has more in mind for us than we are asking. (1Corinthians 2:9) Sometimes His mercy tells us "no".

**Commented [notes16]:** 20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, Eph 3:20 (NIV)

<sup>50</sup> *Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son will live."* The man took Jesus at his word and departed. What a relief there must have been in the heart of the official at the sound of those words. Jesus stretched his faith by commanding him to go and his son would live. The NIV fails to convey the imperative command. Jesus isn't asking; He's ordering.

**Commented [notes17]:** 9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" [1 Cor 2:9 (NIV)]

In that age and culture, the signs and wonders were related to the presence of the magician. Jesus was commanding the official to go and believe without Jesus personally going. He was asking him to believe that He could merely speak it and it would be done. The official allowed his faith to be stretched. He took Jesus at His word and left. (Hebrews 11:6)

**Commented [notes18]:** 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Heb 11:6 (NIV)

Jesus said it. I believe it. That settles it! Is that the kind of faith you have? We have so many expressions of Jesus in the Gospels. Do we believe them? Do we take Jesus at His word like the official did? Will we allow our faith to be stretched? I encourage you to read through one of the Gospels and ask yourself if you are taking Jesus at His word. Let me give you just a couple of examples.

He said all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him. (Matthew 28:18) Do you take Him at His word and act like you believe that? He said that if we desire to be with Jesus, we must take up our cross and follow Him. (Matthew 16:24) He said that He would never leave or forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5) Do you take Him at His word? Are you acting on what He said?

**Commented [notes19]:** 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Matt 28:18 (NIV)

**Commented [notes20]:** 24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Matt 16:24 (NIV)

The official headed back down to Capernaum. <sup>51</sup> *While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living.* <sup>52</sup> *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."* <sup>53</sup> *Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which*

**Commented [notes21]:** 5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Heb 13:5 (NIV)

Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and all his household believed. It happened just as Jesus said. The official was right to take Jesus at His word. You can never go wrong by following a command of Jesus. It came to pass at the very moment that Jesus said it.

The family of Herod compromised in many things, but they did know the Torah. They had rabbi for advisors and probably knew it as well or better than most of us. With this background in the Old Testament, who is it that speaks and it comes to pass? (Isaiah 55:11) It's only the Lord himself or the servants to whom He has entrusted His words. (Ezekiel 12:28; 1Samuel 3:19) When the text says that he believed, we should take it to mean that He knew Jesus to be the servant of God. This is an initial belief that would lead to greater belief. Faith in His atoning work on the cross would come later.

Looking back, we see Jesus' seemingly harsh statement was factual. *Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.* Why did the official ask what time the boy got better? It was because he doubted. Sure, he took Jesus at His word, but then he thought maybe it was just a coincidence. He now knows it was a miraculous sign to help him believe.

How many times have you prayed, seen the prayer answered, and then tried to figure out how it happened naturally? Even if it did happen naturally, who created nature? Can't we just take God at His word and believe? It is the sinful nature in man that can take all we have been given and still doubt. If our rebellious heart was fully yielded to the Holy Spirit, we would wonder how anyone could doubt at all. We'd see the world around us in the light of belief instead of the shadow of skepticism. We'd be amazed that everyone doesn't believe. (Numbers 14:11)

<sup>54</sup> This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus performed, having come from Judea to Galilee. It was a long distance miracle. Jesus had done other miracles, but this is the second in Galilee. The first sign, water to wine, was a demonstration that the abundance of the kingdom had come. The second miraculous sign was the long distance healing of the official's son.

These two miracles in Cana follow a pattern. First there is an urgent need presented. Next, Jesus gives a mild rebuke that challenges faith. (John 2:4) Then there is a command that is obeyed. (John 2:7-8) Finally, the miracle comes to pass resulting in belief in Jesus. (John 2:11) I'm not sure why these miracles in Cana are so similar in pattern, but they do teach a lesson that runs throughout John's gospel. Those who see and believe are blessed (20:30-31). Those who believe without seeing are even more blessed. (20:29)

As we went through the details of the story, you may have missed the flow of what was taking place in the life of the official. His story begins with him hearing about Jesus. He heard that He had arrived in Galilee. Someone had relayed stories of Jesus and told of His return to the area. We don't know who that was, but without their concern to tell the official how he could find help for his son, the story would

**Commented [notes22]:** 11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:11 (NIV)

**Commented [notes23]:** 28 "Therefore say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: None of my words will be delayed any longer; whatever I say will be fulfilled, declares the Sovereign LORD.'" Ezekiel 12:28 (NIV)

**Commented [notes24]:** 19 The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. 1 Sam 3:19 (NIV)

**Commented [notes25]:** 11 The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them?" Num 14:11 (NIV)

**Commented [notes26]:** 4 "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." John 2:4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes27]:** 7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. 8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, John 2:7-8 (NIV)

**Commented [notes28]:** 11 This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him. John 2:11 (NIV)

**Commented [notes29]:** 30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John 20:30-31 (NIV)

**Commented [notes30]:** 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." John 20:29 (NIV)

not have taken place. Someone has to care enough to tell those in need where they can go to find the answers they are desperately seeking. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news! (Romans 10:15)

**Commented [notes31]:** 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" [Romans 10:15 (NIV)]

Then verse 47 tells us that after hearing the message, he went. He made a decision to act on what he had heard. He didn't make excuses or try to downplay Jesus' significance. Even if he didn't fully believe, he went to see for himself. If you want heaven's answers, you must go to Jesus.

That same verse tells us that he asked for help. Once you come to Jesus, you must then make your request. Why is that? Can't we figure that He already knows our needs before we ask? Yes, you can, but He still wants you to ask. It humbly expresses that we know the source of the answer to our needs. When we ask someone to help us, then we know whom to thank for the answer. Ask and you shall receive. (Matthew 7:7)

**Commented [notes32]:** 7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Matt 7:7 (NIV)

In verse 48, Jesus challenged him to believe without seeing the answer he sought. Jesus isn't our magic time and space manipulator. He does not say, "Your will be done," to our every request. Will you believe without a sign? We should base our faith on the person of Jesus, not on whether or not we get what we want.

In verse 50, the official took Jesus at His word and went. This was another step of faith. We like to think of conversion as one time momentous decisions when the whole of life is transformed in an instant, but that is a very rare occurrence. More often than not, we take steps like this man took. We hear. We go to see. We ask, and maybe then we come to the point of believing. Still, our believing is tenuous at best, and we need something to solidify it and plant it deep in our hearts. The man has obeyed, and now he is looking for results.

Then in verse 53 the official realized it was not coincidence, but that the word of Jesus is the word of God, powerful and life transforming. That conviction truly took root in his soul and his life would never be the same.

Finally, also in verse 53, he shared his faith with his household, leading them to faith as well. Once you know, you can't keep it in, you've got to share it, especially with those you love.

*The living miracle of the healing of the nobleman's son teaches us important lessons about faith in Christ—the creation of faith, the conviction of faith, and the confession of faith. When true faith is kindled in a person's life he is never apologetic. — (Olford's Expository Preaching Outlines) Their whole life, actions, speech and desires, will evidence this new life in Jesus. Have you taken the royal official's journey?*

Now you've heard about Jesus just as the royal official did. Will you go to Jesus and make your request? When He gives you the sign you are seeking, will you believe?