

**AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY - Studies in John's Gospel - Part  
eighteen - Sunday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, 10 a.m.**

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**THE SECOND SIGN OF JESUS IN CANA - THE LONG-DISTANCE  
POWER OF JESUS' WORD**

**John 4:43-54 - "After the two days he departed for Galilee. [44] (For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.) [45] So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast. [46] So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. [47] When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. [48] So Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." [49] The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." [50] Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. [51] As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. [52] So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." [53] The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." And he himself believed, and all his household. [54] This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee."**

We're going to continue unpacking John's profound explanation of what it means to "**believe in Jesus Christ.**" That's the reason for the title of this whole series - "**John - The Gospel of Belief.**" That's what John's whole account is about and it's what it's for. He wrote to define and deepen **belief in Jesus, the Son of God.** If we study carefully today John has something important to tell those who need to press deeper into what "**believing in Jesus**" actually means.

There's no point in trying to avoid the confusing verses at the beginning of this text. They seem contradictory. Look at them carefully again - **John 4:43-45 - "After the two days he departed for Galilee. [44] (For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.) [45] So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast."** - IPAD TEXT

First Jesus says a prophet is **without** honor in his own hometown. Yet, right after that quote, John tells us the people from His home town (that's the Galileans) **welcomed** Jesus quite warmly. And then John carefully adds these Galileans were in the crowd at the feast in Jerusalem.

There are many liberal commentaries who write this off as some kind of later editing of John's account - scribal error of some sort. But I think that misses the point. There's a better explanation that fits right into the context of the picture John has been painting about genuine belief in Jesus and what it means. There are counterfeits to genuine belief in Jesus.

Notice, as John records Jesus' words, Jesus didn't say a prophet is without **welcome** in his home town. He said a prophet is without **honor** in his home town. And this has a great deal to do with the way John not too subtly reminds us these Galileans were welcoming Jesus because they had seen what He did in Jerusalem. They, in John's exact words, had seen "**all that He had done**" in Jerusalem.

Little red flags are meant to spring up in our minds. We've seen this before in John's account. Think back to **John 2:23-24 - "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. [24] But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people...."** - IPAD TEXT

***Discipleship based on signs*** - not to be confused with ***initial faith inspired by signs*** - was not welcomed by Jesus. He knew sign-faith had no staying power unless the sign clung to was the sign of His resurrection from the grave. That sign alone would stand rugged and strong through all the seasons of storm and dry doubt that would surely come upon all who professed His name.

So John, in his opening few confusing verses, is reminding the careful reader that, then as now, there are many emotional religious types who confuse ***interest*** in Jesus and ***admiration*** of Jesus with ***determined, committed through thick and thin discipleship*** with Jesus. The idea is those who ***truly*** believe in Jesus follow Him all the way through to the shame and rejection of the cross. They ***die*** with Jesus.

This is not merely some academic issue, unrelated to the way we live out our daily lives. How often have you encountered someone who said something like, ***“Christianity just doesn’t work for me. I have to rethink the whole issue of believing in Jesus Christ.”***

That’s what John calls us all to face in today’s text. And for reasons you’ll see later on in this teaching, we will need to remember this important introductory point. It’s going to come up again.

## 1) **THE FIRST TWO SIGNS AND THEIR RESULTS**

**IPAD TEXT - John 4:46 and 54 - “So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill....54....*This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.*”**

It's strange that John calls this healing miracle the ***second sign*** Jesus did because we know He worked many other miracles ***between*** turning the water into wine and healing of the official's son. We're ***told*** of these other miracles in **John 2:23 - “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.” - IPAD TEXT**

I think there is a reason for this. John clearly distinguishes between these two ***signs*** and the rest of the ***miracles*** because of the way they fit into the stated purpose of his account in **John 20:30-31 - “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; [31] but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” - IPAD TEXT**

Signs are distinguished by the way they *initiate* or *fulfill* the development of genuine faith in Jesus as God the Son. Signs *do something* to the faith of the observer that is deeper than mere excitement or surprise. They somehow *deepen attachment to Jesus' person*. Not just the immediate *benefit* of His life-healing miracles and power.

You can see this in the two signs John lists thus far. Both the water in wine sign and the healing of the official's son sign had abiding results. John lists them both quite carefully.

With the water turned to wine the faith of Jesus' own disciples was deepened - **John 2:11 - "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him."** - IPAD TEXT.

Notice, His *own disciples* believed in Him. But didn't His own disciples already believe in Him? And yes, they did. But their faith wasn't a one time event or momentary interest. Like all genuine faith in Christ Jesus, it was *living* and it was constantly *growing*. The water turned to wine is called the first *sign* because the Apostle John saw the lasting effect it had on Jesus' already believing disciples.

**Lesson?** Faith never quits growing. It never ceases to need feeding. It either expands or it shrinks. Stay fascinated with studying the greatness and glory of Jesus Christ. Don't bail on Jesus because life got hard or He doesn't take your problem away.

The healing of the official's son fits into this same *sign* category. It's quite clever of John to mention the "**believing**" of the official twice in the same account. Note carefully - **John 4:49-53 - "The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." [50] Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." *The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him* and went on his way. [51] As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. [52] So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." [53] The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." *And he himself believed, and all his household.*" - IPAD TEXT**

So here's the question. **When did this official actually believe?** Was it when he heard the promise of Jesus? Or was it when he got the news that his son was better? And the answer is **both**.

This is the difference between *believing* in Jesus because of the neat stuff he might do for us and *believing in Jesus* as the Son of God. John calls these the first two *signs* because they fulfilled the purpose of his whole account. Faith is *created* and faith is *sustained*. And the faith *spreads*. This is faith with no stopping point. It's always in, without conditions, for the long haul.

2) **GENUINE FAITH CAN TAKE CORRECTION AND EVEN REBUKE FROM JESUS WITHOUT SELF-PITY AND QUITTING**

**IPAD TEXT - John 4:47-49 - "When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. [48] So Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." [49] The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies.""**

It's amazing how many of the commentaries say Jesus spoke these stern words for the surrounding onlookers, not the official himself. Sounds nice. But that text won't allow it. "**So Jesus said to him....**"(48). The response seems kind of harsh.



And it's fascinating to me that we get this kind of response in **both** of the first two signs John records. Do you remember Jesus' words to Mary - His own mother - when she merely brought the issue of the shortness of wine at the wedding in Cana? It too sounds a bit harsh -

**John 2:3-4 - "When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' [4] And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.'"**

**- IPAD TEXT**

Why does Jesus do this - twice? Are we meant to drill down under the surface of what believing in Jesus - **faith** in Jesus - is all about? What happens when the faithful come with their urgent issues? Do they always get a smile, a wink, and a wave of a magic wand? Is there never anything belief must **press through and push past**? Is faith never tested and weighed?

Remember these first two signs when you're broken hearted and pressing on heaven's door for an urgently needed answer. Both Mary and the official have to **continue** making their approach to Jesus. After being what some people might call slighted or dressed down by Jesus Mary just keeps pressing ahead - **John 2:3-5 - "When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." [4] And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." [5] His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." IPAD TEXT.**

This is Jesus' mother's way of saying "We're not done. I may have been out of line, but this isn't over. Let's all listen to what Jesus will tell us next. I know there's more."

The same with the official awaiting a miracle from Jesus - **John 4:47-49** - "When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. [48] So Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." [49] The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." - IPAD TEXT

**Lesson?** Genuine belief in Jesus means knowing He always works for our deepest good even when it doesn't *feel* like it at first. Did you not receive as quickly as you had desired? Did He address something in your heart that cut into your pride? Persist in following even when your Lord speaks correction that doesn't *feel* wonderful. There's more from Jesus still to come.

- 3) **WE ARE INVITED TO TRUST IN BOTH THE POWER AND THE REACH OF JESUS' WORD OF PROMISE**

**IPAD TEXT - John 4:47-50 - "When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and *asked him to come down and heal his son*, for he was at the point of death. [48] So Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." [49] The official said to him, "Sir, *come down before my child dies*." [50] Jesus said to him, "*Go; your son will live*." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way."**

This miracle should be especially precious to us. This official had walked from Capernaum to Cana - which was easily twenty miles. And he came to Jesus because he wanted to bring Jesus ***back with him*** to the place where his son was so sick. And what the second "***sign***" in John's account teaches this desperate official is Jesus doesn't have to go all the way back to Capernaum in order for His ***word*** to have power.

If Jesus promises, His authority has the same effect whether anyone can **see** Jesus physically present or not. It's His world. It's His kingdom. It's His rule. Power isn't tied to the visibility of Jesus.

You can't bring your loved ones to a physical Jesus here on earth. You have to have others pray for you without seeing Jesus at the front of any church or prayer room. But you have, wonderfully and faithfully recorded, the very words of Jesus. And we are invited by this wonderful second sign to **believe** in the **word** of Jesus to your broken life when Jesus isn't physically present.

Notice, Jesus **speaks** healing to the official in the form of **promise before** the official has awareness of the miracle. **Trust is forced by Jesus' bare word**. That's the point of this text. There is nothing **verifying** the miracle when this ruler heads obediently for home. But the bare word of Jesus is enough. It always is.

Where is faith being tested and stretched right now for you? Where does obedience to Christ seem to **cost** more than it **offers**? Where do you have to follow **just because** Jesus calls you through the voice of Scripture, or conscience, or the haunting pull of the Holy Spirit on your life?

Just obey. Turn to the voice of Jesus. All that He would lead you into is possible and gracious. But you'll only know that when you do what He says.