

The Gospel of John

The Faith of a Nobleman

John 4:46-54

INTRODUCTION:

Many scholars believe that Jesus died on the cross around 33 A.D. That would mean that at this time 1,986 years ago Jesus was less than two weeks away from fulfilling His Father's will by dying on the cross in order to bring salvation to mankind.

We all have needs and each of our needs are different. Many times we do not know our true need, but God does. If we go to Him with an open heart and seek Him, we are promised that we will find Him. And through **faith** God will come to us as we are and will provide us with our **true need**.

This is shown to us over and over here in the Gospel of John.

Nicodemus - Needed to know that Jesus was not just a man favored by God, He was the prophesied Messiah. Nicodemus needed to be Born Again.

The Samaritan woman - Needed to know that she was trying to find satisfaction in all the wrong places. She needed Living Water: the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in her life.

Disciples - Needed to know that salvation was not just for the Jews. Salvation is now for everyone. They needed a hunger to go into the whole world proclaiming the Gospel because the fields are white for harvest.

The Nobleman - Needed to know that Jesus was more than just a side show performing miracles. He needed a mature faith in order to fully believe in the person of Jesus.

Where is your level of faith?

Are you just now realizing that you are in need of a savior?

Or did you once believe and due to circumstances fell away from God?

Or have you been a Christian for some time and, like the disciples, need a hunger for the harvest of souls?

A mature faith in Jesus is one that believes—not just in His power, or just in His promise—but upon His very Person and puts their faith in action.

In preparing our hearts this morning to hear God's Word, I ask that you turn in your Bibles with me to the **fourth chapter of the Gospel of John**. The Holy Spirit has provided a remarkable story for us at the end of this chapter about a nobleman who met

the Lord Jesus.

All Stand and Read Scripture

John 4:46-54 (NASB)

⁴⁶Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and was imploring *Him* to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸So Jesus said to him, “Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you *simply* will not believe.” ⁴⁹The royal official **said* to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” ⁵⁰Jesus **said* to him, “Go; your son lives.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off. ⁵¹As he was now going down, *his* slaves met him, saying that his son was living. ⁵²So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” ⁵³So the father knew that *it was* at that hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives”; and he himself believed and his whole household. ⁵⁴This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

Prayer

This is a wonderful story. It’s about a man who had faith in the power of Jesus to heal his sick son; and whose son was healed as a result of his faith.

I believe the Holy Spirit gave us the story for a reason. It was to teach us some very important lessons we need to know about the kind of relationship the Lord Jesus wishes to have with those who trust Him.

In the passage before us, the Lord Jesus completed his travel through Samaria and traveled further north to Galilee. While the Judeans were a people proud of their religious devotion to God, and while the Samaritans were a mixed people—partly Jewish and partly pagan, the Galileans were considered common sinners who lived on the edge of the heathen world. And yet, it was Galilee that the Lord Jesus chose as the center of His three-and-a-half-year earthly ministry—and Capernaum, a city of Galilee, as His home.

BODY:

I. REALIZING THE NEED FOR FAITH.

Here we are introduced to a nobleman where we will see a progression of his faith. It began with a desperate need that was beyond his control; then a belief in Jesus power; then it involved a trust in Jesus’ word; and it finally matured into a faith in the person of Jesus.

We’re told, “*So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum*” (vv. 45-46). His son had a fever; and his situation was grave. He, no doubt, could have afforded the best physicians in the region for his son. But they, apparently, could do nothing to save him.

There will be times in our life that we realize that we are totally incapable of fixing a problem in our life.

When good things happen, we all too often attribute it to our own achievements and

success. When bad things happen, however, we are quick to blame God, and we get angry with Him for not preventing it, which indicates the first flaw in our thinking—that we deserve to be immune to unpleasant circumstances.

Tragedies bring home the awful truth that we are not in charge. All of us think at one time or another that we can control the outcomes of situations, but in reality it is God who is in charge of all of His creation. Everything that happens is either caused by or allowed by God. Not a sparrow falls to the ground nor a hair from our head without God knowing about it.

Matthew 10:29-31 (NASB)

***29** Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And *yet* not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. **30** But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. **31** So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.*

We can complain, get angry, and blame God for what is happening. Yet if we will trust Him and yield our bitterness and pain to Him, acknowledging the prideful sin of trying to force our own will over His, He can and will grant us His peace and strength to get us through any difficult situation.

Now; it may be that this man had gone to Cana—twenty-five miles southwest of Capernaum—on official business of some kind; and while there, word had reached him of the dire situation of his son. Or it may be that he already knew about the condition of his son; and had traveled the long twenty-five miles distance to reach Jesus. Regardless of how it may have happened, John tells us, ***“When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death”*** (v. 47).

Here the nobleman, as powerful as he may have been on earth, begins to realize that this was something that was out of his control. He needed someone who had the power to heal his son.

II. FAITH IN THE POWER OF JESUS.

He knew enough about Jesus—having heard the stories of the miracles He had done, and of His bold testimony in the temple—to know that Jesus could make his son live. And that’s the **beginning** point of a faith in Jesus that many have—a faith in His power. They have a need; and they come to Him for the meeting of that need.

But this is where the story begins to get surprising. This man’s faith initially was in the power of Jesus. He had faith that Jesus was able to bring his son back from the point of death. But it was not yet a mature faith. It was a faith that was imperfect in that it needed to **“see”** Jesus in action.

That’s when we read that Jesus said something that seems—on the surface—to have been harsh: ***“Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe”*** (v. 48).

But as harsh as these words may have seemed, I suggest to you that these words—in reality—presented a test of the man’s faith. Jesus’ seemingly-harsh words were intended to pull out from the man the kind of faith that Jesus truly wanted to see; and that would move Him to take action for Him.

The nobleman wanted Jesus to come and perform the miracle for his son—believing in Jesus’ **power**, but not yet believing in the full **authority of His word**. He was asking Jesus to **come** to his son and perform a miracle that he could **see—with Jesus right there performing it**. But Jesus seemed unwilling to satisfy the man’s desire. He seemed to rebuke the man’s request—as if to say to him, “You have a deficiency in your faith! You come to me for the life of your son; but you won’t believe unless I go to his bedside, and you actually see Me do it!” I believe He was wanting to see a more mature faith from the man than that.

This desperate nobleman was—it seems—in no mood to argue the level of his faith. He was respectful, but resolute. “The nobleman said to Him, ‘Sir, come down before my child dies!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your son lives’” (v. 49-50a). I want you to notice that the nobleman acted in faith in what Jesus said to him and passed the test!. Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your son lives”; and he moved to a new level of maturity in his faith in Jesus. “So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way” (v. 50b).

III. FAITH IN THE PROMISE OF JESUS.

He believed enough in Jesus’ word to cease demanding that Jesus come to his house and perform the miracle before his eyes.

Jesus was making him trust that He had the power to give life to his son from a distance of twenty-five miles away—a full day’s journey—by simply speaking the words, “Go your way; your son lives.”

Has our own personal faith in Jesus matured to that level yet? We may come to Jesus with our needs—trusting in His **power** to do for us what is needed. And it’s right that we do so; because He truly **does** have all power. But He **also** speaks as one who has all authority. Do we, then, need to actually see Him act before we will believe on the authority of His promises? Or do we have what we might call a "Doubting Thomas" faith—one that demands to be able to "see" and "touch" for ourselves before we will believe what He says? Would Jesus say to us what He also said to Thomas?

John 20:29 (NASB)

29 Jesus *said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed *are* they who did not see, and *yet* believed.”

So then; this nobleman showed that his faith truly was maturing. When Jesus simply spoke the promise that his son lived, he trusted His words and went his way.

Now; it could be that the nobleman even felt free at that time to carry on with some important piece of business; or it may be that he immediately made his way along the twenty-five mile journey to his home. But in any event, it would have taken some time to make the journey; and perhaps—because he is human like us—we could speculate that he struggled with some doubts along the way.

But John tells us, “Go; your son lives.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off. 51 As he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living. 52 So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” (v. 50-52). The seventh

hour according to Jewish time—would have meant that the Lord saved his son’s life at 1 PM. It would have been later in the evening (which, to the Jewish mind, would have been the next day) that he heard the news from his servants. **So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives”**. The man was brought from a faith in Jesus’ power to a faith in His promise—and the Lord’s promise proved to be true.

And I ask you to note very carefully what we’re told next. **“And he himself believed and his whole household”** (v. 53b). What a wonderful statement! He clearly had **already** believed in Jesus’ **power**; otherwise he would not have come to Him in the first place. And he clearly had **already** believed in Jesus’ **promise**; otherwise he would not have left when Jesus simply declared, **“Your son lives”**. Then the scriptures tell us that **“he himself believed”** means is that the man went beyond a mere faith in Jesus’ power and in His promise; to a...

IV. FAITH IN THE PERSON OF JESUS.

When the nobleman is met by his servants with the wonderful news that his son had been healed at the exact time Jesus had said he was, the miracle is seen to have had a double effect—the sick boy was healed of his deadly fever, and the father was convicted of his belief in Jesus.

In order to have faith, we must believe that Jesus' words are true. Too often, we possess a vague faith, a blurred longing for His promises to be true. True faith is totally convinced of the promises of God.

But now—having seen all that Jesus had done; and having matured in his faith—he now rested his faith **upon** the person of Jesus. Surely this was the Son of God; for only the Son of God could heal his son with a mere word a full day’s journey away! And not only did he himself believe, but so also did his whole household! The conviction of the father and the startling result of Jesus' miracle helped to begin the process of conversion of the nobleman's entire household. Convinced that Jesus was the Christ by personally witnessing this healing, they had the opportunity to grow in their belief to full faith if they continued to seek and believe Him.

Colossians 1:21-23 (NASB)

21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged in evil deeds*,
22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— **23** if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven,

CONCLUSION:

Note carefully the lesson from this story. It is a lesson that you and I need to take to heart. It is not enough to simply believe in Jesus’ power—as important and as right as that is to do. And it’s not enough to simply believe in His promises—even though we most certainly **should** do so. We must come to the point at which we believe “upon” His very **Person**—that He is the Son of God as He says that He is and serve Him in faith His power toward us, and His promises to us, are what they are because He is **WHO** He is!

May God help us to grow increasingly into the sort of mature faith that pleases Him. One that doesn’t demand to know “why”, but that trusts Him without asking. One that

doesn't demand to see "how" He works, but trusts confidently that He works whether we see it or not. One that rests not just in His power, nor just in His promise, but most of all upon His very Person.

ILLUSTRATION:

We wake up, go to work, come home, eat, go to bed and then do it all over again. Year after year, and it all seems good until we stop and wonder why. Have you ever stopped to wonder why? Is this all there is? Just the here and now? Or is there more? In this passage we learn that there is more to life than just the daily grind. We must understand that we are in **need** of salvation.

Luke 15:4-7 (NASB)

⁴ "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? ⁵ When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' ⁷ I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

God will seek those of us who are lost and have gone astray. We will feel Him tugging at our hearts. We realize we have a void in our life that needs to be filled.

But there is good news. God knows that we have all sinned and are in need of a Savior. He understands our despair and desires that all men everywhere will repent and turn to Him. He wants us understand that He loves us so much he was willing to send His only Son to earth offer us salvation from our sin because all of us have sinned and all of us are in need of a Savior.

John 3:16-17 (KJV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

That is good news! God sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins and to set us free from the sin of this world. To teach us the way of righteousness (like God...free of sin) as Adam and Eve were when they were created. The curse of sin in this world has separated us from God. We need His righteousness to be reunited with Him. When we believe in His Son we can have our righteousness restored. Not because of anything that we did to wipe out our sins, but because of what Christ did for us by dying on the cross.

The scriptures tell us that if we seek God we **will** find Him by our faith. He gave us His Word (the Bible) to communicate to us who He is, what this struggle on earth is all about, and how to be saved by faith through Jesus Christ.

By faith, Christ gives us an assurance of eternity in heaven where we will be in the presence of His glory. There will be no more suffering, sickness, hunger, tears, or pain.

The Family of God.