

John 4:43-54, “After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee. ⁴⁴ For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. ⁴⁵ So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast. ⁴⁶ Therefore 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. ⁴⁷ When 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.

⁴⁸ So Jesus said to him, “Unless you *people* see ^lsigns and wonders, you *simply* will not believe.” ⁴⁹ The royal official *said to Him, “^lSir, come down before my child dies.” ⁵⁰ Jesus *said to him, “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 ^lson was living. ⁵² So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, “Yesterday at the ^lseventh hour the fever left him.” ⁵³ So 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. ⁵⁴ This is again a second ^lsign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

Are miraculous healings dependent on the faith of the one being healed?

Is that the reason why many people today in the church don't get healed like we see in the New Testament? They don't have enough faith.

Let's begin this morning by considering a few biblical examples that will help inform our perspective.

Turn back to 2 Kings 5. Naaman, the captain of the army of the king of Aram, had leprosy, for which there was no effective treatment or cure until the modern era.

In this account there was a little girl from Israel who had been captured by the Arameans and she became the servant of Naaman's wife.

This little girl tells Naaman's wife that a prophet in Samaria could cure her husband Naaman of his leprosy. She was thinking of Elisha.

So, Naaman hears about this and informs his king. The king sends word to the king of Israel, who initially wants nothing to do with this. He thinks it's a trap, it's insincere.

But the prophet Elisha hears about the situation and sends word to the king of Israel.

Let's pick it up in verse 8, “**It happened when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent word to the king, saying, “Why have you torn your clothes? Now let him (Naaman) come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.”**

Again, we are reminded of the primary purpose of miracles, in this case, healing. Elisha very well could have been motivated by compassion and mercy for Naaman.

But that is not the *ultimate* reason behind his actions here. The ultimate reason is evangelistic, to give credibility to his ministry and message.

Notice what happens now in verse 9, **“So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha. 10 Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and you will be clean.”**

Now, ask yourself if Naaman’s response in the following verses sounds like he has the type of faith required to be healed.

Verse 11, **“But Naaman was furious and went away and said, “Behold, I thought, ‘He will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, (not my god, his god) and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.’¹² Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a rage.”**

Now, not only is there no evidence in this passage at all that he believes in the God of Israel. At the same time, there is evidence he is in sin.

He’s very angry at the simplistic and seemingly arbitrary instruction of Elisha. And even is manifesting pride that someone as important as him should be met by the prophet himself.

Verse 13, **“Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, “My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, ‘Wash, and be clean’?”**

14 So he went down (reluctantly) and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean.”

Naaman was healed *despite* of his sin and pride, certainly not because of him. What did this miraculous healing accomplish?

Verse 15, **“When he returned to the man of God with all his company, and came and stood before him, he said, “Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel...”**

The most you could say about Naaman is that he believed *as a result* of the healing. But certainly, one would not put him in the category of belief that qualified him to be healed.

Let's turn to Mark 1:40, **"And a leper *came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." 41 Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and *said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." 42 Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. 43 And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away, 44 and He *said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." 45 But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that [u]Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but [v]stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere."**

This man was healed but immediately *disregards Christ's command to be silent*. Warned sternly to not jeopardize Christ's teaching ministry, but ignored Christ's command.

Certainly not an example of the type of faith we would expect if indeed it was his faith that determined his ability to be healed. [[unless of course you want to say that his healing resulted in him having less faith than he had in verse 40]]

Luke 8:40, **"And as Jesus returned, the [k]people welcomed Him, for they had all been waiting for Him. 41 And there came a man named Jairus, and he was an [l]official of the synagogue; and he fell at Jesus' feet, and began to implore Him to come to his house; 42 for he had an [m]only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. But as He went, the crowds were pressing against Him."**

On the way Jesus heals a woman and then this story picks back up in verse 49, **"While He was still speaking, someone *came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher anymore." 50 But when Jesus heard this, He answered him, "Do not be afraid any longer; only believe, and she will be made well."**

Now, you might say, "See, Jesus needs them to believe in order to heal the daughter." Well, let's see if they obey Jesus' command to believe here:

51 When He came to the house, He did not allow anyone to enter with Him, except Peter and John and James, and the girl's father and mother. 52 Now they were all weeping and lamenting for her; but He said, "Stop weeping, for she has not died, but is asleep." 53 And they began laughing at Him, knowing that she had died."

Laughing at the promises of God, laughing at the Word of God is not faith. And yet, look what happens.

54 He, however, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Child, arise!" 55 And her spirit returned, and she got up immediately; and He gave orders for something to be given her to eat. 56 Her parents were amazed; but He instructed them to tell no one what had happened."

Was faith required on the part of the afflicted in this passage? The daughter obviously had no

faith, she was dead. [[also applies to any miracle of resurrection in the gospels: John 11 and Lazarus for one more example]]

The family and the parents certainly show no evidence of faith. They aren't trusting Jesus, they are laughing at Jesus. And yet she was still healed. [[see also the 10 lepers in Luke 17:11ff]]

Several more examples we could look at, but it is clear that individuals were miraculously healed by God in the absence of faith, or in the presence of weak faith.

And drawing our attention back to John 4:43-54, this morning we are going to see yet another example of someone who had weak faith or no faith, and yet still experienced the mercy of Christ in healing.

In this passage we're going to see *the exception of saving faith in a superficial context*.

Let's look at verses 43-44 and see the occasion of saving faith in a superficial context.

“⁴³ After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee.”

This is taking us back to the previous section that we looked at three weeks ago in here. If you back up to verse 39-40, we can be reminded of the context:

“³⁹ From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all the things that I have done.” ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.”

So, there is the reference to Jesus staying with the Samaritans in the village of Sychar for two days. Now, verse 43 indicates that he is resuming his trip from there north to Galilee.

What trip is this referring to? Well, again, just to jog your memory, look back at verse 3 in this chapter:

“He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. ⁴ And He had to pass through Samaria.”

Ever since he started to gain the attention of the Jewish leaders in Judea, he knew it was time to depart and head to Galilee. That has been the destination all along. The interaction with the woman at the well in Samaria was a pit stop on the way.

Back to verse 43, He has now resumed his trip to Galilee. A region that obviously has great biblical significance.

The majority of the gospel narratives occur in Galilee. The majority of the Jesus' miracles took place in Galilee.

It was a large area, consisting of many cities in northern Israel. It was the place of a flourishing fishing industry as it contained the only sizeable freshwater lake in the region. The Sea of Galilee.

Jesus Himself was from the region of Galilee. Nazareth was a town in the lower part of Galilee.

But now take a look at the explanation John gives for why Jesus went to Galilee: Verse 44, “**For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.**”

Modern equivalent – familiarity breeds contempt. The more you’re around someone, the more familiar you are with them, can easily result in a loss of respect for them.

The harder it is for others to believe you’re anything other than them, you’re ordinary, just like us. You don’t know anything above and beyond what we know.

I find this principle often at work in the lives of first generation believers when trying to interact with unbelieving siblings or unbelieving parents.

Not only is the gospel foolishness to those who are perishing, but just also, just as a prophet has no honor in his hometown, a child has no honor among his parents.

I raised you, I changed your diapers, I’ve seen all your immaturities, and now you’re telling me about how to get right with God? You’ve found the truth that I’ve never found?

That is an uphill battle because this very principle is at work.

What’s interesting about this phrase, a prophet has no honor in his hometown, is that Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all record Jesus saying these same words. [[Matthew 13:54, 57, Mark 6:1, 4, Luke 4:23-24]]

And it’s clear that when they use it, it’s referring to Nazareth, which was in Galilee.

But in the other gospel accounts, Jesus makes this statement in *response* to being ridiculed or rejected *while he is in Nazareth*.

However, here in verse 44, it is functioning as the *reason* why he departs from Samaria and continues on north to Galilee.

So what this is showing us is that when he quoted this same language in the face of rejection in his hometown in Nazareth, it was not the first time the disciples heard him say it.

He had previously testified that he would not be received in his hometown or homeland.

Here in John 4, it clearly refers more broadly to the entire region of Galilee, rather than merely Nazareth.

And this is indicated by the grammar in these verses. Notice verse 43 again, **“After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee. ⁴⁴ For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.**

So he went to Galilee because he had testified that he would have no honor *there*.

Which then begs the obvious question: Why would Jesus leave Samaria, where an entire village was converted, and go to a region where he would not receive the same following?

He just had an amazing two days of ministry in Samaria, the entire village of Sychar was converted.

But He leaves there and purposefully goes to where He would face more *rejection* than *reception*. Why?

I think the answer to this goes back to what we saw at the beginning of this chapter. It’s really the same reason he originally set out to go to Galilee.

Look back at 4:1, **“Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), 3 He left Judea and went away again into Galilee.”**

His ministry is gaining momentum in Judea. The jealous and insecure Pharisees knew Jesus was gaining popularity.

But He still has two years left of his public ministry before the time has come for Him to deliver Himself over to death.

And so, He leaves Judea to prevent a premature conflict with the Jewish leaders.

And He goes where? To Galilee. Which would solve two problems. One, He is far away from Jerusalem and the influence of the Pharisees.

Two, because a prophet has no honor in his own country, He doesn’t need to worry about His ministry exploding.

And so he had previously testified of this reality

Back to our passage, that moves us secondly to superficial reception in verse 45. ⁴⁵ So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him,”

The “so” the “therefore” at the beginning of verse 45 adds another layer to the problem we just tried to solve. Because it would appear that he *is* received here. He does get a favorable response to His ministry.

Sure appears as if He is getting recognized and getting more popular and His ministry momentum is continuing.

This reception doesn't seem at all like a prophet has no honor in his own homeland.

But John gives us a detail here that helps relieve the difficulty. Notice the rest of verse 45, the type of reception is described for us:

“having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast.”

When we read those details, Jerusalem, the feast, all the things He did, our minds should go back to John 2:23:

“23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing.”

But as we covered in that section, this was a form of rejection that presents itself as belief. We called it, artificial faith. Not hostile but not genuine belief.

This becomes clear in verse 24, **“But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,”**

He knew the difference between a faithless excitement and amazement at miracles and a trust in the person and work of Christ.

And so, back to our passage, the Galileans, this is northern Israel, they are Jews, and would make the trip to Jerusalem for the Passover.

And what we are seeing back in 4:45 is that they are included in the “many” who believed in His name.

Their reception of Jesus is actually a form of rejection. Just like Nicodemus.

Did not Nicodemus receive Christ? He gave Christ a degree of honor. “Rabbi we know that you are from God and that no one could do these things if unless God is with him.”

It's an honor of sort, but it is not the honor He is worthy of. It's an honor dependent on miracles and being impressed and excited. Not about the truth of who Christ was.

He comes into Galilee, they welcome Him. Not as the Messiah, not as the Savior of the world, like the Samaritans just had in the previous account.

But rather they receive Him as the exciting show that has come from Judea into their region. They receive him excitedly, admirably, but faithlessly.

What John is doing then in verse 45 is writing with irony. He is using words to convey the opposite of the literal understanding.

In other words, they welcomed him, but in reality, they rejected him. Because it was superficial. They were only willing to live by sight, only willing to follow and believe if they saw miracles.

We're not there yet, but notice the indictment Jesus makes of them in verse 48, **“So Jesus said to him, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe.”**

This is the superficial reception Jesus received when He came to Galilee.

That moves us thirdly to a desperate situation. Verses 46-47, **“⁴⁶ Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine.”**

With this mention of Cana, John forms an inclusio. A literary device bracketing similar material at the beginning and the end.

The last time Jesus was in Cana was chapter 2, at the wedding. Where he performed his first sign, his first miracle.

He then went from Galilee to Jerusalem, cleared the temple, interacted with Nicodemus. And then from Jerusalem out into the Judean countryside.

It was there that he heard that the pharisees knew about his ministry momentum. From the Judean countryside he went to Samaria with the woman at the well. From Samaria to Galilee and eventually returning to Cana in Galilee. He has now come full circle.

And this is not the village anyone would expect for Christ to visit twice and attach such a significance to.

Cana is an insignificant place in Galilee. In fact, only John mentions Cana. It's not even referenced in the other three gospel accounts.

It was most likely even smaller and less significant than Nazareth. The highest estimates found for the population of Nazareth at this time were around 500 people.

Cana is a village about 10 miles north, give or take. And most likely had *dozens* of people rather than hundreds, living there.

And so Jesus returns to an inconspicuous place where dozens of people lived.

Notice the middle of verse 46, **“And there was a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum.**

Royal official is referring to one of the king's officers. This would have been a Herodian king. Herod is the family name of a dynasty during that time.

That's why there are multiple Herod's in the NT. All of them were horrible and wicked rulers.

Herod the great was also called the king of the Jews. He is the one who was trying to kill baby Jesus in Matthew 2.

After he dies, Herod's kingdom was divided in 3 ways. One of those regions went to Herod's son, named Herod Antipas, who was the ruler over the region of Galilee.

So most likely, here is a royal official connected to Herod Antipas.

This detail is significant for at least a few reasons. One, it demonstrates that Christ is impartial in His saving work.

He saves out of every rank and class and condition. Poor or wealthy, noble or lowly, Christ makes no distinctions.

Secondly, this was a man who would have had personal resources. And when those resources couldn't solve a problem, he surely had access to other resources.

That means he could have brought in the best physicians to treat his son's illness.

And yet his noble rank, his connections, and his wealth proved to offer no help in this situation, and he was now desperate.

The text says that his son was sick at Capernaum. That was a town about 18 miles, give or take, away from Cana, bordering the sea of Galilee on the north side.

Verse 47, **“When 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.”**

And so this official makes the journey, 18 miles or so, uphill to Cana. Notice he wants Jesus to *come down*. Which makes sense if Capernaum is a town bordering the sea of Galilee.

And here is an example of how the reputation of Jesus spread. He had previously performed the miracle at the wedding in Cana.

Many of the Galileans had personally witnessed more miracles in Jerusalem at the feast. The Lord had the reputation as one who could fix this problem.

We don't have the details of the signs he worked at the feast, but they were of such nature that it was assumed that Jesus could heal physical infirmities.

And so this royal official finds Jesus and was imploring Him. That is to say, he was repeatedly pleading, urgently, persistently requesting that Jesus come to Capernaum to heal his son.

His son is at death's door. And this miracle worker named Jesus represents the last glimmer of hope left for my son. It's a scene of absolute desperation.

That brings us fourthly to a general allegation in verse 48, "So Jesus said to him, "Unless you *people* see ^lsigns and wonders, you *simply* will not believe."

I labeled this a *general* allegation because although He is speaking to the royal official, he is referring to all the people.

Notice the plural: "Unless *you all* see signs and wonders, *you all* will not believe."

This statement reinforces the idea that the welcoming of Jesus by the Galileans was indeed flawed, it was superficial.

They were interested in Jesus *merely* because of His miraculous work. And their faith was dependent on that miraculous work.

And so here is the principle that is being highlighted here: The word of Christ alone is not enough for the person of artificial faith. They must have evidence *before* they believe.

Which is not actual faith according to Hebrews 11:1, "**Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**"

That's what Jesus is saying here: you need to see in order to believe. That's not the biblical order. The biblical order is, believe and then you will see. Believe and then you will understand. [[see Hebrews 11:3]]

This is a very important principle as it applies to apologetics and our ministry to unbelievers.

Let's turn over to Luke 16:19. This passage is probably my favorite passage to go to when it comes to this topic.

Because it I think it illustrates the very principle we need to keep in mind: the same heart that rejects or reasons away the Word, will reject or reason away any evidences.

Evidences can't be the basis for faith. When Scripture is not enough, when the Word of God is not sufficient, no amount of evidences can cause one to truly believe.

Notice verse 19, "**Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. 20 And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, 21 and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. 22 Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and *saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his**

finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’ 25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 And [r]besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’

Now here is where it becomes very relevant for our topic today. Verse 27, **“And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father’s house— 28 for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’**

So, the unbelieving man’s request was to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn his five brothers about this place of torment.

29 But Abraham *said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ 30 But he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’

So you see the assumption he is operating under: as long as they are given proof, as long as they are given evidence, they will respond.

31 But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”

That’s where I get that principle I stated earlier: the same heart that rejects Scripture will reason away any evidence, even the most supernatural, undeniable miracle standing right in front of them.

If they don’t listen to the Word of God, they will not be persuaded by any evidence, no matter how inexplicable and miraculous and supernatural it is.

Well, back to our passage, this is the allegation Jesus has for the entire group. “Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe.”

Certainly, the royal official is included in this allegation. As it applies to the royal official, Jesus is saying this:

You are needing me to demonstrate signs and wonders, you’re needing me to demonstrate a miracle *before* you will believe, before you will entrust your child’s life into my hands.

In fact, notice what the royal official is doing in his request. It’s repeated a couple of times for us. Middle of verse 47, **“was imploring *Him* to come down and heal his son;**

Again in verse 49, **“⁴⁹ The royal official *said to Him, “^hSir, come down before my child dies.”**

There are a few very important ideas to take note of here. First, notice the presumption and pride in this man.

He is asking the Lord to do something, He is turning to the Lord in his time of desperation, but he is also *dictating* how the Lord should work. Telling the Lord how to act and what to do.

Come down to Capernaum, come down. What's the assumption? You must be physically present with my son in order to heal him.

You ever come to the Lord in prayer but you dictate, you give Him terms for how He needs to act.

“Here's *what* I need, here's *how* I need you to do it, here's *when* you need to do it by.”
That's exactly what the royal official is doing:

Here's what I need – healing for my son.

How I need it – you need to come down to my home and be physically present.

When I need it – before my child dies.

This is coming to the Lord, but still trying to maintain the illusion of control. We're still wanting to be in charge, it's our wisdom that is informing the request.

He was operating as if the Lord needed to be present to heal. Twice he had said, “come down, come down.”

Jesus coming down to his house seemed indispensable if his son was to have a chance.

But the Lord wants actual faith – the Lord is saying, “I must be left to fulfill my promises in my way. I don't need your help.”

Abraham and Sarah are a great example of this. They couldn't fathom how the Lord would fulfill his promise, and so they attempted to gain control and live by sight.

Sarah is beyond child-bearing years, so Abraham must have relations with Hagar in order for the son of promise to come about. It's the same idea. Dictating terms for how God is to fulfill his promises.

Perhaps there are areas of your life that come to my mind where you are guilty of doing this with the Lord:

“Here's *what* I need you to do, *how* I need you to do it, here's *when* you need to do it by.”

And then when our terms are not granted by God, we may even accuse Him of wrongdoing. Or not caring.

But in reality, that is not faith. That wanting to see in order to believe.

That is really no different than to demand a sign, to demand evidence before one will fully entrust themselves to God.

So, back to verse 48, what Jesus is saying here as it applies to him, is this: Unless you see me come down your house, and touch your boy, and heal him, you won't believe.

Now, to see what actual faith looks like, turn over to Matthew 8:5. A lot of similarities here, even the same town.

“5 And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him, 6 and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented.”

7 Jesus *said to him, “I will come and heal him.” 8 But the centurion said, “Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.”

10 Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith [!]with anyone in Israel.

That is actual faith. Humility, “I am not worthy for you to come under my roof.” And belief in the word of God. Just say the word.

And Jesus marvels at the profound faith of this man.

Back to our passage, this statement in verse 48 is an allegation, but it also serves as a challenge to this royal official. How will he respond?

Verse 49, **“The royal official *said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”**

Notice, he's still not committing himself fully, he's still repeating the same request with the same terms.

But, he's not defensive, he's not angry at the allegation, he's not denying it. He doesn't accuse Jesus of not caring.

Rather, he continues his plea because the welfare of his son has eclipsed any other concern in the moment.

I need you to do something before my child dies. He continues to appeal to Jesus out of his own distress and desperation.

That brings us fifthly to the miraculous exception in verse 50, “Jesus *said to him, “Go; your son lives.”

Notice He doesn't say, "go, your son *will* live." No, your son lives, presently lives. He has been restored to state of health and living.

This indicating that between verse 49 and verse 50, Jesus miraculously, instantaneously, and completely, healed the boy.

And we might add, *despite* the royal official's weak faith. Despite his dictations. Despite his ignorance. At best he had weak faith.

This is unmerited favor from Christ.

As we talked about in the introduction, the idea today in certain circles where if you have enough faith you won't be sick, you'll get healed as long as you have enough faith. The reason you don't experience miracles is because you don't have faith.

Well, that doesn't work here. The child who was healed doesn't believe until verse 53.

And the only faith the royal official has so far has been weak at best. There's no mention of him believing until *after* Jesus speaks these words. He doesn't actually believe until the middle of verse 50.

And so, Jesus doesn't heal the boy because of the boy's faith, it was non-existent, or the father's faith which was weak at best.

No, this was grace. The powerful and unmerited favor of God. It was a free, gracious gift.

While at the same time, the way in which he healed the boy was a test for this man. It would reveal which pathway the royal official would go down.

Would he remain in the state of his fellow Galileans and have superficial faith? Or would he prove to be the exception?

Would the Word of Christ be enough to believe, or would he demand to see something before he believed?

This is the fork in the road in this narrative. The pivotal point. What category of faith would this royal official be in?

Middle of verse 50, "**The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off.**"

Very importantly, notice what he doesn't do: "Ok, I'll go and see if this is true. I'll go and find out if indeed what you said happened did indeed happen."

No, the man believed the word that Jesus spoke. The Lord said it, that settles it. Saving faith goes beyond the works to believing in the word of Christ.

Notice, no questions, no, yeah but. no, please come down to my house. The man believed and obeyed without any complaint or question.

This is even more remarkable to consider if you put yourself in this father's shoes: once he departs and walks away from Jesus, that's it.

This is the last ditch effort, the last chance he has for his son being healed.

He has no reason to assume he will ever get another chance with Jesus. First of all, he doesn't know where Jesus is going to be after this.

But secondly, due to how urgent the timeline is for his son to die. He was at the point of death.

So when he departed from Jesus and began the 18 mile trip or so home, all he was going on was the bare word of Christ.

He had zero evidence to bolster his faith. He had nothing to see, nothing to convince him that a miracle had happened. All he had was the word.

And that's why we can say that there are two miracles that happen here. One is the restoration of the son. The other is the miracle of regeneration and faith in the heart of the royal official.

The man accepts Jesus' word and departs, thus demonstrating that he, unlike most Galileans, is not simply interested in signs and wonders.

Remember what Jesus had just said: "unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe."

Here, there has been no sign or wonder. The Lord speaks a word, and without seeing, without understanding how that could be possible, he believes.

Charles Spurgeon said this, "Remember, you dishonor God when you want any other evidence except his naked word. What would you, dear friends, think of this in your own case? You promise your child a present, and he wants evidences. You tell him that you love him, and he wants you to call to him somebody else to bear witness to it. Shame on your naughty child, or else there must be something ill about yourself."

I like that illustration. Imagine a parent intending to leave a large financial inheritance to a child upon their death.

And they meet with their child and say, I'm leaving you \$50,000. I had it transferred into your account today.

And the child responds by saying this: "prove it. Show me the receipt of the transaction, let's go to the bank right now. I don't believe you're leaving me that money until I see it with my own eyes in my own bank account."

If that's the response of the child, there are only two options as Spurgeon noted: "Shame on your naughty child, or else there must be something ill about yourself."

Either the child is so self-entitled and covetous that even in the face of such generosity from their parent, they callously demand proof at the expense of a precious relationship they could have had with their dying parent.

Or, maybe the child is acting appropriately, because the parent has habitually made promises that they don't keep. And so the child appropriately is skeptical of this pledged generosity.

Well, that might be true in some human relationships, but when we treat the Lord like that, we are dishonoring Him.

We are treating the Lord as if His Word is not sufficient. We have to see in order to believe.

Not so with this royal official in verse 50. This is the miraculous exception.

That brings us sixthly to a redemptive confirmation in verses 51-53. Verse 51, "As he was now going down, *his* slaves met him, saying that his son was living.

As we've mentioned, he was going *down* because he was up in the hilly plateau of Cana, and was heading down toward Capernaum which bordered the Sea of Galilee.

The man's journey probably would have been around 18 miles or so, depending on the exact route and site of the Cana encounter.

What's interesting is that his servants had come to find him. *And they knew nothing*. They didn't know if he had talked with Jesus, they didn't know about this interaction.

All they knew was the child was now restored to life and they made haste to go and find their superior to let him know that his son was better.

Why is that important? Because it demonstrates that they are *unbiased witnesses*. They are just coming to report the good news.

Verse 52, **"So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, "Yesterday at the ¹¹seventh hour the fever left him."**

Yesterday at 1 pm the fever left him.

Verse 53, **"So the father knew that *it was* at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"**

What's happening here? The Word of Christ was *confirmed* in his personal experience. This is what evidences and experiences do for our faith.

They confirm what we already believe. They confirm what we already know is true based on the Word of God.

Certainly, they strengthen and encourage our faith, but they don't create it.

This is exactly what we see next in verse 53. After the confirmation, “**and he himself believed and his whole household.**”

And you say, “well, wait a minute, he believed here as a result of seeing that the miracle actually happened.”

Well, yes, should the opposite be true? Should he *stop* believing here at this point?

The key is that he had already believed. Verse 50. This is not initial faith, this is the strengthening of faith we receive when the Word of God is proven and confirmed in our experience.

He believed a specific promise with no evidence in verse 50. Now, he believes in Christ Himself. There's no promise in this verse. This is believing in Christ.

This is now the difference between one act of faith, and now a life of faith.

And so he believed verse 50, then the evidence confirmed what he already believed. Jesus has *proven* Himself trustworthy in this man's own experience.

And this is a *redemptive* confirmation because everyone else in home believes as well.

Notice verse 53, “**and he himself believed and his whole household.**”

That doesn't mean the father believed, and his belief was credited to all the others of the house. It's not that they were grafted into his belief.

Rather, he himself believed, and his whole household believed. His children, wife, the servants.

This redemptive conclusion should also cause us to reflect on the purposes of God in suffering. One child in the home struck with life-threatening illness, on the pathway to death.

That becomes the occasion in which a desperate father goes to find Jesus. By the end of the narrative the entire household has eternal life.

That is often how the Lord uses suffering. It becomes the occasion through which His redemptive purposes are fulfilled.

And then a concluding comment by John in verse 54, “**This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.**”

Notice it is the second sign *when he had come out of Judea into Galilee*.

There were many signs he had already done at this point. John 2:23 indicates that many believed on account of the signs he did in Jerusalem.

What John is referring to here is the second sign in Galilee. What was the first sign? 2:1-11, the transformation of the water into wine at the wedding in Cana.

11 This beginning of His [e]signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.”

And remember, John uses the terminology of sign rather than miracles because he wants to point to the *significance* behind the miracle.

What was the significance of that miracle? Well, remember, He transformed water into wine, but the containers were for the Jewish purification, the Jewish cleansing rituals.

Demonstrating what? Only Jesus can provide true cleansing from sin. Jewish rituals can't cleanse or transform.

Now, in our passage today, we have the second sign. It's pointing to one truth about Christ. What is it in this passage? Well, it's a favorite theme of John in this gospel.

Notice the repetition in this account of the word “lives.”

Verse 50, “**Go; your son lives.**”

Verse 51, “**As he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his ^{l1}son was living.**”

Verse 53, “**So the father knew that *it was* at that hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives”;**

What's the miracle demonstrating? Christ's power over death.

I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life. I bring life where there is death.

And so we've seen the:

The superficial reception
The desperate situation
The general allegation
The miraculous exception
The redemptive confirmation