

## JESUS HEALS A ROYAL OFFICIAL'S SON

John 4:43-54

Key Verse: 4:50

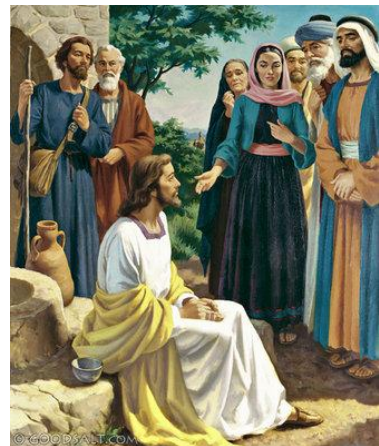
*Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son will live." The man took Jesus at his word and departed.*

In today's passage, Jesus expresses deep disappointment with his hometown people for their miracle-seeking attitude. Jesus also heals a royal official's son. This teaches us that Jesus is the Messiah who came to heal all those who are sick both physically and spiritually. This event also teaches us what kind of faith Jesus wants us to have. May God bless us to be men and women of faith who take Jesus at his word!

### I. A PROPHET IN HIS OWN COUNTRY (43-45)

Look at verse 43. *"After the two days he left for Galilee."* After leading a sinful woman to the living water, Jesus stayed in Samaria for two days. The Samaritans had asked him to stay so that they could study the word of God with him. It happened this way. The Samaritan woman had been thirsty for love. She had gone through five divorces and was now living with a boyfriend. But no one truly understood her. No one even tried to. She was deeply hurt. She was lonely and thirsty. She came to draw water alone in the heat of the day, knowing that no one would be around to point a finger at her. But Jesus approached her with a humble request, "Will you give me a drink?" He led her to the living water welling up to eternal life through his patient Bible study with her. When this sinful woman met the Savior personally, her thirst was quenched and her loneliness was gone. She tasted a deep joy overflowing in her heart for the first time in her life.

Jesus set her free from her sin and death. Her relationship with God was restored. She left her water jar behind and ran to the townspeople to tell them about the grace of Jesus. Her relationship with them was restored. The Samaritans, who used to despise her for her immoral life, listened to her testimony about Jesus and they believed in the Messiah. They were very surprised by the profound change in the woman's life. They wanted to know more about Jesus. So they invited Jesus to their town and asked him to stay with them for two days. Jesus went and taught them about the living hope in the kingdom of God. Many Samaritans accepted Jesus as their Savior, not just because of the woman's testimony, but through their personal Bible study with Jesus. They said to the woman, *"We no longer believe just because of what your said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world"* (2:42). The Samaritans were good Bible students who responded to the word of God personally. They had personal faith based on the word of God.



Look at verses 44-45. (*Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.*) When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, for they also had been there. When Jesus arrived in Galilee, a very different audience was waiting for him. Many Galileans had seen Jesus performing miracles in Jerusalem during the Passover celebration (2:23-25). Jesus saw a blind man begging on the street of Jerusalem. Out of his compassion, Jesus opened his eyes. Jesus performed many miracles as he preached the kingdom of God. The Galileans who had traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast witnessed the miracles of Jesus. They should have seen Jesus as the Son of God through the miracles. However, when Jesus came to Galilee, they welcomed him, not as the Son of God, but as a miracle worker. They expected from Jesus more miracles to benefit them. They were miracle seekers. Jesus was not pleased with their miracle-seeking attitude. They were not welcoming him for who he was; instead, they were demanding more miracles from him. They were not welcoming the Messiah who could save them, but only a miracle worker who could amaze them and entertain them.

People say “Seeing is believing,” but the miracle based faith is not a genuine faith. They seemed to believe when they see, but they don’t believe when they don’t see. Hebrews 11:1 says: *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.* The Galileans had already seen the wonderful miracle of Jesus at the wedding in Cana. They saw more miracles in Jerusalem. Still they wanted even more miracles from him to satisfy their desires for this world. One or two miracles were not enough as long as their faith was based on miracles. They always wanted more. Once Jesus fed a hungry crowd of 5,000 with only five loaves of bread and two fish. They were very impressed by the miracle. However, they again failed to see God in Jesus. They were only focused on the free bread he provided. They came to him the next day expecting another miracle like that. But Jesus refused to comply. He told them that he was the bread of life.



There are many people today who are also miracle seekers. Some people want to become fruitful Bible teachers without studying the word of God faithfully. Some students want to be on a dean’s list without staying up many nights to study. Miracles do happen today. But God is not pleased when we seek miracles with a fortune-seeking attitude. Winning a multi-million-dollar lottery is only a small miracle. A true miracle happens when a terrible sinner repents his sins and receives eternal life through accepting Christ into his heart. God wants us to have faith that is based on his word of truth.

The Galileans were miracle seekers. They had no ears to listen to the word of God through his Son Jesus Christ. They were so different from the Samaritans who listened to the word of God and accepted Jesus as their personal Savior. Jesus was very disappointed by their attitude. So Jesus said, “*A prophet has no honor in his own country*” (44). The Samaritans honored him by listening to the word of Jesus. But his hometown people did not honor him. Jesus really wanted his hometown people to listen to the word of God and

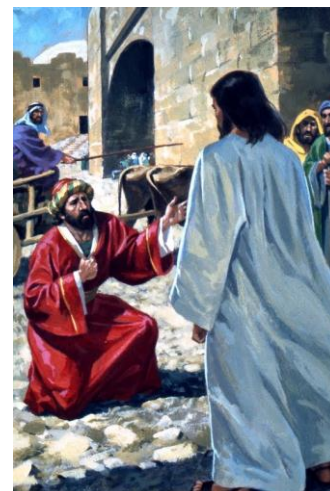
accept him as their personal Savior. May God help us to be true believers by listening to the word of God and by making a decision of faith to commit our lives to the Savior!

## II. TAKING JESUS AT HIS WORD (46-54)

Jesus was sorry that his hometown people would not listen to the word of God because of their miracle-seeking mentality. But a surprising thing happened that made him happy. Look at verse 46-47. *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. 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.* One of the royal officials (of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea) came to Jesus and begged him to come and heal his dying son. He was from Capernaum which was located 20 miles east of Cana. His son was obviously precious to this official. His joy every morning was to hear his son calling him, “Daddy.”

One day, his son suddenly fell sick and was dying. This royal official was accustomed to giving orders to his servants to do things that needed to be done. But this time, he personally made the 20 mile trip through the rugged terrain to come to Jesus. He humbly pleaded with Jesus, “Sir, I beg you. Please come and heal my son who is dying.”

His plea was very earnest. He was a royal official and Jesus was only a country preacher in many people’s eyes at that time. But he called Jesus, “Sir.” What did Jesus say to him initially in response to his plea? Look at verse 48. *“Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.”* Jesus’ answer seemed cold and unsympathetic. His answer certainly did not sound encouraging. The official could have concluded that Jesus wasn’t willing to help him. But in the gospels, we find that Jesus was never unwilling to help those who came to him. Once a man with leprosy came to him and said, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” The leper wasn’t supposed to be in a public place to talk to Jesus. He believed Jesus could heal him but wasn’t sure if Jesus was willing. Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said, “Be clean!” (Mk 2:41).



Jesus was willing to help those who came to him. So why did Jesus say to the royal official something that sounded like a rejection? It was a kind of test of faith for the official. At the same time, it was a rebuke for the miracle-seeking attitude of the Galileans.

How did the official respond to the seemingly indifferent answer of Jesus? *The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my child dies”* (49). Surprisingly, he wasn’t discouraged. He would not give up. Instead, he pleaded with Jesus with more urgency. Jesus was pleased with his faith. The official passed the test of faith. What did Jesus say to him? Look at verse 50. *“You may go. Your son will live.”* Still, Jesus’ answer was short and to the point. It even seemed to lack compassion. But Jesus’ love for a sinner is deeper than any human love. Jesus really wanted to help him to have faith in the almighty God.

How did the official respond? Let's read verse 50. *Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son will live." The man took Jesus at his word and departed.* The royal official took Jesus at his word and departed. This man's faith in Jesus was indeed amazing. What is faith? Faith is taking Jesus at his word and act on it. It is easy to take a parent at his or her word. It is easy to take a medical doctor at his word. But it is not easy to take Jesus at his word. But this man took Jesus at his word, and then acted on his faith. He departed, believing that his son would live. He didn't ask Jesus to give him a tangible sign to hold on to. He simply departed, believing in Jesus' words. His faith was not theoretical. His action showed that he believed in Jesus' words.

In the Bible, there are many examples of men and women of faith who had faith based on the word of God. Abraham in Genesis was a 75 year old man with a severe family problem. He had no son to carry on his family legacy. He was often depressed and fatalistic because of the problem. One day, God appeared to him and said, "I will make you into a great nation. I will make your name great and you will be a blessing" (Ge 12:2). God's promise was too good to believe. He didn't have even one son, but God promised him that his children would be so numerous that they would form a great nation. It didn't sound realistic at all to this old man. But Abraham believed the promise and began his journey of faith. But after ten years, he was still childless. His wife was still barren. So he was discouraged. He was feeling sorry about his life sitting in his dark tent when God visited him one night. God took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars ... so shall your offspring be" (Ge 15:5). Then Abraham took God at his word newly. He believed in his heart that God would make him a source of blessing for many. That's how Abraham became a father of faith. Now his spiritual descendants are more numerous than a great nation. All believers including you and me are the descendants of Abraham.

How can we take Jesus at his word? We must learn to deny our own ideas to listen to the word of God. It requires us to be humble ourselves before God. Simon Peter was a fisherman. He worked a night shift because the ideal fishing time in the Sea of Galilee was the quiet hours of the night. Once he had a particularly bad night at the sea. He tried all night and caught nothing. He was tired and hungry. He was washing the nets when Jesus came to him and said, "Put out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch" (Lk 5:4). Peter was too tired to try again and the nets were already cleaned. But Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets" (Lk 5:5). Peter, a veteran fisherman, listened to Jesus who was the son of a carpenter. Then he caught so many fish that the nets began to break. When Peter took Jesus at his word and obeyed, he experienced the power of God. It became a turning point in his life. Jesus called him to be a fisher of men and Peter became a great disciple of Jesus.

There was a Roman centurion in Capernaum (Mt 8:5-13). He was an officer of the Roman army whose motto was "conquer and destroy without mercy." One day, one of his servants fell sick. Unlike his colleagues who considered their servants expendable, this centurion was very compassionate. He loved his servant like his own son. He did everything to get the best medical care for the servant. But nothing worked. As he watched his servant in terrible suffering, he felt helpless. Still, the centurion did not give up until he

heard that Jesus was in town. By faith, he came to Jesus for help. Jesus was amazed by the Roman officer's compassion. So Jesus said, "I will go and heal him." But the centurion replied, "*Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it*" (Mt 8:8-9). The centurion had a "just say the word" faith in Jesus. Jesus was amazed by his faith and healed his servant.

Look at verse 51. When the royal official in today's scripture was on his way home, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. 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" (52). *Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live."* So he and all his household believed (53). This official not only believed Jesus could heal but also obeyed Jesus by returning home, thus demonstrating his faith. It is not enough for us to say we believe that Jesus can take care of our problems. We need to act on what we believe. When we pray about a need or problem, we must act as though we believe Jesus can do what he says.

Jesus' healing of the royal official's son was the second miraculous sign of Jesus in John's gospel (54). This time, Jesus performed the miracle at a distance. Although the official's son was 20 miles away, he was healed when Jesus spoke the word. Distance is no problem for Jesus in helping us, because Jesus is God. May God help us to humbly accept the word of God and experience the power of God! May God help us to take Jesus at his word and act on it by faith!