

## Believing is Seeing - John 4:43-54 - Jn12

Jesus and His disciples had just spent 2 days in the “Jewish forsaken” land of Samaria, and not only did He bring salvation to Samaria, but in the process, He taught His disciples how to live the “Satisfied Christian Life” by:

- 1) Submitting to the Will of God; and
- 2) Doing the Work of God.

But now Jesus leaves Samaria and heads back to my favorite area in Israel, the Galilee.

### John 4:43-44

**“<sup>43</sup> Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee.**

**<sup>44</sup> For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.”**

In the other gospels, Jesus quotes this same proverb, speaking of Nazareth, but here He’s probably speaking of the stark contrast between the poor response He got in Jerusalem and the great response He got in Samaria. What a sad testimony.

### John 4:45 says

**“So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.”**

Those in the Galilee had been to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover, and they had seen the things that Jesus had done there. Back in John chapter 2, it says, “...during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.” But then it says, “Jesus did not commit Himself to them because He knew all men.” Remember, we said that, even though the people in Jerusalem seemed to believe in Jesus, Jesus did not believe in them because He knew their belief was only at the level of a type of “amazement” at the signs that He did, and it seems the Galileans may have returned with this same “sign-based” faith that Jesus didn’t accept from those in Jerusalem.

So Jesus is about to give the Galileans a lesson in “real faith” as opposed to “amazement” or “sign-based” faith. Here’s where our real story gets started today.

### John 4:46

**“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.”**

So Jesus went to Cana, about 18 to 20 miles from Capernaum, and in Capernaum was a certain “nobleman” whose son was sick. The Greek word for “nobleman” is “Basilikos.” In addition to “nobleman,” it’s translated *king’s man* or *royal official*, which is evidently what this man was. He was a royal official in Herod’s court, and therefore, he was a man of great influence, great power, and great wealth, as any royal official in Herod’s court would be. And so, it may have seemed that this “Basilikos,” or nobleman, had everything he needed. He had wealth and influence, and we’ll see in a minute that he also had a great love for his family.

Just like Nicodemus, this nobleman seemed to have it all together, yet he was about to find a great need in his life. There came a day when this nobleman's young son fell deathly ill and, at that point, nothing else in his life seemed to matter – all influence, all power, and all wealth. He would have gladly given it all in exchange for his son's health.

It's no different today, is it? Each of us have an indescribable love for our own children, and nothing can shatter us more quickly or more completely than having affliction fall upon our child, and that's exactly where this "Basilikos" found himself. Death was trying to infiltrate his home and take his son, and this "Nobleman" was determined to do something about it.

Now there was a man named Job who was well acquainted with the seemingly senseless trials of this life. Turn over to Job 5:6-7, right before Psalms.

### **Job 5:6-7**

**"For affliction does not come from the dust, Nor does trouble spring from the ground; 7 Yet man is born to trouble, As the sparks fly upward."**

And that's true enough, but watch what's written in the next 2 verses.

### **Job 5:8-9**

**"<sup>8</sup> But as for me, I would seek God, And to God I would commit my cause—  
<sup>9</sup> Who does great things, and unsearchable, marvelous things without number."**

And we're going to see this nobleman today commit his cause to God. Continue in verse 10 of Job chapter 5.

### **Job 5:10-11**

**"<sup>10</sup> He gives rain on the earth, And sends waters on the fields.  
<sup>11</sup> He sets on high those who are lowly, And those who mourn are lifted to safety."**

We have a God of unsearchable and marvelous works, who sets on high those who are lowly and who lifts to safety those who mourn, and Jesus Himself brought this truth home to us in the form of a promise. Turn back to John 16:33 and watch Jesus say the same thing as Job.

### **John 16:33**

**"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."**

Every one of us will be called to endure the fires of this life. Job says we are born to it, and Jesus promised it to us. But because of His great love for us, God has provided a way through the trials and through the tribulation. Job says we have a God who does great and marvelous works and lifts to safety those who mourn, and Jesus Himself says He is the source of our peace and He has overcome this world, so that "in Him" we may overcome the tribulations of this world. And today, you can see, back in our text in John 4, how this nobleman comes to this level of true faith today.

This is the faith described as "Believing is Seeing," the title of our study. Though his money could buy almost anything, it couldn't buy what was most important to him – the life and health of his son. So when the nobleman heard of Jesus' arrival in Cana less than 20 miles away, he felt his

first glimmer of hope. He had heard of Jesus' miracle at the wedding, and he had heard of the signs Jesus did in Jerusalem. And so, he set himself into action. He didn't send a servant. He didn't send a messenger. But he himself dropped everything he was doing and, at all costs, he ran to Jesus. What an incredible picture as this nobleman, this royal official, galloped at full speed on his royal horse to the meek and humble carpenter's Son, who had last been seen with the forsaken people of Samaria. Pick it up in John 4:47.

#### **John 4:47**

**“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.”**

The Greek tense for “implore” is literally *continued to implore*.” It means *to implore without ceasing*. This nobleman's position and his reputation didn't matter, and he was totally oblivious to the crowd around him. He had one thing set in his mind, and that was to implore, and continue to beg Jesus, to meet the greatest need in his life – that his son would be healed. And so, in verse 48, we have the first response of Jesus to the nobleman.

#### **John 4:48**

**“Then Jesus said to him, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.”**

OUCH! That was Jesus' response?? This man of great stature had just thrown everything aside to run to Jesus, and this is the response he gets?? It seems Jesus responds harshly to this man, who appears to be exercising some level of faith. But C.S. Lewis says, “The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, and His compulsion is our liberation.” C.S. Lewis is saying that it is the pressure of God that brings our freedom.

Here, Jesus Christ perfectly places his finger on the weakness of, not just the nobleman, but the weakness of the people's faith. The words “you people” in verse 48 are plural. Jesus is speaking to not only to the nobleman, but to all the Galileans who received Him because of his signs, and Jesus wants to bring them, and us, to a higher level of faith, and He's about to do just that with the nobleman. Ahead in John chapter 20, when Thomas doubted, Jesus said to him in verse 29:

#### **John 20:29**

**“Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**

There was a weakness in the faith of the nobleman and the Galileans. Maybe they were turning Jesus into the latest “side-show” phenomenon, following Him around to see the latest miracle. But Jesus knew that level of faith is temporary at best, and it falls far short of God's true intent for us, which is to KNOW JESUS HIMSELF. Our sufficiency, our strength, our provision, is in a growing, experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ Himself. He wants us to go beyond believing in His signs to believe in Him personally and His word, as they stand alone.

Jesus' sharp words to the nobleman were not a rebuke. They were the beginning of a great work of grace in his life because those sharp words are about to bring this Basilikos to a crises of belief, and that's where Jesus brings each of us as we find ourselves in the tribulations of this life. He brings each of us to the most critical question possible regarding our faith. “Is your faith based on

what you see, or is what you see based on your faith?” Now in the next verse, the nobleman doesn’t discuss theology. He simply cries out for mercy to Jesus.

#### **John 4:49**

**“The nobleman said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies!”**

The nobleman didn’t deny Jesus’ words. He didn’t justify or rationalize his position. He didn’t pull rank or use his royal background. He simply clung to as much as he could grasp about Jesus, and pleaded with Him to come to his son. He cried out for mercy. Now in the “first part” of verse 50, Jesus gives the nobleman both a “NO” and a “YES” in response to his plea.

#### **John 4:50a**

**“Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your son lives.”**

Jesus says, “NO, I won’t do it your way, and YES, I will answer your prayer.” Now here is the “crisis of belief.” Imagine the Nobleman – He’s gotten his answer and it’s really not how he had requested it, but He has heard the word and RIGHT NOW he must respond to Jesus Christ. Jesus offers him only His word, and then He requires a response – “Go your way.” Now the nobleman has two choices. He can believe and obey, or he can doubt and question, and Jesus brings us to this same place at some point in our lives. We see the nobleman’s response in the second half of John 4:50.

#### **John 4:50b**

**“...So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.”**

The nobleman chose to believe and obey, and it was at this moment his faith in Jesus Christ was made real. Listen – supernatural faith fell on this nobleman the very instant that he truly believed and obeyed. Up to this point, he had believed in Jesus because of what he had seen. Now he is seeing because of what he believes. Even though his son was 20 miles away, the nobleman saw, at that instant, what Jesus said was true and he went his way. Turn with me to Heb 11:1, probably the clearest definition of faith in the Bible,

#### **Hebrews 11:1**

**“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”**

**Hebrews 11:1** in the New American Standard says

**“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”**

Faith is the substance, the evidence, the assurance, and the conviction of things we cannot yet see. Faith is NOT “seeing is believing.” Faith IS “believing is seeing.” We see it because we believe it in response to the word of Christ. The nobleman saw his son well, and so “he went his way” in verse 50. But the next 3 verses really show the growth of faith in the nobleman.

#### **John 4:51-53**

**<sup>51</sup> And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, “Your son lives!”**

**<sup>52</sup> Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.”**

**<sup>53</sup> So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives.” And he himself believed, and his whole household.”**

This shows tremendous growth in the nobleman's faith. Please hear this. The M.I.P. (the Most Important Point) is this. *As soon as you truly believe and obey, God will give you the supernatural ability to believe and obey.* This is something I can't put into man's logic for you. The moment you truly choose to believe, God gives you the supernatural ability to believe, and the moment you truly choose to obey, God gives you the supernatural ability to obey. And that's when your faith really starts to grow by leaps and bounds. There are 2 things I want to point out in these last verses:

- 1) In verse 52, the nobleman inquired of the servants when his son got better, and they said, "it was yesterday, at the 7th hour..." Now the 7th hour is 1:00pm, and presumably, if the nobleman was still in the frantic condition he was in when he first came to Jesus, he could have ridden the 18 miles from Cana back to Capernaum the same day, but he didn't. It was the next day the servants met him on the road. WHY?? Because his faith had changed his approach to the crisis. He was no longer racing about and going crazy, but instead, he was confidently heading back to Capernaum to see the son he already knew had been made well. **FAITH IS THE EVIDENCE and CONVICTION OF THINGS NOT YET SEEN!**
- 2) The second point here is at the end of verse 53, "...and he himself believed, and his whole household." The nobleman shared the testimony of his faith, and his entire household believed. And there's a chance this nobleman's wife is mentioned in Luke chapter 8 as one of the women who later followed Jesus and provided for the ministry. And so, the nobleman's faith certainly brought forth "fruit unto salvation."

Our text today clearly shows two conditions of this "nobleman-sized" faith:

- 1) You must Believe the Word of God; and
- 2) You must Respond to the Word of God.

You must believe what He says and you must act upon it. "Believe and obey. There is no other way..." Now there are those here today who need to experience this level of faith in their lives because the trial has come. This world's tribulation is upon you and you would give anything to know how to overcome it. The Word of God is speaking to you today, and He says:

- 1) Fly to the feet of Jesus. Let nothing stop you;
- 2) Believe His Word and, as you believe, He will give you the strength to believe; and
- 3) Obey His Word and, as you obey, He will give you the strength to obey.

And if you will follow the example of the nobleman, Your faith will grow to a supernatural level. You will have true faith.