

John 4:46-54
Healing of the Officials' Son

I. Intro

If Jesus had the power to heal, why didn't He heal everyone?

Why didn't he perform more miracles? He performed a ton... but why not more?

It's really an important question.

One that many of us will come to grips with. If that day has not already come in your life, there will come a day when you will be begging God for a miracle... and God will not comply with your request. And you will ask that very question: Why God, did you not heal? Why did you let this happen?

I read this week the story of a woman... She was very faithful to her church: She attended regularly, she gave regularly, she read her Bible and prayed regularly. And in her late 40's it was discovered that she had cancer. It was a very devastating discovery for those who knew her and for the woman. The pastor of the church went to go visit her in the hospital. And in the midst of their conversation... they started to talk about healing. 'I would be happy to pray for healing' the pastor said, 'but let's also pray for the humility to trust God'. The woman demeanor changed, and she said to the pastor, 'Pastor... I believe that Jesus healed in the Bible, so I believe that surely, He could heal me. **If He can't heal me, of what use is He to me?**'

When it comes to belief, what is the purpose of YOUR belief in Jesus? Is it for something, or is it for someone?

Today's passage is about belief. And we are going to learn three things about belief:

Belief can be misplaced. (48)

Belief can grow. (50)

Belief is the key to following Jesus. (53)

II. Belief can be misplaced.

Let's dive into our story...

John, the gospel writer, has been setting the stage so far in his letter. He is writing this gospel so that His readers will believe in Jesus, and He wants us to understand what that belief looks like.

So He begins by having Jesus perform a miracle in Cana... He turned water into wine.

He took a desperate situation for a family and made 908 bottles of wine!

Now he is returning to the same town.

I wonder what the buzz was like? I wonder how excited the town was to hear that Jesus was back?

You see, even though only the servants saw the miracle of the wine, word had spread.

It had at least spread 20-25 miles (**show map**), from Cana to Capernaum.

John 4:46

In Capernaum, there was an official whose son was ill. This is someone very important and significant in the culture.

John 4:47

And so this man goes to Jesus, and begs and pleads for Jesus to come and heal his son.

To be fair, I'm not sure that I have ever experienced desperation like this.

This man's son was at the point of death... which means when He left Capernaum to find Jesus... there was a possibility that on his return his son would be dead.

So now the official is at the feet of Jesus asking for a miracle.

And so the crowd with much anticipation and the official I am sure as well wait on the words of Jesus... and He says...

John 4:48

“Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.”

I really wrestled with this sentence this week. I mean what is Jesus saying here? It seems so strong and negative... I didn't think Jesus was supposed to be negative. So, a few things about this statement... First, the you there is a plural you... it's a 'you all'. So, Jesus is talking to everyone. The crowd must have gathered... Maybe this happened in the center of town and there were lots of people around. And so He is speaking to the audience and the official.

The second thing, is this... I wondered if maybe Jesus wasn't being negative, but anytime in the gospels the phrase 'signs and wonders' is used it is used negatively. That people are just looking for a trick, they are just looking to consume. They just want to be awed for the sake of being awed.

Which brings us to the point Jesus is making... **Belief can be misplaced.**

A consumer believes for the benefit of the miracles, followers believe for the benefit of the miraculous one.

I have an awesome magic trick that I perform. It took me some time to master it. It's really pretty good... anywhere I go I do it. Every new staff member, I show it to... Any time I go to visit new friends or family, I show it... Any time I go on a mission trip, I show it to anyone who will watch. And trust me... I really, really, really wanted to do it on stage for all of you today!

Now... what happens at the end of my trick? Usually one of three things: People want to know how I did it, they want to see it again, or they want to see another.

And that is exactly what is going on in the people's hearts here. The town is saying: Wow! How did he do that. Do it again! Or better yet, do another! Keep doing miracles and we will believe that you are a miracle worker. But they missed the point of the miracles. The miracles gave credibility to why Jesus should be believed, the miracles were not an end in themselves.

What do you think about the miracles of Jesus?

Do you think they are cool, and you are hoping that like the woman I shared about earlier, He will do one for you when you need it?

Better yet, how do you know if your belief is misplaced?

You'll know when you have a moment of desperation. You'll know because you will cry out to God for a miracle. And let me be super clear... there is nothing wrong with doing that... we are going to see in a moment how much Jesus cares for us... and wants us to do that...

But if you cry out to God for a miracle and He doesn't respond the way you want... if your belief in him ends at miracle worker you will be disappointed. You will start to question is Jesus really who He said He is.

Is that where you are today my friends? Let me challenge you that your belief is misplaced.

So let's keep reading to see if we can put our belief in the right place.

III. Belief can grow.

Jesus rebukes the crowd but the official is not deterred.

John 4:49

Now, Jesus... I love this... it is always so fun to read His encounters.

He never does what you expect.

So, Jesus looks the official in the eye and says...

John 4:50a Go! Your son will live!

Now... pause the game. What could be going on in the mind of the official right here? Let's speculate for a second.

You see he came to get Jesus because he thought if Jesus were in the presence of his son, Jesus could heal his son. Now Jesus is saying... I can heal your son just by saying He is healed.

Now remember, there is a chance that the official's son will be dead when he returns. So this is his one chance. What would you do? Would you still beg Jesus to come?

John 4:50

This official believes the word of Jesus.

Do you see the growth in his belief? He moves from believing just in His works, to believing in His word.

Do you take people at their word?

It probably depends. We live in such an age of skepticism right now. We expect people to let us down more than we do that they will follow through.

This official... He had only heard about the works of Jesus... but we see this progression in His belief from just believing in the works of Jesus to also believing in the words of Jesus... But watch... it doesn't stop there.

John 4:51-53

The official moved from believing in His works, to believing in His words, to believing in His worth.

Belief can grow. Belief can progress.

Has yours?

You see Jesus wants to make sure we realize that the miracles are not an end in themselves. They are a means to an end. They point us to His person. To who He is!

According to this passage, here is how I would define belief: Belief in Jesus is not the mere acknowledgement of His works, or even the approval of His words, but the acceptance of His person as the savior of the world.

You see when belief is misplaced... all we want is the miracle, and when the miracle doesn't happen, we become disappointed, dissatisfied, and despondent.

But when belief is in the person of Jesus... the worth of Jesus... the value of who Jesus is... You begin to say things like JC Ryle... and Anglican Bishop who lived 100 years ago...

Health is a good thing... but sickness is far better if it leads us to God.

Prosperity is a great mercy... but adversity is a greater one if it brings us to Christ.

Anything, anything, is better than carelessness and dying in sin. –JC Ryle (Anglican Bishop)

What is John, the author, helping us to see...

III. Belief is the key to following Jesus.

What is more important in this encounter to Jesus, the healing of the son or the belief of the family?

As we read and engage in these encounters... Jesus wants the miracles to not be an end in themselves. He doesn't want us just to believe He is a just a miracle worker.

You see miracles in and of themselves don't have power. They are just a moment in time.

They just change the life of that one person.

But Jesus is offering so much more. He is offering Himself.

Can I be honest with you? This is a tough sermon for me... why? I like the practical one's.

What's the point of this sermon... believe. Believe in the person of Jesus. That's it? That's it.

How do I do that? I know this... we believe by letting the works of Jesus, and the words of Jesus bring us to an acceptance of Jesus.

IV. Conclusion

If Jesus had the power to heal, why didn't He heal everyone?

If all that Jesus wanted to do was make the world better, for a period... He could have done it.

But Jesus came to this world to give us so much more than that.

I'm inviting you today to believe that.

Based on what? Based on the work did in healing the son. Based on the method Jesus used to heal him, that Jesus spoke, and His word is so powerful, that being 20 miles away, a son was healed. But above all of that ...

Believe in the person, that cares so much for this world, that He didn't just come to heal sickness, He came to heal the greatest sickness... sin and death and offer us all the opportunity to be children of God.