

Five Portraits of Faith [believing] (John 4:43-54)

The Gospel of John is the gospel of believing! The Greek word (πιστου) translated believe is used 100 times in John's gospel. Throughout his gospel John contrasts those who do not believe with those who would believe, false belief with genuine belief, and the falling away of false belief with the growth of genuine belief.

1. ***Curious Faith*** (v. 43-45)

John quotes what Jesus had said about His reception the last time He was in Galilee (Matt. 13:57; Mark 6:4) **Honor** means esteem, value, respect which they did not have! It refers to the general lack of acceptance of Jesus by those in his hometown and surrounding area of Galilee. They 'received' Him as a miracle worker based on what they saw Him do at the feast but they did not honor Him or receive Him for who He really was. They came more out of **curiosity** than to see the one who could be the Messiah, they looked more for a performance than they did for the proof that would confirm what some were saying, "**Could this be the Christ, the Messiah?**" Jesus already knew, there would be no real honor from the Galileans, just the hope for a good show, theirs was a '**curious faith**' but not a genuine faith!

2. ***Crisis Faith*** (v. 46-49)

I'm sure a huge crowd had gathered as Jesus had come to Cana. They had seen His miracles in Jerusalem (v. 45) and heard He turned water into wine at a local wedding, and people did not want to miss another sensational sign or miracle that Jesus may do! The royal official had heard Jesus was in Cana of Galilee, so he came from Capernaum, about 17 miles to the northeast, a city on the Sea of Galilee, to find Jesus and beg for Jesus to heal his son who was at the point of death. He wanted Jesus to come to Capernaum, obviously because his son was too sick to travel. **At the point of death**, means he could die at any moment. The text says the Royal official kept on imploring Jesus, begging Him to come down and heal his son.

Jesus says, "**Unless you people (pl) see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe**" (Jesus meant this not just for the man, but for the crowds also!) One last agonizing plea from a desperate father, "**Sir, come down before my child dies**". This father was in crisis mode, he would do anything to try to save his son's life, even seek the help of one he had only heard he could do miracles. He turned water into wine, maybe he could turn sickness into health. Notice a couple of things, 1) he felt Jesus had to be there at his son's side to heal him, and 2) if his son died, Jesus could not help after that! He had a '**crisis faith**', he hoped Jesus could do something, he was willing to ask, but he didn't believe Jesus was much more than a miracle worker either! Both '**Curious faith**' and '**Crisis faith**' are not really faith at all. They are both still holding on, clinging to the bush of their own thoughts and ideas, they haven't '**let go**' and fully and completely trusted God!

3. ***Confident Faith*** (v. 50)

"**Go, your son lives**". Go? I wanted you to come with me the royal official was probably thinking. He had only heard and maybe seen Jesus do miracles in person, not from a distance! And now this man has a choice ... do I beg some more, do I figure out what else I could do, or do I believe Jesus' word? And the scripture says, "**The man believed the word that Jesus spoke**"! He trusted what Jesus said and what Jesus could do! He no longer had to see, he believed without seeing! This was his '**let go**' moment! And his faith was shown by what he did next . . . He started off ... and he kept going . . . He didn't look back ... he

didn't doubt ... he was going home, he wanted to see his son alive and well! That's '**confident faith**', faith that doesn't have to see, and faith that is seen in action!

A couple of things to take note of: Those in Cana didn't get to see this miracle, and the text doesn't say any believed or even followed the royal official. Jesus said "**unless you see you simply will not believe**", they didn't see and as far as we know they didn't believe. And there is no other mention of Jesus ever going back to Cana. On the other hand, the royal official decided he didn't need to see, he just believed Jesus' word! Both that his son was healed and that Jesus is who He claims to be, the son of God! Secondly, the son is a beautiful picture of salvation. Without Jesus he was dead. Jesus didn't say, "Go, your son will recover, or he'll be better in a few days". He said, "Go, your son lives!" He went from death to life! When you believe the gospel, you go from spiritual death to life! (Eph. 2:5)

4. ***Confirmed Faith*** (v. 51-53a)

As he was going, his servants met him. His faith had propelled him towards home, he didn't have any idea that his servants would meet him on the road. Isn't this exactly how God honors faith. He confirms this man's faith even before he is able to see his son with his own eyes! "**Your son lives**" his servant's shout! I bet they didn't wait until he was close but started shouting it as soon as their master came into view! **I love it!** Notice the man wasn't surprised, his only question is what time did he get better? The servants knew the exact time and report it to their master ... and it was the exact time that Jesus had spoken the words, "**Go, your son lives!**" And he himself believed ... his faith is **confirmed**, his faith is deepened by seeing the power of God's promises, Jesus spoke it and it was done, completed just like He said, "Go, your son lives", and it was so. His faith was strengthened and rewarded, that's '**Confirmed Faith**'.

5. ***Contagious Faith*** (v. 53b)

This royal official certainly explained to his servants, his wife, his son and other children and family members that were part of his '**household**' exactly what had taken place. I'll bet he did not miss one detail! I would have loved to listen to him describe how he felt as he left his dying son and made the journey to Cana. What he thought as he saw the crowds and made his way through them so he could talk to Jesus' face to face. How he felt as he begged Jesus to come with him so he could heal his son and how his heart must have sunk when he heard Jesus say, "**Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe**" And his last desperate plea, "**Sir, come down before my child dies**." and then the amazing words, "**Go; your son lives**". And I can hear him say, "**and I believed His word, and I started home**" Can you picture the scene, his whole household riveted on every word, I can imagine tears streaming down the father's face. And then I saw my trusted servants and they said "**your son lives**" and as he now looks at his fully healed son, he says and I knew when they said what time the fever left was the exact time Jesus had said you lived . . . And his whole household believed! That's '**Contagious faith**'!

"**The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart**"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." (Romans 10:8-10)

"... the kingdom of heaven [salvation] is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold everything that he had and bought it." (Matt.13:45-46)