

3.4

FROM CANA TO CAPERNAUM

TRUTH ABOUT GOD

There is power in
what God speaks.

TRUTH FOR MY LIFE

I will believe Jesus'
words have power.



FOCUS VERSE: John 4:50

Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

LESSON TEXT: John 4:43–53



BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

Lesson Text: John 4:43–53

After a brief layover in Samaria, Jesus arrived back in Galilee, where He had grown up in a small town called Nazareth. When He arrived, several people recognized Jesus for His exploits in Judea, most notably when He drove out the irreverent moneychangers in the Temple (John 2:13–22). However, Jesus' disciples had also baptized many people in Judea, and many Jews who made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem had returned home to Galilee as baptized followers of Jesus and would have been thrilled at His arrival.

The Gospel writer connected Jesus' location in Galilee to the place Jesus had previously performed the miracle of turning water into wine (John 2:1–11). Such a miracle likely drew large crowds. Even when a nobleman approached Him, Jesus responded with initial pushback to test the nobleman's motivations. Jesus was not interested in being a sideshow attraction, performing signs simply for the sake of performing signs.

In fact, Jews selfishly seeking a sign from Jesus and Jesus calling them out for their obsession with signs was a common hallmark of Jesus' ministry (Matthew 12:39; 16:1–4; Mark 8:11–12; 13:3–4, 22–23; Luke 11:16, 29–30; 23:8; John 2:18; 4:48; 6:2, 14, 26, 30). John the Baptist was seen as less credible because he did not perform signs like Jesus did (John 10:41). Later, the apostle Paul would also call out the Jews for their obsession with signs (I Corinthians 1:22).

This brief story indicates the primary reasons Jesus performed signs: to cause people to enter into belief and relationship with Him. The nobleman's entire household came to believe in Jesus because of this sign, which happened privately in their home. This motivation was consistent with the purpose statement of John's Gospel found in John 20:30–31: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." The ultimate purpose of any sign or miracle—and the ultimate reason Jesus' signs and miracles were recorded in the Bible—is to cause those who experience and witness them to come into greater knowledge, belief, and relationship with Jesus Christ.

JESUS WAS NOT INTERESTED IN BEING A SIDESHOW ATTRACTION, PERFORMING SIGNS SIMPLY FOR THE SAKE OF PERFORMING SIGNS.

DAY 1

John 4:43-45

⁴³ Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.

⁴⁴ For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

⁴⁵ Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilæans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

Biblical Insight

In John's Gospel, Jesus referred to his hometown where He encountered his strongest opposition. While people in Nazareth did not accept Jesus or honor Him, as the saying in John 4:44 states, people in Galilee honored Him for what they saw at Jerusalem. John pointed out that Jesus had no honor "in" His own country, but His mighty acts in Jerusalem positively affected the Galilæans who saw Him.

Daily Devotion

Hometowns can be special. Some who move away look back to those locations with fondness and precious memories of their childhood, favorite restaurants, and where to find the best homemade ice cream. In classic small hometowns, you can find grandmas cooking and the best mechanic, who may also be the local Sheriff. The setting can bring nostalgia, but in Jesus' case, He was not known as the hometown hero. It sounds outrageous, but He was not received well in his own neighborhood. In this particular locale, He was not welcomed with the honor He deserved.

Though Jesus pursues, He will never force anyone to receive Him. He is constantly seeking those who will believe because of the gift we have in communion with God. How will you share Jesus with those around you?

Jesus deserves every bit of reverence no matter where He is represented. He deserves reverence no matter what others think or say. Even if your hometown rejects Him, you have the choice as to whom you will serve. How will you receive Jesus when He draws near to you?

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 2

John 4:46-47

⁴⁶ So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

⁴⁷ When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

Biblical Insight

John 2:1-11 records the miracle of the water turned into wine, which happened in Cana, a town in Galilee not far from Nazareth. Word of Jesus' supernatural abilities must have spread, for Jesus was greeted by a nobleman, or royal official, whose son was sick in Capernaum, another nearby town situated on the edge of the Sea of Galilee. It is also possible this nobleman had been at the wedding in John 2, or he could have encountered Jesus when Jesus traveled with His mother, brothers, and disciples to Capernaum immediately after the wedding (John 2:12).

Daily Devotion

God has never had an issue getting His message across. Even before text messaging, social media, and any other medium of communication, His gospel was relayed.

The royal official in John 4 had heard of Jesus and knew Jesus could save his child. He knew Jesus could work a miracle, even though he had never met Jesus. He knew of Jesus, but he had yet to experience Jesus personally. It is possible to know about Jesus but not know Him.

Today, it is easier than ever to share the gospel. We understand His character and know He desires to love and help His children. We are blessed not just to know *of* Him and what He can do for us, but we get to *know Him*.

What are ways you can use modern technology and communication to share God's goodness?

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 3

John 4:48-49

⁴⁸ Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

⁴⁹ The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

Biblical Insight

Jesus' rebuke initially seemed harsh, but it is important to note that both instances of "ye" in verse 48 are second person plural, not singular. In other words, Jesus' pushback was not against the nobleman specifically, but His words were directed at the Galileans generally. Perhaps Jesus was worried His miracle performed at the wedding in Cana had caused Him to become like a carnival attraction where everyone wanted to see the extent of Jesus' supernatural power. In Jerusalem, the people had asked for a sign after Jesus purged the Temple (John 2:18). Later, a crowd in Capernaum asked Jesus for a sign even though they had just witnessed Jesus feed five thousand people and walk on water the day before (John 6:30).

Daily Devotion

Faith is essential to any Christian's walk with God. By its very nature, the basis of faith is believing. Faith is not believing when all the answers are laid out; rather, just the opposite. Jesus does not owe us signs or feelings to make us trust. We are called to trust, plain and simple. Verse 48 shows God's seemingly frustrated response when asked for a sign: "Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

God shows His power every single day. The air in our lungs, the world spinning exactly as it should, the sun marching east to west across the sky all wondrously show His handiwork. These signs raise the concern that some people may serve God only if they can see or feel the extraordinary. In reality, the miraculous *is* His ordinary.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 4

John 4:50

Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

Biblical Insight

While many in the audience in Galilee would have been disappointed they hadn't seen an instantaneous sign, the nobleman simply "believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way." This story reminds readers of Jesus healing the centurion's servant in Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10. That story also happened in Capernaum, and the centurion had great enough faith not to require Jesus to come to his house. He simply asked Jesus to "speak the word only" (Matthew 8:8). Jesus was able to discern the sincerity of both the nobleman and the centurion because neither of them desired a public spectacle; they just wanted their loved ones healed.

Daily Devotion

One of the most beautiful, yet controversial, sentiments of prayer is seen in Matthew 6. As born again believers, we know that unashamedly sharing our values and being open about prayer is part of the culture. The verses in Matthew 6 do not negate that; they just remind readers that our invocations do not have to be heard by others to be effective. Prayer is communication with the Lord that rarely needs publicity.

The nobleman and centurion both spoke to God on behalf of their loved ones, but they did so in a way that did not draw attention to themselves. They were desperate, but their faith was strong enough to know Jesus could do the miraculous with just a whisper—and He did.

You do not have to chase God down to get His attention. He is close. Your style of devotion does not have to look like that of those around you. Your prayers matter, no matter where you are on your journey with the Lord. Wherever you are, ask Him to speak into your situation, and He will.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 5

John 4:51-53

⁵¹ And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.

⁵² Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

⁵³ So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

Biblical Insight

The seventh hour of the day was about 1:00 PM, and it would have taken some time for the nobleman to travel the approximately fifteen miles back to Capernaum. However, before the nobleman even got back home, his servants met him on the road and reported the good news. The nobleman recognized the time when his son's fever broke as being about 1:00 PM, the exact time the nobleman had spoken to Jesus. While this miracle was not in front of crowds, it was effective enough to cause the nobleman's entire household to believe in Jesus, which would have included many family members, friends, and servants living in the nobleman's presumably expansive estate.

Daily Devotion

The nobleman's life was changed when his son received a miracle from Jesus. Not only did the nobleman have a child who had been made well, but he also experienced a shift in his spiritual life. He was made privy to a gift that overflowed into the lives of those around him. This quiet healing had thunderous ripple effects on those in close proximity. The nobleman became a walking billboard for the grace and goodness of the long-awaited Savior.

You have this divine opportunity as well. You can share what Jesus has done for you and how He has changed your life. Although it is an option, this news does not have to be shouted from every rooftop. It can be a quiet conversation over coffee or a letter sent through the mail. The way you carry yourself as a redeemed child of the most high God speaks volumes too. You should present yourself in a way that lets people around you know there is something different about you. Your daily existence can make an impact when you live it unto Christ.

Are you living in a way that causes others to want to know Jesus too?

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*
