

## Koinonia Gathering Guide: The Miracle of His Living Word

### Scripture John 4:39-54

### Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word, and to help each person move from merely welcoming Jesus to fully accepting Him as Lord and Savior.

### Ice Breaker

**Share a time when someone kept their word to you in a significant way. How did that impact your trust in them?**

### Key Takeaways

- 1. Faith anchored in God's Word is stronger than faith based on signs** - The Samaritans believed because of Jesus' word alone, while the Galileans needed to see miracles.
- 2. There's a difference between welcoming Jesus and accepting Jesus:**
  - Welcoming = inviting Him to fix your situation
  - Accepting = inviting Him into your heart and following regardless of circumstances
- 3. Three reasons sign-based faith won't last:**
  - It's built on what you see, not what He said
  - It's conditional, not committed
  - It's vulnerable to deception
- 4. Faith grows when we follow Jesus' word BEFORE we see the results** - The royal official walked home trusting Jesus' word before seeing his son healed.

## Understanding the Text

1. **Read John 4:39-42.** What was different about how the Samaritans came to faith compared to the Galileans in verses 43-45?
2. **Read John 4:46-54.** What were the royal official's expectations when he came to Jesus? How did Jesus challenge those expectations?
3. Why do you think Jesus responded with "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe" before healing the official's son?

## Personal Reflection

4. **Welcoming vs. Accepting:** On a scale of 1-10, where would you honestly place yourself?
  - 1 = I only welcome Jesus when I need something
  - 10 = I have fully accepted Jesus as Lord of every area of my life
5. What would it take to move closer to 10?
6. **Conditional vs. Committed Faith:** The sermon asked, "What if God blessed you based on your terms and conditions?" How does this challenge your view of your relationship with God?
7. Think about a current prayer request. Are you asking Jesus to meet your expectations, or are you surrendering to His will? What's the difference?

## Going Deeper

7. **Read 2 Corinthians 4:8-18.** How does Paul's description of committed faith challenge or encourage you in your current circumstances?
8. The sermon stated: "If all it takes is a sign for you to believe, all it takes is a sign for you to be deceived." How does this warning apply to our culture today? What false signs might we be tempted to follow?
9. **The 20-mile walk:** The royal official had to walk home trusting only Jesus' word. What "20-mile walk" might God be asking you to take right now—where you have to trust His word before seeing results?

## Application

10. What is one area of your life where you've been looking for a "sign" instead of trusting what God has already said in His Word?
11. The sermon mentioned the pastor knew at age seven he was called to preach, but he went to dental school looking for "confirmation." Have you ever pursued something you knew wasn't God's will because you were looking for a different sign? What happened?

## Practical Applications

### This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

#### Option 1: Word Over Sight

- Identify one promise from Scripture that applies to a current situation you're facing
- Write it down and read it daily
- Journal about choosing to trust God's Word even when you don't see evidence yet

#### Option 2: Expectation Audit

- List your current prayer requests
- Next to each one, write what you're expecting God to do
- Ask yourself: "Am I telling God how to fix this, or am I surrendering to His will?"
- Rewrite your prayers with an attitude of acceptance rather than just welcoming

#### Option 3: Committed Faith Practice

- Read 2 Corinthians 4:8-18 every morning this week
- Each day, write down one way you can demonstrate committed faith (not conditional faith) in your current circumstances

## Memory Verse

**John 4:50** - "Jesus said to him, 'Go, your son will live.' The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way."

## Action Steps

1. **Identify your "seventh hour"** - What has God already spoken over your life that you need to walk toward in faith?
2. **Evaluate your foundation** - Is your faith built on what Jesus does or who Jesus is? Write down three attributes of Jesus that remain true regardless of your circumstances.
3. **Practice obedience before evidence** - Choose one area where God has spoken clearly in His Word, and commit to obeying even before you see results.

## Closing Reflection

**Silent Reflection (2-3 minutes):** Ask each person to quietly consider: "What would change in my life if I truly accepted Jesus instead of just welcoming Him?"

## Group Prayer:

- Pray for faith that trusts God's Word over visible signs
- Ask God to reveal areas where group members have conditional rather than committed faith
- Pray for courage to walk in obedience before seeing results
- Thank God that His Word never fails

## For Next Week

- Read John 5:1-15 (the healing at the pool of Bethesda)
- Reflect on this question: "What have I been waiting for God to do that He might be waiting for me to obey?"

## Leader Notes

- Be prepared to share your own struggle with welcoming vs. accepting Jesus
- Create a safe space for honest answers—many Christians struggle with sign-seeking faith
- Emphasize grace: moving from welcoming to accepting is a journey, not a one-time decision
- Consider sharing the dental school story from the sermon as an example of seeking signs over obeying God's clear word

## 5-Day Devotional: Anchored in His Living Word

### Day 1: Faith Beyond Sight

**Reading:** John 4:39-42

**Devotional:** The Samaritans believed in Jesus simply because of His word, without witnessing any miracles. Their faith wasn't dependent on signs or wonders but anchored in what they heard. This reveals a profound truth: the strongest faith trusts God's word before seeing results. Many of us struggle to believe unless we see evidence, but Scripture calls us to walk by faith, not by sight. Today, examine your faith foundation. Are you constantly seeking signs, or can you rest in what God has already spoken? The Samaritans declared Jesus as "Savior of the world" based solely on His word. Let that same word be sufficient for you today, even when circumstances remain unchanged.

### Day 2: Welcoming vs. Accepting

**Reading:** Matthew 19:16-22

**Devotional:** There's a critical difference between welcoming Jesus and accepting Him. The Galileans welcomed Jesus for what He did—the miracles they witnessed—but the Samaritans accepted Him for who He is. Welcoming means inviting Jesus into your situation to fix it; accepting means surrendering your entire life to His lordship. The rich young ruler welcomed Jesus as a good teacher but walked away sad when acceptance required sacrifice. Conditional faith says, "I'll follow You if..." Committed faith declares, "I'll follow You even if..." Today, honestly assess: Have you merely welcomed Jesus into certain areas while maintaining control, or have you fully accepted Him as Lord? True discipleship costs everything, but it also gains everything that truly matters.

### Day 3: The Power of His Word Alone

**Reading:** John 4:46-50

**Devotional:** The royal official wanted Jesus to physically come to his dying son, but Jesus simply spoke: "Go, your son will live." This father faced a pivotal choice—trust Jesus' word or demand visible proof. Faith grows when we obey God's word before seeing results. That 20-mile journey home required every step to be an act of trust. Jesus doesn't always meet our expectations or follow our prescribed solutions. He gives us His word instead. Perhaps you've been waiting for God to show up in a specific way, but He's already spoken. His word never returns void. The miracle

occurred the moment Jesus spoke, though the father wouldn't see it for hours. What word has God spoken over your life that requires you to simply "go" in faith?

#### **Day 4: Walking Through the Seventh Hour**

**Reading:** 2 Corinthians 4:8-18

**Devotional:** The royal official discovered his son was healed at the exact moment Jesus spoke—the seventh hour. Between God's promise and its visible fulfillment lies a journey of faith. Paul understood this tension: afflicted but not crushed, perplexed but not despairing. We don't lose heart because we fix our eyes on the unseen, not the temporary circumstances. Perhaps you're in your seventh hour—God has spoken, but you haven't seen the manifestation yet. Don't turn back seeking another sign or confirmation. Keep walking forward. The promise is already fulfilled in the spiritual realm; your faith journey brings it into the natural. Stop looking for signs to confirm what God already said. His word is enough. Walk as though it's already done, because in Him, it is.

#### **Day 5: Committed Faith in Testing Times**

**Reading:** Daniel 3:16-18

**Devotional:** The three Hebrew boys exemplified committed faith: "Our God is able to deliver us...but even if He does not, we will not bow." This is faith that doesn't negotiate with God or place conditions on obedience. It's not "I'll serve You if You bless me," but "I'll serve You regardless." Desperation seeks immediate results; faith rests in God's character. When Jesus doesn't meet your expectations, when prayers seem unanswered, when the fire grows hotter—will you still believe His word? Committed faith isn't built on circumstances but on the unchanging nature of God. Today, surrender your expectations. Stop telling God how to solve your impossible situations. His ways are higher, His word is sure, and His timing is perfect. Anchor yourself not in what you see, but in the Savior of the world.