

Small Group Guide: Signs - The Second Sign

Based on John 4:43-54

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: What's the most memorable Super Bowl commercial you've ever seen? What made it stick with you?

Sermon Summary

This week we explored Jesus' second miraculous sign—healing the royal official's son from a distance. The sermon challenged us to examine whether we're satisfied with just "seeing smoke" or if we want to be "on fire for Jesus." We learned that miracles might lead us to Jesus, but it's faith that keeps us following Him.

Key Scripture

John 4:50 - "Jesus replied, 'You may go. Your son will live.' The man took Jesus at his word and departed."

John 20:31 - "These signs are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing, you may have life in His name."

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **What stood out to you most from this sermon?** Was there a particular phrase, story, or Scripture that resonated with you?
2. **Compare the three groups of people in this passage:** Nicodemus (who saw miracles but didn't believe), the Samaritans (who believed without miracles), and the royal official (who believed before seeing). Which group do you most relate to and why?
3. **Why do you think Jesus responded to the royal official by saying, "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, you will never believe"?** What was Jesus trying to communicate?

Going Deeper

4. **The sermon asked: "Do we want to simply see smoke, or do we want to be on fire for Jesus?"** What's the difference between these two positions? Where would you honestly place yourself right now?
5. **"Miracles might lead you to Jesus, but they don't keep you following Jesus. It is faith that keeps you following after Jesus."** Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Share examples from your own life.
6. **The sermon mentioned that we often ask God, "What have You done for me lately?"** Have you ever found yourself in this place? What circumstances led you there?

7. **How does the story of the royal official demonstrate faith?** What did he do that showed he trusted Jesus' word?

Personal Application

8. **The sermon stated: "This sign is a pointer, not a prescription."** What does this mean? How might we misuse miracle stories as prescriptions rather than pointers to Jesus?
9. **"Is Jesus enough for us? Or are we waiting for another miracle?"** This is a challenging question. How would you honestly answer it in your current season of life?
10. **The father took Jesus at His word, while his family believed after seeing the miracle.** Both arrived at faith. How does this encourage you if you feel your faith is "weaker" than others?
11. **For those who have walked through serious illness (personal or family):** How did your faith sustain you through that time? Did you experience the tension between hoping for healing and finding peace in God's eternal perspective?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Miracles are signs that point to Jesus, not merit-based rewards for good behavior**
- ✓ **Faith is more important than fireworks—belief sustains us when miracles don't come**
- ✓ **We are called to be faithful, not fickle**
- ✓ **Taking Jesus at His word is the essence of faith**
- ✓ **God's goodness can only be fully understood from an eternal perspective**

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Faith Audit

- Take time to journal about areas where you're waiting to "see it to believe it" versus areas where you're believing before seeing
- Ask God to reveal where you might be demanding miracles rather than trusting His word
- Share your insights with the group next week

Option 2: Word Over Sight

- Identify one promise from Scripture that you need to take God at His word on (even though you haven't "seen" it yet)
- Write it down and place it somewhere you'll see daily
- Practice declaring, "I take You at Your word, God" when doubt creeps in

Option 3: Eternal Perspective Practice

- When facing a current challenge or disappointment, intentionally shift your focus to the eternal hope you have in Christ
- Write down how viewing your situation through an eternal lens changes your perspective
- Share with one person this week how this practice affected you

Prayer Focus

Pray for:

- Those struggling with terminal illness or caring for loved ones who are sick
- Faith to trust God's word even when we don't see immediate results
- Hearts that desire Jesus Himself more than what He can do for us
- Courage to step out in faith before seeing the outcome
- Anyone wrestling with disappointment when prayers weren't answered as expected

Going Forward

Memory Verse for the Week: *"The man took Jesus at his word and departed."* - John 4:50b

Question to Carry: Am I satisfied with just seeing smoke, or do I want to be on fire for Jesus?

Closing Prayer

Close by praying together, asking God to increase your faith to believe His word whether or not you see miracles, and to help you find your ultimate satisfaction in Jesus Himself.

Next Week

Continue in the "Signs" series through the Gospel of John. Read ahead: John 5:1-15 (The Third Sign)