

Seeing is Believing? **John 4:43-54**

43 Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. 44 For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. 45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.

46 So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. 48 Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

49 The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

50 Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. 51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, "Your son lives!"

52 Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." 53 So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household.

54 This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee. NKJV

Review

Maybe it is time for review. Jesus first met Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a religious ruler of the Jews. Next He encounters an immoral Samaritan woman, which leads to the salvation of many Samaritans. Now He is encountered by a Nobleman, probably one of Herod's high commanders of political appointment. We see from this that Jesus is for everyone. From the religious but un-born-again to the immoral, religiously confused, to those of great standing in this world's system. No one is beyond the reach of Jesus.

Galileans, believers or not.

Notice that John introduces this portion by telling us two things about the Galileans. One, they received Jesus for they too had seen the miracles that Jesus did in Judea. Two, that a prophet is without honor in his own country.

So how could both be true? How could Jesus be not honored by the Galileans and also be received by them as a great miracle worker. This was the same condition of **Nicodemus**. Remember he had said that "no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him," John 3:2 NKJV. But that obviously did not make him a believer in the truest sense. People are not saved by believing that Jesus is a miracle worker but by believing that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Mat. 16:16-17

The Galileans were willing to accept Him as a miracle worker but not the Son of God. They were

unbelievers.

Troubles come to all.

Now let us turn our attention to the nobleman. When Jesus comes from Judea to Galilee it causes no small stir for many of them had also went up to the feast and saw the signs that Jesus did in Jerusalem. And the whole country of Galilee was a buzz among them. These had been heard by this nobleman. Probably by some concerned friend that knew the condition of his son, who was sick and about to die from some ailment.

No one is exempt from problems. No one is too young or too old to be free of them. No one is too rich or too poor to be free of them. Problems come to everyone alike. If you become a Christian, even then you will not be free of the problems that strike at the human race. Whether it is disease, famine, flood or drought, we are all partakers of the calamities that come upon this old world.

From this instance we can see how that problems can sometimes be used by God to bring people to Himself. We see in the voice of this nobleman that he is deeply torn by the soon death of his son. And it is that deep concern that forces him to go to the only one he knows of that can bring a satisfactory solution. How many times do we find that only a great crisis can bring a man to God?

I remember hearing a pastor tell of a woman in his congregation who had been in the hospital for a long time. She had suffered terribly. The pastor came to visit and asked how he might pray for her. Her response incredibly was, "Just pray that I won't waste all this suffering." She wanted God to use it to bring her closer to Him. I think God will honor a prayer like that.

Is seeing believing, or is believing seeing?

Jesus gives the nobleman a somewhat uncharacteristic response. "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

Now what is wrong with that, many Christians would say. I mean, is not the reason Jesus did these signs, to bring people to faith? And to that I answer no. Signs and miracles do not bring faith. Have you never read over in Romans 10 that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17 What signs do is they get people to listen, to listen to the Word of God. People can see signs and miracles and never come to faith. We notice in this passage that the man believes Jesus word, and goes his way. His faith is later substantiated when he returns home and finds his son well and comes to know that he was healed at the very instant when Jesus had said, your son will live.

But notice something here with me. Cana is about 15 or so miles from Capernaum. Why is it then that he does not return home until the next day, seeing that he had met Jesus at 1:00 p.m.? It was because he believed. And believing he did not need to run home to see if it was really true. That is a demonstration of the man's faith. Saving faith if you will since it was based up the word of Jesus and not on sight.

Much of Christianity in our day is based on seeing is believing. That is why people have such little faith. And that is why so many church members have abandoned the church and God with it. Their faith is not based on the word of God but on the words and actions of men.

Remember the words to that old song we sang when we were kids.

Have faith, hope and charity,
That's the way to live successfully.
How do I know, the Bible tells me so.
Do good to your enemies,
And the Blessed Lord you'll surely please,
How do I know, the Bible tells me so.

Don't worry 'bout tomorrow,
Just be real good today.
The Lord is right beside you,
He'll guide you all the way

Have faith, hope and charity,
That's the way to live successfully.
How do I know, the Bible tells me so!

God forbid I don't know how the TV industry let it slip by but Roy Rogers and Dale Evens used to sing that on national TV.

Or what about that other great favorite, *Jesus Loves Me*

All based on what, that the Bible tells us so.

In Luke 16 Jesus told what I believe is a true account of a certain rich man.

Luke 16:19-31

19 "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. 20 But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. 26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

27 "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' 29 Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 But he said

to him, **'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'**" NKJV

And it was so. The religious leaders who knew from the soldiers that Jesus and truly risen from the dead did not believe but instead bribed the soldiers to tell a lie.

Great Faith

Later in Jesus ministry there will be another man from Capernaum who comes to Jesus with a similar request but with what Jesus describes as Great Faith.

Matt 8:5-11

5 Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, 6 saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

7 And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

8 The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

10 When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" NKJV

What type of faith do we have?

Is ours a Great faith, or do we believe what we see?

Is that really faith?

Heb 11:1-2

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. NASB