

"I am delighted to tell you about the signs and wonders that the most high God has done for me. "How great are his signs! How mighty are his wonders! His kingdom will last forever, and his authority continues from one generation to the next.""
(Daniel 4:2-3, NET)

JESUS HEALS AN OFFICIAL'S SON

John 4:43-54 (ESV)

⁴³ After the two days he departed for Galilee. ⁴⁴ (For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.) ⁴⁵ So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast. ⁴⁶ So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. ⁴⁷ When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸ So Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." ⁴⁹ The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." 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. ⁵¹ As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. ⁵² So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." ⁵³ The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." And he himself believed, and all his household. ⁵⁴ This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.

DISCUSSION:

- 1. What does "*a prophet has no honor in his hometown*" mean? If you have been in church a long time, is it possible to start to treat Jesus like a hometown boy?**

Those familiar with Jesus had trouble recognizing Him as Messiah. His "hometown" could be Nazareth, but he was born in Bethlehem, maybe Judea counts as "home." It seems that there were plenty of people in any setting who weren't willing to look past his unremarkable appearance and station in life.

Perhaps I am stretching this statement but it occurred to me that those of us who grew up around church can become so familiar with Jesus that we also lose our awe and wonder...?

- 2. In John 4:48 who is Jesus talking to: The official? A surrounding crowd? Both?**

We've seen plenty of times in the gospels where Jesus talks to one person or group but is really intending to be overheard by someone else (like the Pharisees standing on the edge of the crowd).

The official is acting faithfully, by first traveling to seek out Jesus and then by subsequently obeying Him to GO! I'm inclined to think Jesus is therefore mostly talking to the locals crowded around.

Some commentators point out the comparison of the Samaritans, who believed based only on hearing about Jesus rather than seeing a big sign like the Jews had witnessed. (Although to be fair Jesus did have miraculous insight into the life of the woman at the well).

3. What is wrong with the kind of belief that is based only on seeing signs and wonders? How did Jesus require a deeper faith from the important official?

Throughout Scripture more is demanded and those who believe without a sign are commended. Jesus could have gone, or done something more concrete, but He demands that the official step out in faith *before* he saw any results.

4. What did the sign Jesus performed reveal about Jesus' mission and character? What response did it demand?

- It shows us Jesus' compassion for human suffering, he was concerned about this man.
- Like the parables, Jesus reveals his power and divinity but you have to look for it. He doesn't "put on a show." He rewards those who earnestly seek Him (Heb 11:6).
- He has power over sickness
- He can act across space, the whole universe is His dominion.
- He wants us to know him more deeply than as the "God that gives us stuff"

Response: If he can do that, He is divine, He is the master of Creation. He is God! And I must worship Him...

5. Did the official believe in Jesus "all at once" or gradually? What does this tell us about how we should expect people to come to faith in Christ?

He increased in his faith. He had enough faith to come looking for Jesus. He had enough faith to act on His command. He had a lot more faith when He realized what Jesus had done. Enough that He apparently becomes a follower.

We need to be patient. We grew into faith in Jesus and our faith has grown deeper over time. Give people time to grow.

6. The official "took Jesus at his word." What promises of Jesus do we need to take at face value?

- That He hears our prayers.
- That He is a Good Father who has a plan for us.

- That He works together in all things for the good of those who love Him
- That He sends us the Holy Spirit and that He will transform us into His image.
- That He is coming back
- That He will raise us from the dead
- That He will make all things right and all things New.
- And many more...

7. It was 20-25 miles between Cana and Capernaum, a long walk. What do you think the official was thinking on the way home?

Answers will vary.

8. Do you know of anyone who turned to Jesus in a crisis? Was that “crisis faith” the start of something deeper? What often happens to people who practice “fire alarm faith?”

It’s easy to look down on “crisis faith,” but at least the person in a crisis was willing to turn to God. That’s a BIG, BIG step.

For many, a crisis is the thing that started them on a different way of living and a growing healthy faith. For others, once the crisis passes, they are content to go back to their usual pattern of life. They likely repeat at the next crisis.

In his Grace God often does help at a time of crisis, but not always and definitely not always the way we wanted or expected. Some will find His response, or perceived response, unsatisfactory and will turn from faith. (“the weeds sprang up”).

What’s the difference between those who go on to a life of “telling what the Lord has done” and those who go back to the status quo?

- Submission to the Holy Spirit and his plan for our growth in all its aspect.
- Discipleship, prayer, meditation on his Word, etc.
- Becoming more involved in a body of encouraging believers

We need to persistently encourage those who have made it through a crisis and help them walk more closely with Him.

The Nobleman (John 4:43–54)

Our Lord continued His journey to Galilee (John 4:3) and came again to Cana. Galilee was known as “*Galil ha goyim*—Galilee of the Gentiles.” Apparently Jesus had detected in Judea (His own country) the increasing hostility of the religious leaders, though the real opposition would not yet appear for some months. Our Lord was really never identified with Judea even though He had been born in Bethlehem. He was known as the Prophet from Galilee (Matt. 21:11; John 7:52). Jesus knew that the public response to His ministry in Jerusalem had been insincere and shallow (John 2:23–25), and that it was not honoring to Him at all.

Why did Jesus return to Cana? Perhaps He wanted to cultivate the “seed” He had planted there when He attended the wedding feast. Nathanael came from Cana, so perhaps there was a personal reason for this visit. Jesus was met at Cana by a nobleman from Capernaum, some twenty miles away. The man had heard about His miracles and came all that distance to intercede for his son who was dying. The first miracle at Cana came at the request of His mother (John 2:1–5), and this second miracle at Cana at the request of a father (John 4:47).

Was this man a Jew or a Gentile? We do

not know. Nor do we know his exact position in the government. He may have been a member of Herod’s court; but whatever his national or social standing, he was clearly at his wit’s end and desperately needed the help of the Saviour. He “kept beseeching Him” to travel to Capernaum to heal his son.

John 4:48 was not a rebuke of this nobleman. Rather, it was our Lord’s lament at the spiritual condition of the people in general, both in Judea and Galilee. “Seeing is believing” has always been the “pragmatic” philosophy of the lost world, even the religious world. The nobleman believed that Jesus could heal his son, but he made two mistakes in his thinking: that Jesus had to go to Capernaum to save the lad, and that if the boy died meanwhile, it was too late.

We must admire this man’s faith. Jesus simply said, “Go thy way; thy son liveth” (John 4:50). And the man believed Jesus and started to return home! Both the Samaritan woman and this anonymous nobleman must have rejoiced the heart of Jesus as they believed the word and acted on it.

The boy was healed the instant Jesus spoke those words; so the man’s servants started out to find him so they could share the good news. (Again, it is the servants who know what is going on. See

[John 2:9; 15:15](#).) The boy had been healed at the seventh hour, which, in Roman time, would be 7 o'clock in the evening. The father certainly would not have traveled at night, for that would have been dangerous; nor would the servants have taken that risk. The father's faith was so strong that he was willing to delay going home, even though his heart yearned to see his beloved son.

When the father and the servants met the next day, their report confirmed his faith. Note that the father thought the healing would be gradual ("began to improve"); but the servants reported a complete, instant recovery.

This man began with *crisis faith*. He was about to lose his son and he had no other recourse but the Lord Jesus Christ. Many people came to Jesus with their crises, and He did not turn them away. The nobleman's crisis faith became *confident* faith: he believed the Word and had peace in his heart. He was even able to delay his trip home, knowing that the boy was out of danger.

His confident faith became *confirmed* faith. Indeed, the boy had been completely healed! And the healing took place at the very time when Jesus spoke the Word. It was this fact that made a believer out of the nobleman and his household. He believed that Jesus was the Christ, the

Son of God; and he shared this faith with his family. He had *contagious* faith and shared his experience with others.

This is one of several miracles that Jesus performed "at a distance." He healed the centurion's servant from a distance ([Matt. 8:5-13](#), and note that he too lived in Capernaum), and He healed the daughter of the Canaanite woman in the same manner ([Matt. 15:21-28](#)). These two were Gentiles and, spiritually speaking, were "at a distance" ([Eph. 2:12-13](#)). Perhaps this nobleman was also a Gentile. We do not know.

[John 4:54](#) does not state that this healing was the second miracle that Jesus ever performed, for that would contradict [John 2:23](#) and [3:2](#). This was the second miracle He performed *in Cana of Galilee* (see [John 2:1, 11](#)). He certainly gave those people special privileges.

But we must note that both miracles were "private" rather than public. Mary, the disciples, and the servants knew where the excellent wine had come from, but the guests did not. (Of course, it is possible that the servants told the story to others.) The nobleman's son was healed at Capernaum, not Cana; but news traveled rapidly in those days and certainly the word got out.

Jesus' first miracle at the wedding revealed His power over *time*. The Father

is always making water into wine, but He takes a season or two to finish the work. Jesus made the wine instantly. In this sense, our Lord's miracles were only *instantaneous* copies of what the Father is always doing. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). The Father is constantly multiplying bread, season after season, but the Son multiplied it instantly.

In the second recorded miracle, Jesus showed His power over *space*. He was not limited simply because He was in Cana and the sick boy was in Capernaum. The fact that the father believed the word and did not know the results until the next day is evidence that he had confident faith. He trusted the word that Jesus spoke, and so should we.