

## The Gospel of John – Walking by Faith

Today we're going to continue this series by looking at John 4:43-54. This scripture says:

- (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 Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.
- (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 Judaea 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.
- (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.
- (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.
- (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.
- (54) This *is* again the second miracle *that* Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.

There could actually be several lessons in this small amount of Scripture. Much could be said about the fact that the people who should have known Jesus best rejected him – it seems that they wanted to humanize him too much. It is those who saw Jesus as the miracle worker who followed him.

This, then, brings us to the nobleman from Capernaum. This nobleman appears to have been someone from the king's court – noble by birth, and probably serving in the

government of Herod in some way at this time. Some scholars have tried to identify this man with various others in the Bible, but there's no evidence to support such identification.

There are several points here that we can learn from this encounter. First we see that the nobleman is like most people – seeing is believing. He wanted Jesus to come down to his house to heal his son. Jesus used this opportunity to go to the very heart of faith. Hebrews 11:1 tells us that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. You see, faith is not believing what we have seen. While that may sometimes be hard it is easier than seeing what one has believed. In 2 Corinthians 5:7 the apostle Paul tells us that we walk by faith, and not by sight. To truly live by faith we have to put aside our own vision and look at things through eyes of faith.

Jesus here pointed out the fallacy of walking by sight. Walking by sight means that we're not following God because he's God – we're following God because of the works that we've seen. Sometimes I think that the Church today get's too caught up in the physical things. We get so caught up on the doctrine of baptism, or the Lord's Supper, or tongues, or miracles, etc. that we lose the big picture that it's all about God. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). As long, then, as we focus on the visible things in life we cannot be fully walking in God's pleasure.

This nobleman obviously believed that if Jesus came down to Capernaum (about a day's journey from Cana where Jesus was) he could heal his son, but his faith had been based on sight. It didn't really sink in to him that Jesus didn't have to come down until Jesus showed him the way. When Jesus told him to go his way he believed, but it would seem that his faith was not complete. When those of his household came he asked what time – so his faith still needed affirmation.

I think this is a good example of the way most of us are today. We talk about faith, and even believe, but yet there seems to be doubt that is cast because of what we see. If we want to have faith that can move mountains we have to begin by putting aside sight. If we want to have faith that can move mountains we're going to have to get into the Word of God, because it is the Word that gives us direction for life. If we're going to have faith that will move mountains then we're going to have to get into communion with God – for faith is strengthened in prayer and fasting. Finally, if we're going to have faith that will move mountains we're going to have to follow the guidance of the Holy Ghost, who has been sent to guide us into all truth.

The last point that I want to make is that as the faith of the nobleman was strengthened so was that of his household. When we truly act in faith today it will have an impact upon those closest to us.

What about you today? Are you living by faith? Are you blinded by the things around you? If so, God is there to help. I encourage you to call upon him for help today.

Yours in Christ,

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