

The Healing of the Nobleman's Son

John 4:43-54

John 4:43-54 – “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.”

Background Notes

After two days, Jesus departed and went to Galilee. Thus the Lord spent two days in Samaria after He had led the Samaritan woman to salvation. “So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days”(v40).

In verse 44 the Lord stated that “**a prophet has no honor in his own country.**” This doesn’t seem to make sense, because verse 45 says, “**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.**” After all, Galilee was “His own country.” So what did the Lord mean when He said that “**a prophet has no honor in his own country?**” Is it a contradiction? No.

John recorded the Lord’s statement, in view of what was about to happen. The Galileans would reject the Lord. At first they received Him with praise because they saw and heard all the miracles that He was performing - particularly because of the miracles He had done in Jerusalem. So at first He was received with praise, but later they rejected Him. We have a foretaste of that in verse 48: “Jesus said to him, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.”

“Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.” I think many of you can understand that. There’s a nice group of folks here tonight, but I’m an out-of-town speaker. Suppose I lived here. Suppose I was a local, and you heard me teach often - how many people would come to a seminar on a nice evening like this? Maybe not quite so many! Or if I were to keep this seminar going for another month, how many would continue to show up? You see, that’s what the Lord was saying. A prophet has no honor – he’s just an ordinary guy - in his own country.

I’ll never forget an experience I had a few years ago, when I was fairly new at speaking to large groups. I preached at a large conference in Canada, and many people shook my hand, and said that they really enjoyed the ministry. It was pretty exciting! I came back home thinking that I was God’s gift to the Church! The next day I walked into my early class at Emmaus Bible College. During the lecture, a student raised his hand and asked a question – and can you believe - he fell asleep while I was giving the answer!! Do you see the point? That student was used to my teaching - I was “in my own country” at Emmaus! So that explains the Lord’s statement: ***a prophet has no honor in his own country.*** (And, by the way, my over-estimation of my teaching and preaching was whittled down to a proper size very quickly!)

The royal official (*nobleman*, v46) may have been either a Jew or a Gentile, but he was probably a Jew, and probably employed by Herod Antipas, the ruler over the region of Galilee. The official was stationed in Capernaum, a town on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. He traveled to Cana, about 20 miles uphill, to request healing for his son who was very sick. *“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”(v47).*

“Jesus said to him, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe”(v48). Was the Lord rebuking the official? No. The Lord was actually addressing the crowds that followed Him just to see miracles. How do we know that? Well, the Greek word for “you” here is plural, although we can’t pick that up in English. That’s why, in most translations, the word *“people”* is added, printed in italics. The word *“people”* is not in the original text, but it is added for clarity, to indicate that the word *“you”* is definitely plural. So the Lord was not rebuking the official - He was rebuking the people, because they were following Him just to see His miracles.

In verse 54 we read: *“This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.”* This doesn’t mean that this was Jesus’ second miracle, but it was the second **“sign miracle”** in the Gospel of John. The first sign miracle in John’s Gospel (and the Lord’s first miracle) was the changing of the water into wine. The Lord did many miracles while He was in Jerusalem. For example, look at John 2:23 *“Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.”* And in John 3:2 Nicodemus said, *“...no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”* So we know that the Lord did a number of miracles while he was in Jerusalem. When He returned to the Galilee area, He performed the second sign miracle in John’s Gospel. This may also have been His second miracle done in the Galilee area.

Doctrinal / Teaching Points

1. God designs dilemmas of faith to cause Christian growth.

The Lord purposely put the royal official in a dilemma of faith. *“The nobleman said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies. 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”(v49-50).* Now the official was in a dilemma of faith. If he went, he would have to leave the Lord, and go in complete faith based only on the Lord’s word. But if he stayed and insisted that the Lord come with him, then his son might die in the meantime.

Well, the official believed the Lord’s word, and responded with a strong faith! Notice how verses 52-53 emphasize his growth in faith. When he found that his son had recovered, *“he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” 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.”*

He had already believed in the Lord, but his faith was confirmed and strengthened. He believed, and he witnessed his whole household coming to salvation as well! God designs dilemmas of faith to cause Christian growth.

That takes place today as well. As you know, I write six issues of **“Devotions for Growing Christians”** a year, so every two months we go through this process: I write it, then we take it to a printer, and then we put on address labels and mail it out.* We’ve been doing this for twenty-two years. It costs about a thousand dollars for the printing and the mailing of each issue! Often when I start writing, the funds are not there for the printing and mailing. It’s a dilemma of faith. I know the Lord has given me this ministry, and I believe He wants me to continue to write, but the funds aren’t there, and we don’t want to go into debt. Shall I delay writing the next issue, and not step out in faith until all the funds are there? Or do we take a reasonable step of faith and trust God to work out the finances - and thus grow in faith?

Why does God operate this way? Because God designs dilemmas of faith to cause Christian growth. (And by the way, the Lord has **never failed** to send in all the finances we need to print and mail **DFGC!***)

2. God can heal from a distance.

To perform this miracle, the Lord Jesus didn’t need to lay hands on the sick boy, or even go to his bedside. He just spoke the words, *“Your son will live.”* Healing by remote control, if you will! God can heal from a distance.

John wrote, *“these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name’ (John 20:21).* John included the miracle of the healing of the official’s son for that specific purpose, because there is no doubt that this miracle emphasizes the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. As God, Jesus could heal from a distance.

God can heal from a distance today. When I was twelve years old, I had polio. I was in the hospital, partially paralyzed – and God healed me in answer to my prayers, and the prayers of many other Christians. No one came and laid hands on me; no human “healer” was involved. The paralysis simply left overnight. God can heal from a distance.

Maybe you’re praying for healing for yourself, or for someone else. God doesn’t always heal in answer to our prayers - we need to leave that decision up to the sovereign will of God. But God **can** heal, and God can heal from a distance.

Practical Applications

1. Do you need signs and wonders?

“Then Jesus said to him, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe”(v48). This was a rebuke to the people. **Requiring** signs and wonders in order to believe is not pleasing to God. Do you need signs and wonders?

There’s no doubt that God does use signs and wonders to confirm His Word. There were signs and wonders in the Old Testament to confirm the word of the prophets. There were signs and wonders in the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus - signs and miracles that proved His deity. There were signs and wonders done by the apostles, that confirmed the word of the Lord and the gospel message they were teaching.

God is not limited. He can use signs and wonders today. But the question is, do you **need** signs? That’s the point. **Craving** or requiring miraculous signs is not pleasing to God. Read John 20:25-29. Do you need signs and wonders?

2. Maybe your sickness will bring others to Christ.

What was the result of this boy being healed? *“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.”* This wonderful result would not have happened if the son had not been sick in the first place.

Maybe your sickness will bring others to Christ. God allowed this boy to nearly die so that others would come to faith. God may permit a tragic accident or a serious illness in your life, or in my life - because maybe that illness or accident will bring others to Christ!

*Note - Regarding the illustration of printing and mailing **Devotions for Growing Christians**. As you may have guessed, that illustration was given a number of years ago. This Talk was recorded before it was possible to send “**eDevotions for Growing Christians**” by