

*Commentary Notes*

David Guzik [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Jhn/Jhn-4.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Jhn/Jhn-4.cfm)

Steve Cole <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-25-foxhole-faith-saving-faith-john-443-54>

Tony Merida [Exalting Jesus in John](#) (\$2.99 on Amazon)

A.W. Pink [The Gospel of John](#) (99¢ on Amazon)

The Lord often graciously meets us at our point of crisis, but that's just the beginning. He wants us to believe in and follow Him not only because He delivered us from our crisis, but also because He is the only Savior and Lord. He is worthy of our trust because of who He is.

Throughout John's Gospel we see those who seem to believe but then turn back from following Jesus Christ. (6:66-69)

Those who left Jesus demonstrated by leaving that their faith was not authentic (cf. 1 John 2:19). On the other hand, the disciples, by persevering in the faith, demonstrate that their faith is indeed authentic.

Believing Jesus is not something we do one time. We must keep believing, keep depending, keep trusting. From the beginning—the opening verses of the Gospel of John—the need for continual trust is emphasized. Those who become children of God are those who received Christ (John 1:12), those who are believing (present tense) in his name. Why is continued belief so important to John? Where did he learn this emphasis? "Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, 'If you continue in my word, you really are my disciples'" (8:31). To continue is to "abide," to "remain," and to "persevere." True disciples continue in the faith, growing more and more in their dependence on Jesus Christ. Authentic faith is more than spiritual curiosity about Jesus. Authentic faith is more than emotional feelings about him. Authentic faith is not a single decision for him. Authentic faith is an actual commitment, an informed belief, and a growing dependence on Jesus Christ.

This shows the condition of the Jews—their inability to recognize the Lord Jesus the Christ of God, and their failure to set to their seal that what He spake was the truth.

1. He had no honor "in his own country." This was in vivid contrast from His experiences in Samaria.
2. While we are told that "the Galileans received him," it was not because they recognized the glory of His person, or the authority and life-giving value of His words, but because they had been impressed by what they had seen Him do at Jerusalem.
3. There is the declaration made by Christ to the nobleman—intended, no doubt, for the Galileans also, "except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

*4:43 After the two days he departed for Galilee.*

- Different indeed are God's ways from ours. During those days spent in Samaria many had believed on Christ to the saving of their souls. And now the Savior leaves that happy scene and departed into a country where He had received no honor. How evident it is that He pleased not Himself!
- The will of the One who has commissioned us must determine all our actions. Failure must not make us lag behind, nor success urge us to run before. Neither must failure make us fretful and feverish to seek another field, nor success cause us to remain stationary when God bids us move on.
- The religious leaders in Jerusalem regarded Galilee with contempt (see John 7:41, 52). It was there that "the poor of the flock" were to be found.

4:44 For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.

- The reference is to what is recorded in Luke 4. At Nazareth, "where he had been brought up," He entered the synagogue and read from Isaiah 60, declaring "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Those who heard Him "wondered," and said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" They were totally blind to His Divine glory.
- Why, then, should He return thither? The answer to this question is found in Matthew 4: "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Naphtalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Naphtalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;
- The Samaritans believed His bare word, for no miracles were performed before them. But now in Galilee He meets with a faith of a very inferior order. The Galileans received Him because they had seen "all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast"
- the nobleman's house (verse 53) did not believe until a miracle had been performed before their eyes.
- Galilee was Jesus' country – where He grew up. Because these people felt so familiar with Jesus, they did not honor Him the way they should have. In this we recognize that they really were not familiar with Jesus; if they were, they would have honored Him all the more.
  - There is such a thing as a false familiarity with Jesus; a dangerous feeling that we know all about Him. Such a dangerous feeling leads to a lack of honor towards Jesus.
  - It's a little hard to know if John meant to associate the place where Jesus was not honored to be Judea or Galilee. A case can be made for either; clearly the other Gospels quoted this principle and related it to Galilee (Matthew 13:57 and Mark 6:4).
  - He betakes himself to Galilee therefore, to avoid fame, testifying that His own country (Galilee) was that where, as a prophet, He was least likely to be honored. (Alford)

4:45 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.

- How this brings out the fickleness and the shallowness of human nature. For upwards of twenty years the man Christ Jesus had lived in Galilee. Little or nothing is told us about those years which preceded His public work. But we know that He did all things well. His manner of life, His ways, His deportment, His every act, must have stood out in vivid contrast from all around Him. Had His fellow-townsmen possessed any spiritual discernment at all they must have seen at once that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Holy One of God. But they were blind to His glory. The perfect life He had lived quietly among them was not appreciated. As the Son of God incarnate He was unknown and unrecognized. But now things were changed. The humble Carpenter had left them for a season. He had commenced His public ministry.
- now that the Lord Jesus returns to Galilee, He is at once "received." Now that His fame had spread abroad the people flocked around Him. Such is human nature. Let a man who lived in comparative obscurity leave his native place, become famous in some state or country, and then return to his home town, and it is astonishing how many will claim friendship, if not kinship, with him.
- It was customary for the Jews in Galilee to go to Jerusalem for the feasts (fulfilling Exodus 23:14-17). This particular time they remembered all that Jesus had done in Jerusalem.
  - Perhaps they remembered when Jesus turned the merchant's tables in the outer courts of the temple (John 2:13-17). Jesus also predicted His own resurrection (John 2:18-22) and performed many other unspecified signs when in Jerusalem (John 2:23-25).
  - The enthusiasm of the Galileans was not soundly based. It was dependent on the wonders arising from their sight of the signs, not on a realization that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world. Their very acceptance of Him was thus in its way a rejection. They gave Him honor of a sort, but it was not the honor that was due to Him. (Morris)

4:46a So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine.

- The Holy Spirit indicates there is some connection between them, something which they have in common.

- both were third day scenes
- He rebuked the one who asked (Mary & the nobleman)
- The one that the Lord commanded both obeyed
- Both miracles we see the Word at work: in each miracle the Lord did nothing but speak.
- Both narratives mention is made of the servant's knowledge
- The sequel in each case was that they who witnessed the miracle believed: result of the first sign was that the disciples believed in Jesus (2:11); the result of this second sign was that the royal official and his household believed (4:53). That's the response that John wants all of his readers to make: These signs are written so that you will believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and thus have life in His name (20:31).
- The designed similarity in the way in which each narrative concludes: in John 2:11 we are told, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee," and in John 4:54, "This is again the second miracle which Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee."
- There is also a great contrast between the two stories. The first is a scene of joy and happiness; but the second is a scene of sickness, desperation, anxiety, and the shadow of death. By comparing the two stories, we are to see that life is filled with both kinds of situations and that Jesus is the One that we need to trust in all the joys and sorrows of life. (James Boice)

*4:46b And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill.*

- By this time Jesus had made His home in Capernaum (Matthew 4:13 and John 2:12). Though Jesus was at Cana (John 4:46a), the nobleman travelled the 20 or so miles (32 kilometers) from Capernaum to Cana.
- *An official*: Literally, 'a royal person'...this man was probably an officer of Herod Antipas. (Alford)

*4:47 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.*

- This certain nobleman was one of many parents who came to Jesus on behalf of an afflicted child. He obviously came with passion and urgency of a father of a sick child – and at the point of death.
- He probably never would have come to Jesus if it hadn't been for this personal crisis. God often uses the crises in our lives to get us to seek Him in ways that we never would have done if the crisis had not occurred. But we need to understand that seeking the Lord in a crisis is not automatic. Many curse God and grow bitter when trials hit. We should follow this man's example by seeking the Lord when trouble strikes.
- It is well when trouble leads a man to God, instead of away from God. Affliction is one of God's medicines; then let us beware of murmuring in time of trouble.

*4:48 So Jesus said to him, "Unless you[a] see signs and wonders you will not believe."*

- Jesus rebuked those who depended on signs and wonders before they would believe. It might seem that Jesus was harsh towards this man who wanted his son healed, but He encountered many in Galilee who were interested only in His miracles – He therefore questioned this man accordingly.
  - Signs and wonders can lead a person towards belief in God, and can validate a heavenly messenger – but they can also have no effect on a person, and Satan can also use lying signs and wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9).
  - Signs and wonders from God are obviously good things, but they should not form the foundation of our faith. We should not depend on them to prove God to us. In themselves, signs and wonders cannot change the heart; Israel saw incredible signs at Mount Sinai and even heard the very voice of God (Exodus 19:16-20:1), yet a short time later they worshipped a gold calf (Exodus 32:1-6).
  - These words imply the contrast between the Samaritans, who believed because of His word, and the Jews who would not believe but through signs and prodigies. (Alford)
- Jesus knew that the man was not seeking Him because he wanted to worship Him or follow Him for who He is. He wasn't coming as a sinner seeking forgiveness and eternal life. Rather, he was like the soldier in the foxhole. He desperately needed immediate help. And so Jesus' rebuke, which as I said was directed both at the man and at the Galileans who were there, was a gracious rebuke intended to help the man see his greater need. Jesus wanted him

to move from his foxhole faith to genuine saving faith. We should learn that the Lord never rebukes us to hurt us, but always for our good, so that we might grow in faith and holiness.

*4:49 The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies."*

- *The official said to Him:* This man was a nobleman, a man of high standing and stature. All of his standing and stature seemed to matter nothing in light of his great need. He experienced the leveling effect of affliction.
- *Sir, come down before my child dies!* In His previous words, it seemed that Jesus discouraged the nobleman from asking for a miracle. Yet this request shows that the nobleman properly understood that Jesus did not intend to discourage asking Jesus for miraculous help, only to discourage a faith that seeks only the miraculous.
  - The nobleman did not appeal to Jesus on the basis of his noble status, but on the basis of his son's great need. Coming to Jesus as a great and important man would gain him nothing before Jesus.
  - He urged no merit, but pleaded the misery of the case. He did not plead that the boy was of noble birth — that would have been very bad pleading with Jesus; nor did he urge that he was a lovely child — that would have been a sorry argument; but he pleaded that he was at the point of death. His extremity was his reason for urgency: the child was at death's door; therefore his father begs that mercy's door may open. (Spurgeon)

*4:50 Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way.*

- The Lord never turns away a soul that truly seeks Him. There may be much ignorance (as indeed there is in all of us), there may be much of the flesh mixed in with our appeals, but if the heart is really set on Him, He always responds. And not only so, invariably He does far more for us than we ask or think. It was so here. He not only healed the son of this nobleman, but He did so immediately, by the word of His power.
- There are three, possibly four, different cases recorded in the Gospels, where Christ healed a Gentile, and in each instance He healed from a distance. There was a reason for this. The Jews were in covenant relationship with God, and as such "nigh" to Him. But the Gentiles, being "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise" were "far off" (Eph. 2:12, 13), and this fact was duly recognized by the Savior.
- Here once more, we are shown the Word (John 1:1, 14) at work.
- *Go your way; your son lives:* Jesus severely tested this man's faith, forcing him to believe in Jesus' word alone and not in any outward demonstration of the miraculous. Despite the test, the man took Jesus at His word and departed. The nobleman demonstrated that true faith is simply taking Jesus at His word. **So Jesus very skillfully drew this man into a deeper level of faith: Faith in Christ's promise or word.**
  - It was worthy of His care to heal the boy; it was far more needful that He should train and lead the father to faith. (Maclaren)
  - Had our Lord gone with him, as he wished, his unbelief could not have been fully removed; as he would have still thought that our Lord's power could not reach from Cana to Capernaum: in order to destroy his unbelief at once, and bring him into the fulness of the faith of his supreme power, he cures him, being apparently absent, by that energy through which he fills both the heavens and the earth. (Clarke)
- *Your son lives:* Jesus did not use any dramatic effects in this healing. Many people want to see dramatic effects in God's work; and sometimes God provides them. Real faith may perceive and accept the outward demonstration of the miraculous, but does not require it.
- What Christ has said, He is able to do; and what He has undertaken, He will never fail to make good. The sinner who has really reposed his soul on the word of the Lord Jesus, is safe to all eternity.... In the things of this world, we say that seeing is believing. But in the things of the Gospel, believing is as good as seeing. (J.C. Ryle)

*4:51-52 As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. 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."*

- According to his servants, this happened "Yesterday at the seventh hour."
  - This means that the nobleman took his time to return from his meeting with Jesus in Cana back to his home in Capernaum. His leisurely pace was a demonstration of faith. In fear, the nobleman ran from Capernaum to Cana; in faith he walked from Cana back to Capernaum.

- The word "yesterday" brings out a striking point. Cana and Capernaum were only a comparatively short distance apart: the journey could be made in about four hours. It was only one hour after midday when the Savior pronounced the sick boy healed. Such implicit confidence had the nobleman in Christ's word, he did not return home that day at all!
- The nobleman was so sure that that his child was alive and well, that he was in no violent hurry to return. He did not go home immediately, as though he must be in time to get another doctor, if Christ had not succeeded; but he went his way leisurely and calmly, confident in the truth of what Jesus had said to him. (Spurgeon)
- *Your son lives!* The nobleman believed it before the evidence, but the evidence was clearly welcome. One may only imagine how beautiful this news was to the nobleman and to know, it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives."
- The proof of this miracle was plain. When Jesus proclaimed the boy healed, he was in fact healed – and in a demonstrated way.
- *Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.* Left is the same word used when the Samaritan woman left her waterpot. It wasn't just a slow, natural recovery. It happened instantly. The man then knew that it was the same hour when Jesus had spoken the word, "Your son lives." As a result, the man and his entire household believed in Jesus.

4:53 *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.*

- *And he himself believed, and his whole household:* The miraculous power of Jesus developed greater faith in both the nobleman and his household. He believed before, but now he believed more. His faith was deepened by his personal experience of God's power.
  - His disciples believed on him after the water had been turned into wine; the father and the rest of the household believed as the result of the healing of the boy: and in both cases the verb in the original is an inceptive aorist 'they put their faith in Him'. (Tasker)

4:54 *This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.*

- In the Gospel of John the signs are given to lead the reader to faith (John 20:29-31). The relation between belief and signs is clear in John chapter 2 and chapter 4.
  - The first sign persuaded His disciples
  - The second sign persuaded a Jewish nobleman and his household
  - The Samaritans believed without a sign
- The first two signs in the Gospel of John took place at Cana of Galilee. The first was at the best party ever – a wedding party. The second was connected with the worst tragedy ever – the illness and soon death of a child. Jesus is real in both aspects.

*Note: The inclusion of commentary notes from individuals does not mean that we endorse everything from that individual. We just happen to think the included can be helpful in understanding the context of what is going on.*