

## The Mind of Christ - Lesson 43

February 5, 2020

I left off at an awkward place to jump in here tonight so let's go back and begin with **John 4:39**. Maybe that will help us get some continuity.

### **John 4:39-45**

From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done." <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. <sup>41</sup> Many more believed because of His word; <sup>42</sup> and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

<sup>43</sup> After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee. <sup>44</sup> *For Jesus, Himself, testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.* <sup>45</sup> So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that *He did in Jerusalem at the feast*; for they themselves also went to the feast.

I was talking about the idea that between the verse 44 and 45 that people are fickle and Jesus knew that nature of people. He knows that they can be "for" in one minute and "against" in the next minute. So, they saw all the things that He did in Jerusalem; they were amazed like everybody else, but Jesus knew that a prophet really didn't have honor in his own country. He knew that He was going into territory that was going to be, eventually, not receptive to Him. It is in the middle of that discussion where I will pick up in my notes.

I wrote that I wonder if Jesus is thinking of Prophets like Jonah and Daniel who were honored in foreign lands. The rejection of the Jews was hardly a surprise to Jesus. His indication of God turning to non-Jews and the faith of non-Jews is highlighted in the stories of the gospels, John 4 being one of them.

The ones he commends often in the gospels are people who are non-Jews. The royal official in **John 4:46-52**, after Jesus heard his son was ill said, "**You may go. Your son will live.**" The Syro-Phoenician woman whose daughter was demon possessed in both **Mark 7:26-29** and **Matthew 15:22-28** was healed when Jesus said to her, "**Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.**" And her daughter was healed at that moment. In **Luke 7:2**, The Centurion whose daughter was dying was healed by Jesus and was told, "**I tell you, I have not found such great faith in all of Israel.**"

In **John 10:16** Jesus speaks of other sheep that are not of this sheep. In other words, Jesus always had in His mind that the gospel is not going to be wholesale received by the Jews but it was going to be extended to the Gentiles. Even though He sent His disciples to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, He is always indicating that the gospel is going to go beyond them. In **John 10:16** He speaks of other sheep who are not of this fold. In **John 17: 20-21** He speaks of all who will believe through the message of the Apostles: "**My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message**", one being **Cornelius in Acts 10:13**.

In **Acts 13:34**, Paul and Barnabas quoting **Isaiah 42:6** says, “I am the Lord, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations...” and **Isaiah 49:6** He says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” This shows that it was always God’s intent for the Jewish people to be a light to the Gentiles.

It’s true that Jesus’ and the Apostles’ ministry was to go to the Jews first and **then** to the Gentiles, but it was not God’s intent to withhold the Gospel from the Gentiles. The Apostles are evidence that the Jews were used by God to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. Though most Jews ended up rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, all of this most surely must have shaped Jesus’ thinking.

It almost seems kind of “out of the blue” (in verse 44) here that Jesus testified **that a prophet has no honor in his own country**, but Jesus is anticipating rejection. It is what has happened to almost every prophet who ever came to Israel. Most every one of them was rejected and He has a lot to say about that much later on in **Matthew 23**. All of this shaped His thinking. Jesus dealt with rejection, He dealt with misunderstanding; and He dealt with out and out **hated**. People just hated Him. He saw, at the end of the age, just how selfish and how deluded God’s ‘holy people’ had become. The One foretold to Abraham, who would bless all men, was right in front of them; but they could not see it.

The Samaritans was a reminder in contrast of what He faced as He headed through Galilee. He will see enthusiasm turn to mob violence very quickly. The current of public opinion is strong in man, and that tide can turn often and unpredictably. Jesus’ mind must surely have struggled with the disappointment of rejection.

When I was writing in this particular section... I again; I think it’s really easy for us to romanticize a lot of things in Scripture. We might think, “Wow. If I would have been with Jesus, and experiences the things **He did with** Him, I would have been on this **spiritual high** all the time. It would be like riding on the crest of the Spirit and everything would be wonderful; and ushering in this new age ... But He had to deal with temptations and struggle just like all of us do, and the rejection was never very far away. His being misunderstood was never very far away.

Since this class is a search for the Mind of Christ, I want to keep in the back of my mind all that Jesus certainly did have to deal with the rejection and the misunderstanding and sometimes very much hated of things.

**John 4:45** says that the Galileans received Jesus because of what they saw Him do in Jerusalem at the feast. Surely they meant the cleansing of the Temple. Did Jesus know they were watching Him and that this would be a factor in His outreach to them? In other words, He’s in Jerusalem doing His thing in the Temple, but there are people from Galilee there, and they’re watching this; and later on they are factoring this in to either their reception or rejection of Him.

At first, it was something they liked. They may have been thinking, it's about time someone showed these scallywags what's for, and Jesus is doing it so he's pretty popular for doing that; but just the idea that people were watching and how it may have affected them we may see later on. The reception that the Galileans gave to Jesus will prove to be neither lasting nor widespread, but it *was* a reception.

It was said in **John 1:12**, “**But as many as receive Him, to them He will give the right to become children of God...**” If this reception proves genuine, then we are seeing the beginning of new birth in some of these people. Again, maybe for some it *was* genuine and it did lead to a new birth.

This underlines, for me, the thinking of Jesus regarding the many factors necessary to bring people to faith. In Jerusalem that day, He cleansed the Temple area of merchandisers. Jesus have had many motives for doing so. His Father's honor was at stake in the Temple, but impressions were also being made on those who observed Him. What were they thinking?

From what we learn later, they saw in Jesus' forceful act of driving out moneychangers and overturning tables the trait of a revolutionary ... or perhaps a budding King, or a Messiah. Their hopes of deliverance from Roman domination rose. Perhaps they recalled men of old; Moses, Samson or Joshua. Maybe they began to get visions of a man who would go in there and be really forceful showing everybody what's for. But that was just an initial impression from that one thing that they saw in Jesus.

I think this is indicative of us, of the way we may view God, or the way we may view Jesus. If we only look at one facet of God or Jesus we may get a distorted view of who He is. We might build this whole case, whether it's that ***God is an angry God who is always upset at everybody***, or we may get the view ***that Jesus is this loving person who could never send anybody to Hell***. (Of course, Jesus talks about Hell more than anybody else in the Bible...). We get all of these distorted views when we just “see” **one** thing, and then we extrapolate from **that** who God is'; and ***that's very, very dangerous***, of course.

Reception can mean many things to many different people. I am seeing that Jesus knew His actions were prompting responses to Him in the heart of people, but He was not playing to their responses, I don't think. He was focused on fulfilling the will of His Father; and accomplishing His work. He wanted people to follow Him, but He would not do what people expected, to make that happen. He knew He had an audience of **One** to please. He's not marketing Himself; calculating that ‘if I do this, I may get more people’. He has only One person He is trying to please: His Father. He is just having people watch Him please His Father, and if they want to please the Father, maybe they will fall in line with Him. If that's not where their heart is, then maybe they'll reject Him. It is different than so much of what we tend to do, even in the church in this day and age.

I wrote a little prayer here:

“Father, Help me live to please You alone, and use this focus to draw others to Yourself and to Your Son.”

Now we come down to verse 46 and following.

### **John 4:46-54**

#### **Healing a Nobleman's Son**

Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum.<sup>47</sup> When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and was imploring Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.<sup>48</sup> So Jesus said to him, “Unless you **people** (plural) see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe.”<sup>49</sup> The royal official said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”<sup>50</sup> Jesus said to him, “Go; your son lives.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off.<sup>51</sup> As he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living.<sup>52</sup> So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.”<sup>53</sup> So the father **knew** that it was at **that** hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives”; and he himself believed and his whole household.<sup>54</sup> This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

**Sue:** That man had a lot of faith to take Jesus at His word and leave.

**Rod:** Yes, he did. But let's not jump to conclusions about **how much** his faith was. What were his alternatives? What were his choices?

If Jesus was insistent that He had places to go, he could do a ‘remote’ healing here. Everything is cool. Go home; your son is fine. Now I may have wanted to believe that; hoped that that was true, but until that servant confirmed that exact hour his son got well ... that was the ‘Ah ha’ moment for him. “Okay. Alright. I know just what happened here.” That could not be a coincidence. Maybe God healed him, but at that exact moment?

Let's take that apart a little bit. In **John 4:46-52** we have Jesus' **second** miracle in Galilee; the first being the water turned to wine. This, too, was in Cana. So why did Jesus go back to this small town? Why did He choose this place for His second miracle when the first one was done with reluctance? Did He **plan** this miracle? It doesn't seem that He planned the first one. None of this is clear. Even this miracle seems to be done as a concession to the man and a need to see signs and wonders.

Jesus makes the comment in verse 48 that “Unless you **people** see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe.” So there is something similar about both of the miracles. He seemed to be a little reluctant on the first one, and now it's like, ‘Okay. I'll heal your son. You seem to always need another sign so I will do this for you.’ Although He is going to reach a point where it says ‘I'm done with signs. I'll give you one more. It's called the resurrection and that one will have to be good enough for you.’

The “royal official” means someone who belongs to a king ... a nobleman. It is used in **Acts 12:20** likely an official, a representative of Herod, but probably not a representative of Rome. It seems logical that word of Jesus’ “water to wine” miracle had spread throughout this region. Capernaum is about 15 to 20 miles from Cana.

His son was sick; critically so; at the point of death, so was Jesus' "confrontation in the Temple" in his mind? We were told that in the previous verses. With the memory of 'water to wine' a few days earlier ... again, we're connecting lots of dots here. Remember, word spreads quickly when something amazing happens, and these are very small towns. I know this from my experience in Haiti that it's amazing how word can spread.

This nobleman saw an opportunity to have his son healed. Certainly this was an act of faith. Faith led to a request. Note: the request was not just for a cure, but for Jesus Himself to come to his son. Capernaum was "down" as to elevation, but "up" geographically. He asked Jesus to come "down" to heal his son, even though from where he was, He had to go geographically north. But elevation-wise, he was coming down into Capernaum because Capernaum was on the Sea of Galilee. It's these small little things that give the attention to detail sometimes that are interesting to me.

The Nobleman made an assumption, that is, that Jesus needed to be physically present to heal his son. He had in his mind, not only what he wanted as an outcome, a healthy son, but how all of this should happen; how it may occur. We do that a lot of times as well. We want certain outcomes and then we want to tell Jesus how to do it.

Of course, his way was riskier and less efficient, but it was all he could see. It was all he could think of. Jesus had to come there and do it personally. To him, Jesus had to be physically there to heal his son. How long would it have taken to go 15 or 20 miles, even on horseback? Time would have been consumed in that journey.

Here we have a conflict between how man thinks and how Jesus thinks; ***the means or the mode of how something should work*** is different. Both have the same end or maybe the same focus; the healing of the son, but the nobleman only sees one way... you have to come to heal him.

Jesus is not limited to one way. He has multiple ways; unlimited ways to accomplish the same thing. The lesson for us is not to "box" Jesus in because of some preconceived notion that we have. The Nobleman's faith did not restrict Jesus from acting as He saw fit. ★ And that's another great lesson for us, I think, and that is "even though my faith maybe has a vision for a certain thing happening in a certain way, Jesus doesn't look at that and say, "Well, if you had just thought of the other way over here maybe I could act; *but now my hands are tied.*" Jesus is ***not limited*** just because we have a preconceived idea. He is free to do it the way He wants to do it.

It's difficult to figure out Jesus' thinking concerning signs and wonders. Here in **John 4:48** it seems He views them as mere crutches to believe that he offers reluctantly. Here is how the New American Standard Bible says it: "**Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe.**" It sounds like He is a little put out with them.

In **Matthew 12:39** and in **16:4** he said, "**An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet...**" Even Paul seems to put signs down in **1 Cor. 1:22**, "**For Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and foolishness to Gentiles.**"

Jesus did a lot of signs and miracles but it almost seems on the other hand He was reluctant or thought, “These are just necessary things I have to do for you people just to get your attention.” But are we looking at that the right way?

There was a place for signs and miracles. **John 20:30-31** says, “Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;<sup>31</sup> but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.” Signs had a place for bringing people to faith, but signs, just in a gratuitous kind of way was not what God had in mind. He didn’t do things just for a show.

So which is it? Are signs and wonders necessary; God-ordained prerequisites to faith, or are they unnecessary crutches to bring reluctant self-centered people to faith? What we know is that Jesus did not do **anything** against God’s will. And **we know** that God has **used signs and wonders down through history** as a way of accomplishing His will; as a way of bringing people to faith. He has done that, so it can serve that purpose.

To me it’s kind of like the Word of God. Jesus said don’t throw your pearls before swine (**Matthew 7:6**). Is he saying, “I don’t want you teaching people the Word of God because they are just going to misuse it or abuse it and distort it and disbelieve it?” I think He’s saying that when the Word of God is put before people, they can react to it on one of two ways: they can **embrace it as the Word of God** or they can **reject it to their own destruction**.

**It’s the same thing with signs.** It really depends on the heart … it’s like the soil. What kind of soil are you planting the ‘signs’ in? It like ‘what kind of soil do you plant the seeds in?’

**Brian:** It’s like Nazareth. He said He could not do many signs in Nazareth because of their unbelief. (**Mark 6:5-6**) “And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. <sup>6</sup> And He wondered at their unbelief.” Jesus had the power to do the signs, but God did not want Him to do signs where there was no belief.

**Rod:** Yes. It’s like, ‘why do them?’ And again, that doesn’t mean that God won’t do signs like He did with Pharaoh. Pharaoh had a pretty good dose of some signs … ten plagues. And Pharaoh had a hard heart, and we don’t know that he ever came to believe; at least to fall down and worship God. But again, God’s purpose there was not so much to bring Pharaoh to faith, but to get him to release his grip of God’s people and let them go.

So, it’s like, “What is the purpose of the sign?” He wasn’t just pulling rabbits out of a hat, or making people disappear for the fun of it. Jesus was accomplishing something good with the miracles that He did.

**Sue:** We have such an advantage by living here today. We can see what happened in the Old Testament and how God worked. We can get a better overview of the whole story; more-so than those who were living at that time. I had never really thought about the advantage of being there back then when I have the whole story right here.

**Rod:** Right. But I've had plenty of people tell me, "If I was there and saw all these things that Jesus did, I would be one of the most faithful people in the world." And I'm thinking, "Well, Do you believe He did them? What's holding you back now? Jump in."

**Ruth:** It keeps saying it, they needed the signs. They couldn't believe without them. He was doing it to **help them** to see who **He** was. Without them they could not believe; they were sitting on the fence thinking of Jesus as their old Nazareth buddy, that He's not anybody special. They needed the signs so Jesus did them. It wasn't in his plan that signs would be his work. His work was different then. In our telling the story of Jesus we sometimes get that wrong. We talk about signs and miracles but we don't talk about "why He came" so He did the signs so they would believe **why** He was there? He came as **savior**.

**Rod:** Right. And there is a similar thing in **John 5** where Jesus talks about the testimony of John the Baptist. But then He turns around and says, "I don't **need** the testimony of John. The only reason I am offering that is because **you** believe He's a prophet and that may cause **you** to come to faith. And therefore, I will allow it."

**Ruth:** It's like this miracle. **You** need it because **you** don't know who I am.

**Rod:** But also in **John 5** he says, "But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—**the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.**

Jesus is saying that his works demonstrate that if these are genuine miracles, then that **shows** that I am doing it by the power of God. **Yet they even turned that around on Him** and said, 'no, he's driving out demons by the power of Beelzebub.'

**Macy:** You talked about it being back then or now. I've seen this work in my own life. When you come to Jesus with a true need, allowing him to meet whatever the need is, **then** you see things that you normally don't see. There wasn't the trust that He really **is** who He said He **is**; like the man in **Mark 9:24**, "I believe, but God, help my unbelief." When we come to God with a need, do we trust Him to meet that need? That's when you really start to see things happen.

**Rod:** Yes. I believe it's in **Hebrews 2:2-4** where he talks about **confirming** these things by the signs, wonders and miracles. "**For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,**"<sup>3</sup> how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,<sup>4</sup> God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will."

There are confirmations. Again, I think a lot of it depends on if you have a heart that has a tendency to believe. I remember Jack Lewis, a professor at Harding Graduate School who said in one of the classes, "There are two types of people in the world. (James Bales said that there are people who **have** problems, and there are people who **are** problems). But Jack Lewis said, "There are people who bend "**to**" things, and people who bend "**away from**" things." Those are the two kinds of people in the world.

He said he didn't know how to explain why one person tends to be a **believer** – someone who wants to believe, has a tendency to want to believe, believe anything **versus** those who have a tendency to be **skeptics** and don't believe much of anything. They are hard to convince. Other people are easy to convince. And he warned us that we would learn that in ministry as you will see those two types of people.

Now, evidence is okay. And there are all kinds of lines of evidence for people in coming to faith. And only **one** of those things is the 'sign'. A sign is just one sliver of evidence along with a huge amount of other evidence. Some of the others, like prophecies and fulfillments, are pretty miraculous too but they just fall into a different category.

*The literal wording of John 4:48 of the Greek says, “Except signs and prodigies you see, by no means you believe.”* “Except you people (**plural**) see **signs and wonders**, you simply will not believe.” The word for **signs** is “*semeion*” (*σημεια*) and the word **wonder** is “*teras*” (*τερας*) meaning wonder, prodigy. The Scripture is saying that *except signs and prodigies you see, by no means, you believe* ... except for these signs and wonders is, belief won't occur. The word for (**wonders is prodigies**) (*τερατα*). It means “a **portent**”. A portent is a “sign” or a “**signal** act”. It is a sign or a token by which anything is known or distinguished. It is a token, pledge, assurance, proof, or evidence. A portent is a prodigy. We talk about children being “**child prodigies**”. What do we mean by that? What do we see in that child that we label them a prodigy?

**Brian:** Unusual promise

**Rod:** Yes, something unusual that indicates that this child may end up being really, a distinguished person in some form. It's usually in music or art or science or whatever it may be. They have something **unusual**. It's like a sign, they are a prodigy.

So, the people were looking for some indicator of something else to come, but what does this have to do with the Royal Official in asking Jesus to heal his son? It seems to me that this man was simply caught up in the moment of wanting his child healed. It seems pretty simple.

The matter of Jesus seeming to have a problem with people wanting signs and wonders in order to believe; yet these signs and wonders being part of God's plan to bring people to faith do not **seem** to go together. Is there something in this story that I am missing? The word “request” seems normal; nothing to indicate rudeness. And even after Jesus said that the boy was healed, the man believed Him and went home. There is nothing evident to me, that the problem is with this man, per se. He seems like a normal father who wanted a favor from Jesus that he believed Jesus could grant.

Isn't faith based on evidence, and wasn't one line of evidence is signs and wonders? If Jesus did not want to have to heal this child, He did not have to do it. He didn't **have** to heal this child. **I don't believe that He healed everybody in the world who was sick when He was on earth.** Maybe it's just the way that the New American Standard Bible (NASB) portrays this verse. So I go back to, well, maybe the problem is the translation of the NASB that makes it look like Jesus was a little put out with the request.

**John 4:48** in Berry's Interlinear literally says, "Unless signs and wonders ye see, in no wise will ye believe". A similar "except" statement is used **John 3:5** regarding the 'new birth'. "**Except you are born again, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.**"

**Mike:** The NIV makes it sound like Jesus was a little irked when He said, "You people".

**Sue:** The NIV says, "**Unless you people see signs and wonders,**" Jesus told him, "**you will never believe.**" So He does seem put out.

**Macy:** There is the humanity part and there is also the part where I agree with you that Jesus didn't heal everybody while he was here, but we know that he would **hear** them out. We have to look at the **character of God**. He **knows** that He is God and can do these things. **There are other passages where He just sighs.** It could be one of those moments where He thinks, I am God and I am not going to **NOT hear** this request, but at the same point, I know this crowd and I know what you're wanting and I don't want to do it for **THAT** reason.

**Rod:** That could be. It's almost like, "I know this is good for you. I know this is what I need to do, and I'm going to do this, but I also know in the scheme of things, this is not going to make a lot of difference in your lives. This is **not** the thing that is going to bring you ultimately to **saving** faith."

**Brian:** The word "you" ... is that singular or plural in the Greek. {It is plural} cc

**Rod:** I don't know. I didn't bring the interlinear.

**Brian:** Maybe He's taking to the crowd. Maybe this young man at least had a germ of faith but the others around him not so much.

**Rod:** That may be true, too. Sometimes I run across these things and you may wonder why I spend so much time on that, but I sometimes can't reconcile it. And if you're trying to study the "**mind of Christ**", things that don't seem to go together ... I have to struggle with them.

So I ask this question: Is Jesus just stating a 'fact'? Could it be that Jesus was pleased that this Royal Official was asking for a miracle which, when granted, would lead him to believe? Was Jesus merely telling him that such was necessary in order to come to faith, and perhaps when Jesus **did** speak of the evil and adulterous generation seeking signs, He was talking about those who would **not** believe no matter how many signs they saw, but would ask for one more.

In **John 5:36** Jesus said that His works were **one** testimony of the **fact** that He was sent by God. But when someone could be exposed to this work over and over again and never come to faith, it was frustrating to Jesus and exposed the blindness and the deafness of those who would not see or would not hear. ("**I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me.**") **Signs and wonders** were not the point. The problem was the heart of the person who needed one more. But this Royal Official was not in this category.

The NASB puts “people” in *italics* perhaps changing the meaning. So even when He uses the term “people”, the NASB put it in italics, which indicates that it is not in the Greek text. Usually words in *italics* are inserted when translators think the word is needed for the understanding of the passage but it’s not literally in the Greek. It could be referring to “you people” indicating plural.

This Royal Official indicates a very significant point; ***nothing else matters when your child is about to die***. He insisted that Jesus **act before** his child dies. Mary and Martha will do the same in **John 11:21- 2** regarding her ailing brother, Lazarus. Martha then said to Jesus, “**Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.**”

Often life gets reduced down to the bare necessities; and that’s life itself. There’s no need for food, water or clothing when you are dead. This Official who has surely tried everything he knew to do, there was simply one last place to go; to a man who had turned water to wine, and overturned some tables in the Temple.

In **John 6:28-29** after so many disciples had deserted Jesus; Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, “**Are you going to leave also?**” <sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered Him, “**Lord, to whom shall we go? You** have words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> **We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.**” Figuring out where we must go for life, physical or eternal is at the top of our pursuit list.

In **John 4:50**, Jesus said to him, “**Go your way; your son lives.**” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off. The test of faith in these words had to be immense. If Jesus was his **last** and **only** chance to get his son healed, how could he simply go away?

Like Naaman, another Royal Official, who was told to ‘go away’ to the Jordan, **2 Kings 5:10** it was not that **simple**. Naaman’s expectation was that Elisha was going to heal him on the spot, but then he told him to go away, and go dunk in the Jordan River seven times? That is not what we want to hear when we’re desperate for healing or to save a child. We want Jesus to do something that proves ‘on the spot’ that we are going to get what we ask for.

But Jesus simply says, “Go away! Your son lives!”

**Carole:** It’s like Jesus is trying to teach us that obedience is better than sacrifice. ‘Go in the Jordan seven times. Trust Me’. And He’s saying to the Official, “Your son lives”. You acted like you have faith...prove it.

**Rod:** Yes, and since there’s nowhere else to go, what could he do? He’s thinking, “I don’t have any options here.”

**Macy:** It sounded like, almost hindsight here; it’s like he says he believes but now he has to confirm that faith. It’s like in life when we see something happen, we may think, “Well, that wasn’t what I was looking for exactly”, but as you go down the road you realize that it WAS what you were looking for exactly! I wanted that, but it didn’t come in the package I was expecting it to come in.

**Rod:** Exactly, exactly.

This is a moment of faith and I always like to point out these moments of faith because people are people like us; but what makes the difference? What draws that person at **that particular moment** so that faith happens in the heart?

Surely some things, as precious as death, and life, should warrant a little more attention ... at least a prayer. Maybe Jesus should have looked up to heaven and prayed but Jesus, rather matter-of-factly said, "Go your way. Your son lives." It was an action to take; and a word to believe. **That** is living faith. **James 2:23** "*And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.*"

The response of the man was just that. He believed **the word** and he started off ... quickly, I imagine. The word "word" is logos ( $\lambda\omega\gamma\omega\zeta$ ), as used in **John 1:1**. He believed '**Jesus himself**,' both the act of speaking **and** the word spoken. The Word who spoke the Word into existence speaks health into this dying child. The man's journey to Jesus had taken several hours. His exchange with Jesus and the securing of the blessing took minutes. The distance between the man and his son was 15 to 20 miles but was transverse by Jesus instantly. The man came to Jesus with anxiety and left with hope and anticipation. He demonstrates for us, simple faith. Believe Jesus' word, and start off. Just ... START.

**One Note:** the Word Jesus spoke was to him and for him. Jesus did not speak the same word for every sick child just like He did not call all the dead from their tombs in John 11. The miracle was very specific for a very specific purpose.

One preacher said, and I think it was Marshall Keeble, who said "Why did Jesus say, "Lazarus, come forth!" Because if he hadn't said, "Lazarus" everybody in the whole graveyard would have gotten up.