



JESUS IS GOD'S ANSWER TO MAN'S DOUBT

Preaching and Teaching Resources

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Jesus is God's Answer to Man's Doubt

The Book of John tells us about Jesus' parade of miracles, seven extraordinary and deeply significant events that tell us more about Him.

His wondrous work in John 4:46-54 reveals that Jesus is God's answer to Man's doubt.

"...And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. 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" (John 4:46-47).

First, this story tells us the obstacles to strong faith.

The nobleman's second-hand faith was weak, revealing that we cannot use someone else's faith as our own.

Jesus also rebuked the notion that these people needed miracles in order to have faith in Him: "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe" (John 4:48). Demanding signs from God dishonors Him, because it means that we don't take Him at His Word.

Weak faith can also be self-centered and strong-willed, too set in its own ways. There's nothing wrong with asking God to bless us; but strong faith is primarily interested in the glory of God.

Adrian Rogers says, "Faith is not so much receiving from God the things that you want as it is accepting from God the things that He gives."

Second, this passage also reveals the operation of a strong faith.

"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. And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, 'Your son lives!'" (John 4:50-51).

If we want to strengthen our faith, we must hear from Him through Scripture, believe Him, and obey what He tells us to do. Then, we can find rest in His Word, the assurance of our salvation.

Finally, this miracle reminds us of the objective of strong faith.

Jesus did not come to perform miracles; He came to save souls. These miracles were recorded so that we may trust in Him and have strong faith.

Adrian Rogers says, "Believe in miracles, but trust in Jesus."

Life Application

If you want to have strong faith in God, seek to hear Him in Scripture today. Believe, obey, and find rest in the Word of God, the assurance of your salvation.



Jesus Is God's Answer to Man's Doubt

SERMON REFERENCE: John 4:46-54

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) John had a strategy when he wrote the Gospel of John.
 - i) He listed seven miracles; he called these miracles "signs."
 - (1) They are miracles with a message.
 - (2) They are signs with significance.
 - ii) John 21:25
 - (1) Jesus did many other things.
- b) Jesus is the Christ.
 - i) He is the Messiah.
 - (1) When you believe, then you will have everlasting life.
- c) Jesus did not come to perform miracles.
 - i) Jesus came to save souls.
- d) What we need to do is to go beyond miracles and on to Jesus.
 - i) We may believe in miracles, but we don't trust in miracles.
 - (1) We trust in Jesus.
- e) The first of these seven miracles is where Jesus turned the water into wine.
 - i) John 2:1-11
 - ii) This tells us that Jesus is God's answer to man's disappointments because the wines of this world run out.
 - (1) But the joy that He gives is always fresh, full, and free.
- f) Jesus healed a nobleman's son, but that man had difficulty believing in Jesus.
- g) Not only is Jesus God's answer to man's disappointments, but Jesus is also God's answer to man's doubt.
 - i) Everyone has difficulty with doubt.
 - ii) What we need is a strong faith.
 - (1) Doubt sees obstacles; faith sees the way.
 - (2) We need to possess a faith, but more than that, we need a faith that possesses us.
- h) John 4:46-54
 - i) This man had a problem; his problem was that he was a nobleman.
 - (1) He had prestige, power, wealth, and all of the accouterments that went with that wealth.
 - (2) He had a son who was sick.
 - (a) He had a problem that he could not handle.
 - ii) He had heard about Jesus turning water into wine at Cana of Galilee.
 - (1) He thought that maybe Jesus could heal his son.
 - iii) The man made the journey from Capernaum to Cana of Galilee to see Jesus.
 - (1) He desperately pleaded with Jesus to heal his son.
 - (a) Rather than healing his son, the Lord seemed to remonstrate with him and almost to scold him.



- (i) John 4:48
 - (2) The Lord Jesus told him to go his way, that his son was alright.
- iv) This man's problem was the dark soil in which the flowers of faith would bloom and blossom.
- i) In today's message, we will look at three specific things as we discuss strong faith and going beyond miracles and on to Jesus:
 - i) The obstacles of strong faith.
 - ii) The operation of strong faith.
 - iii) The objective of strong faith.

2) THE OBSTACLES TO STRONG FAITH (JOHN 4:46-47)

- a) He had a second-handed faith.
 - i) All this man had was hearsay about the Lord Jesus.
 - (1) He had heard how Jesus had done miracles.
 - (a) John 4:46-47
 - (2) He had only heard about Jesus.
 - (a) All he did was to listen to other people talk about miracles that Jesus had done.
 - ii) Second-handed faith is not strong faith.
 - (1) We cannot go to Heaven on our parents' faith, our pastor's faith, our neighbor's faith, or anyone else's faith.
 - (2) We can hear about Jesus and what He has done for others, but that is not strong faith.
 - (a) It is second-handed faith.
 - iii) Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I am?"
 - (1) Matthew 16:13
 - (2) Then, Jesus asked the pertinent question, "But whom do you say that I am?"
 - (a) Matthew 16:15
 - iv) Do you know about Jesus, or do you know Him?
 - v) Is your faith first-handed faith or second-handed faith?
- b) He had a sign-demanding faith.
 - i) John 4:48
 - (1) Jesus was not approving the man when He said this but rebuking him.
 - ii) Matthew 16:4
 - (1) Jesus said this to those who were asking Him for a sign from Heaven.
 - iii) Even when Jesus Christ was on the cross, there were those who told Him to come down from the cross, and then they would believe.
 - (1) Matthew 27:40
 - iv) Are you in this category?
 - (1) Are you a person who says that if God would work a miracle for you, a miracle that you could see, then you would believe because seeing is believing?
 - (a) Seeing is seeing.
 - (b) Believing is believing.
 - v) Many people have the idea that if God would perform a sign, then it would be alright.
 - vi) Miracles are not good tools for evangelism.



- (1) Jesus had performed a miracle by turning the water into wine.
 - (a) John 2:1-11
 - (2) John 2:23
 - (a) People followed Jesus because of the miracles He did.
 - (3) But in John 2:24, we are told that Jesus did not commit Himself to them.
 - (a) The word "commit" in this verse and the word "believe" in verse 23 are the same words in the Greek language.
 - (i) They believed in Him, but Jesus did not believe in them.
 1. John 2:24-25
 - a. Jesus knew that they followed Him, not because He was the Messiah, but because of the miracles.
 - (b) It was not God they were hungry for, but a sign or a miracle.
 - (4) When Jesus fed the five thousand, the crowds followed Him.
 - (a) John 6:1-15
 - (5) When Jesus began to talk to them about eternal truths, such as eating His flesh and drinking His blood (that is, receiving Him into their lives), they deserted Him.
 - (a) John 6:47-66
 - (b) Jesus had to turn to His disciples and ask if they, too, would turn away.
 - (i) John 6:67
 - (6) Jesus knew man.
 - (a) He knew that these people who demanded signs and miracles didn't have strong faith.
- vii) What is wrong with asking for signs and miracles?
- (1) It dishonors God.
 - (a) It tells God that we cannot take Him at His Word and that He has to prove Himself to us.
 - (i) It is an insult.
 - (ii) Is His Word not enough?
 - (b) Thomas is called "the doubting disciple."
 - (i) The other disciples believed in Jesus and the resurrection.
 - (ii) Thomas wouldn't believe until he saw the nail prints in Jesus' hands and the wound in His side.
 1. John 20:24-28
 - (iii) Jesus said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, yet have believed."
 1. John 20:29
 - (2) It is dangerous to man.
 - (a) Signs and wonders can be very deceiving.
 - (b) 2 Thessalonians 2:9
 - (i) This is a description of the antichrist.
 1. He will be a super deceiver.
 2. He is the devil's messiah.
 3. He is Satan incarnated.
 4. He will be the last world ruler before the Kingdom of Heaven is set up.



- (ii) The antichrist will be a master magician.
 - 1. He will have power to do incredible miracles.
 - 2. By those new age miracles, millions will be doomed because they were deceived by the signs and wonders of the antichrist.
 - (c) Revelation 13:13-14
 - (i) This passage speaks of the antichrist.
 - (d) This is why Jesus remonstrated with the nobleman.
 - (i) John 4:48
 - c) He had a self-centered faith.
 - i) John 4:49
 - (l) The man was interested in the welfare of his child.
 - (a) There is nothing wrong with that.
 - (i) Just like there is nothing wrong with miracles.
 - (b) But this man had yet to bow at the feet of Jesus Christ and worship Him.
 - ii) Many people are more concerned about our health, welfare, children, families, and futures.
 - (l) This is not strong faith.
 - iii) There is nothing wrong with asking God to bless us.
 - (l) Strong faith is interested primarily in the glory of God and the heart in its right relationship to Him.
 - iv) This man was interested in the physical, not the spiritual, and in the temporal, not the eternal.
 - d) He had a strong-willed faith.
 - i) John 4:49-50
 - (l) He told God what to do; he instructed the Lord.
 - (a) The man told Jesus to come, but Jesus told the man to go.
 - (b) The man tried to tell the Lord how He was going to do what He was going to do when He did it.
 - (c) Have you ever been guilty of this?
 - (i) Instead of saying, "Speak Lord, your servant hears," do you say, "Listen Lord, I'm talking to You"?
 - ii) Strong faith waits upon God, listens to God, and gets a message from God.
 - iii) Weak faith is strong-willed faith.
 - e) Faith is not so much receiving from God the things that we want, as it is accepting from God the things that He gives.
 - i) We cannot claim it until He names it.
 - f) Faith is not dictating to God.
 - g) Faith is hearing God, believing God, and acting upon what God says.

3) THE OPERATION OF STRONG FAITH (JOHN 4:49-50)

- a) A radical and dramatic change took place.
- b) We must hear the Word of God.
 - i) John 4:50
 - ii) Romans 10:14



- iii) Romans 10:17
- iv) In order to have faith, we must know what God has said and is saying because faith is a response to the Word of God.
 - (1) Jesus said something to the man, and he heard the Word.
 - (a) John 4:50
 - (2) That is the reason why we preach the Word of God.
 - (a) So that people can hear it.
 - (b) If we want people to believe, then we have to give them something to believe.
 - (i) We must give them the Word of God.
- c) We must believe the Word of God.
 - i) John 4:50
 - ii) Hearing is not enough.
 - iii) Some people will hear, but they have not yet believed.
 - iv) Some people say that they cannot believe, but they can believe.
 - (1) It is not an intellectual problem; it is a moral problem.
 - (a) The problem is not in the head but in the heart.
 - (i) Hebrews 3:12
 - (ii) Psalm 53:1
 - (2) It is not that they cannot believe; it may be that they will not believe.
 - (a) Because Christ gives faith to every man.
 - (i) We must accept it, receive it, and believe it.
 - (ii) John 1:9
 - (3) You can believe if you will believe.
 - (4) Unbelief is not weakness; it is wickedness and rebellion.
 - (5) If you want to believe, then God will enable you to believe.
 - v) Faith is a response to God Himself.
 - (1) It is not a response to what God has done or to miracles.
 - vi) This man believed before he saw that his son was healed.
 - (1) He didn't see any sign.
 - (2) He didn't see any wonder.
 - vii) What did he have?
 - (1) He looked into the face of Jesus.
 - (2) He was captivated by the person and character of Jesus Christ.
 - viii) Faith is the heart response of the soul to the character and nature of God.
 - (1) Faith does not demand signs or wonders.
 - (2) God created us this way.
 - (a) God created our eyes to respond to light.
 - (b) God created our ears to respond to sound.
 - (c) God created our spirits to respond to the character and the nature of God.
- d) We must obey the Word.
 - i) John 4:50-51
 - (1) He did exactly what Jesus told him to do.



- (a) Had he not believed, he would have demanded a sign and continued to ask Jesus to heal his son.
 - (i) But it was settled.
 - ii) Faith is shown by obedience.
 - (1) We must hear the Word.
 - (2) We must believe the Word.
 - (3) We must obey the Word.
 - iii) True faith is always linked to obedience.
 - (1) Romans 16:26
 - (2) James 2:26
 - (3) Sitting in a church, nodding your head, and taking notes is not faith.
 - iv) We are not saved by faith and works; we are saved by faith that works.
 - (1) If it does not work, then it is not faith.
 - v) There is no substitute for obedience.
 - (1) Faith that does not lead to obedience is not faith.
 - vi) John 4:51-53
 - (1) 24 hours passed between the time when Jesus told this man that his son was well and when he met his servants.
 - (a) The man lived in Capernaum, and he met Jesus at Cana.
 - (i) It was approximately a twenty-mile journey.
 - 1. On foot, it would have taken seven or eight hours.
 - 2. This man was a nobleman.
 - a. He would have gone by chariot, camel, or some other conveyance instead of by foot.
 - (b) If you left home and had a child that was at the point of death, and someone told you that he was alright, what would you do?
 - (i) You would get back home as quickly as you could to see and check.
 - (ii) This man took 24 hours when he could have been there in two or three hours.
 - 1. This is one of the most incredible demonstrations of faith in the Bible.
- e) We rest in the Word of God.
 - i) The Bible says, "He who believes will not make haste."
 - (1) Isaiah 28:16
 - (2) We don't have to worry; we can wait on the Lord.
 - ii) Psalm 37:7
 - iii) Don't get all upset and go around with nervous frustration.
 - (1) Rest in the Lord.
 - iv) Psalm 37:5
 - (1) Commit your way to the Lord.
 - v) Why did Jesus not go with this man to heal his son?
 - (1) The man had the Word of Jesus.
 - (2) When we need a blessing or an answer to prayer, we do not have to have Jesus here with us physically in order to receive it.



- (a) Psalm 107:20
 - (i) He sent His Word.
- (3) Jesus is not here in a body today, but we have His Word.
 - (a) The Bible is the Word of God.
 - (b) When we have the Bible in our homes, it is like having Jesus in our homes.
 - (c) When we pick up the Word of God and read it, God speaks out of His Word.
 - (i) Faith is finding a promise in the Word of God, brought home by the Spirit of God, and standing on it.

4) THE OBJECTIVE OF STRONG FAITH (JOHN 4:53)

- a) John 4:50 says, "and the man believed."
 - i) Here in John 4:53, it says, "and himself believed."
 - ii) When did he believe?
 - (1) In verse 53, the man was not believing for physical healing but for salvation.
 - (a) He was believing not in a miracle, but in a Messiah.
 - (b) He went beyond the miracle and went on to Jesus.
- b) The miracles were there so that he might believe in the Lord Jesus.
- c) It is easy to picture this man as he went back home to tell his family and household that he had met the Messiah, and that they too could be saved.
 - i) What good would it have done if this boy had been healed and then later died and went to Hell?
- d) Jesus didn't heal everyone, but He will save everyone who will call upon Him.
 - i) He did not come as a teacher or as a healer; He came as a Savior.
 - (1) Luke 19:10
- e) John 20:31

5) CONCLUSION

- a) Believe in miracles, but trust in Jesus.
- b) John 20:31
- c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



Jesus Is God's Answer to Man's Doubt

SERMON REFERENCE: John 4:46-54

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Turn, would you please, to John chapter 4. The Gospel of John, chapter 4. Beyond miracles and on to Jesus. John had a strategy when he wrote the Gospel of John. He lists seven miracles, he calls these miracles "signs"; that is they are miracle with a message. They're signs with a significance. And then he says, "There are many other things that Jesus did, but I took these seven miracles and I arranged them to be a parade of miracles. And at the conclusion, you're going to see that Jesus is the Christ. And then, I want you to believe that He is the Christ, the Messiah. And when you believe, then you will have everlasting life." Now Jesus did not come to perform miracles, He came to save souls. And what we need to do is to go beyond miracles and on to Jesus.

I said a little while ago, I believe in miracles but I don't trust in miracles, I trust in Jesus. Now, think about it. There are seven of these miracles. The first one where Jesus turned the water into wine. That's found in John chapter two. And that tells us that Jesus is God's answer to man's disappointments because the wines of this world run out. But the joy that He gives is always fresh, full, and free.

And now we're going to find Jesus healing a nobleman's son. But that man has difficulty believing in Jesus. So not only is Jesus God's answer to man's disappointments, Jesus is God's answer to man's doubt. Do you have that? Let that echo in your mind, now. Jesus is God's answer to man's doubt. Now we all have difficulty with doubt. But what we need is a strong faith. "Doubt sees the obstacles, faith sees the way. Doubt sees the darkest night. Faith sees the day. Doubt dreads to take a step, faith soars on high. Doubt questions, 'Who believes?' Faith answers, 'I'."

Now I know that you want faith and you need faith. You need to possess a faith but more than that you need a faith that possesses you. With that in mind, we're in John chapter 4, begin in verse 46 and let's read through verse 54, "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. And when he had heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee he went unto Him and besought Him that He would come down and heal his son, for he," the son, "was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.' The nobleman saith unto him, 'Sir, come down, ere my child die. 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. And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him saying, 'Thy son liveth.' Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend." That is, when he began to get better. "And they said unto him, 'Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.' 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. This again is the second miracle that Jesus did when he was come out of Judea into Galilee."

Now here was a man who had a problem. And what was his problem? He was a nobleman. That is he had prestige, he had power, doubtless he had wealth, he had all of the accouterments that go with that wealth. But he had a son that was sick. He has a problem that he could not handle. Now he'd heard about Jesus turning water into wine at Cana of Galilee. And now Jesus is back in Cana of Galilee. And this man thinks, "Well, if Jesus could turn water into wine, maybe He could heal my son." And so he makes the



journey from Capernaum to Cana of Galilee. I've made that journey myself many times. It's about 17 to 25 miles. It all depends on where you start and where you stop. But here's this nobleman he makes this journey over to Cana of Galilee where Jesus performed His first miracle. And he desperately pleads with Jesus to heal his son. But rather than healing his son, the Lord seems to remonstrate with him, almost to scold him. In John 4:48, Jesus looks at him and he says, "Except ye see signs and wonders, you'll not believe." This man, however, is in desperation. He doesn't want to talk theology. He says, "Lord, come down before my son dies." And the Lord Jesus says, "Go your way, your son is all right. Your son lives." And this man's problem was the dark soil in which the flowers of faith would bloom and blossom.

Three things I want you to see as we talk about strong faith and going beyond miracles and on to Jesus. Three things I want you to see. First of all, I want you to see **the obstacles to strong faith**. And then I want you to see the operation of strong faith. And then I want you to see the objective of strong faith. Now this man had some obstacles in his life. And what were they? Obstacle number one to strong faith: **second-handed faith**. Now, listen, write it down if you're making notes; second-handed faith. All this man had was hear-say about the Lord Jesus. He had heard how Jesus had done miracles. You can see that very clearly in John chapter 4 verses 46 and 47, "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 when he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee he went unto Him." He had just heard about Jesus. And that's wonderful. Everybody ought to hear about Jesus. But all he had was hear-say. All he did was to listen to other people talk about miracles that Jesus had done.

Now look up here and let me tell you something, second-handed faith is not strong faith. You can't go to Heaven on your mother's faith. You can't go to Heaven on your pastor's faith, your neighbor's faith, or anybody else's faith. You can hear about Jesus and what Jesus has done for others but that is not strong faith; that is second-handed faith. In Matthew 16 verses 13 through 16, Jesus asked those disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" They said who men said that He was. But then Jesus asked the pertinent question, "But whom say ye that I am?" Now I want to ask you a question this morning: do you know about Jesus or do you know Him. Is your faith first-handed faith or second-handed faith?

Now here's another obstacle to strong faith. Not only second-handed faith, but I want you to notice, he had **a sign-demanding faith**, a sign-demanding faith. Look again in John 4 verse 48, "Then said Jesus unto him, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.'" Now Jesus was not approving the man when He said this; Jesus was rebuking the man when He said this. Jesus said on another place, in Matthew 12:39, "An evil and an adulterous generation seeketh a sign." Here were these people saying, "Give us a sign from Heaven and we'll believe." Even when Jesus Christ was on the cross they said, "Come down from the cross and we'll believe." Are you in that category? Are you a person who said, "Well, if God would work a miracle for me; a miracle that I could see. An industrial strength, bona fide miracle, then I would believe, because seeing is believing." No, it is not. Seeing is seeing. And believing is believing. And so many people have the idea that if God would perform a sign, then it would be all right. But, friend, listen very carefully as we're talking about miracles. Miracles are not very good tools for evangelism. Jesus had performed a miracle in John chapter 2; He turned the water into wine.

You're in John chapter 4, just go back to John chapter 2 and look, if you will, in John verse 23. This is incredibly instructive. Look at it, verses 23 through 25 "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover in the feast day, many believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did." Here they came,



here was the entourage. They're following Jesus. Why? They saw the miracles which He did. But now notice verse 24 and I hope it's underscored in your Bible. "But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them." The word "commit" in verse 24 and the word "believe" in verse 23 is the same word in the Greek language. They believed in Him; He did not believe in them.

Now, why didn't He? "Because He knew men, and needed not that any should testify of man for He knew what was in man." He knew that these people were following Him, not because He was Messiah, but because of the miracles. It was not God they were hungry for, it was a sign, a miracle. And when Jesus fed 5,000, and we're going to talk about that later on, the crowds followed Him. They said, "This is wonderful. Look! He's a walking cafeteria." But when Jesus began to talk to them about eternal truths, eating His flesh and drinking His blood, that is receiving Him into their lives, are you listening? They left Him; they deserted Him. They had seen Him feed 5,000. Read John 6:67 where He had to turn to His disciples and say, "Will you also go away?" Jesus knew man and He knew that these miracle mongers, these people who demand signs and miracles don't have strong faith. What was wrong with this man's faith?

Well, it was a second-handed faith. Number two, it was a sign-demanding faith. Now listen carefully, I'm going to slow down right here. What is wrong with asking for signs and miracles? What is wrong for wanting signs and wonders? You're going to hear more and more about signs and wonders as we come to the end of an age. Now, there's nothing wrong with signs and wonders, Jesus did them. But what is wrong with demanding signs and wonders? Number one, **it dishonors God**. It says, "God, I can't take you at Your word. You've got to prove Yourself to me." Suppose you were to say to your son, "Son, I'm going to put \$100 in a bank account for you. I have done that, son, to begin a bank account so when you get to be sixteen you can have a car of your own. And so this is the first installment. I'm putting \$100 in the bank for you." Now suppose your son were to say to you, "Dad, that is wonderful, but Dad, how can I be sure that you put \$100 in the bank for me?" "Well, I just said so, son." "Well, dad, thank you very much. Dad, would it be all right if I see the deposit slip? I mean, Dad, could you give me some proof?" Do you see what that is? Do you see the insult? "It's, your word is not enough. I need some proof that you are a God that keeps your word."

Thomas, we call him Thomas the doubting disciple. The other disciples believed in Jesus and the resurrection. In John chapter 20 and verses 25 through 29, Thomas said, "Except I see the prints in His hands, the wound in His side, I'll not believe." Then when Thomas did see and Jesus said, "All right, Thomas, there they are," Thomas fell down on his knees and rightly he should have. He said, "Lord, I believe, my Lord and my God." But here's what Jesus said to him. And you might want to put this in your margin. John chapter 20 verses 29 through 31, "Jesus saith unto him, 'Thomas because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen yet have believed.'"

Now, it's very important that you understand this. This man's faith was a weak faith. Number one it was a second-handed faith. Number two it was a sign-demanding faith. When you demand signs, not only is it dishonoring to God, but it's dangerous to man. Signs and wonders can be very deceiving. I want you to put over in your margin of your Bible this Scripture, Second Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 9. And what you have in Second Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 9 is a description of the antichrist who I believe is standing in the wings of world history. There is coming a man who will be a super deceiver. He is the devil's messiah. He is Satan incarnated. He is coming. He will be the last world ruler before the kingdom of Heaven is set up. We believe that this man of sin, this beast, this antichrist may be alive and



well on planet Earth today. But let me tell you how the apostle Paul describes him. Listen to this in Second Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 9, "Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." The antichrist will be a master magician. The antichrist will have power to do incredible miracles. And by those new age miracles millions will be doomed and damned to Hell because they were deceived by signs and wonders of the antichrist.

Put these verses down, Revelation chapter 13 verses 13 and 14. Listen to them. It speaks of the antichrist and here is what it says about him, "He doeth great wonders so that he maketh fire to come down from Heaven on Earth in the sight of men and deceiveth them which dwell on the Earth by means of those miracles which he had the power to do." "Deceives those that dwell on the Earth by the means of the miracles that he had power to do." "Makes fire to come down out of Heaven."

Suppose rather than taking the Word of God for the assurance of your salvation, you went out in an open field one day and you said, "God, I've just got to know, are You real? Can I go to Heaven? Am I right with You? Do You exist? Give me a sign. Give me a wonder. Show me." And then suppose from pole to pole the heavens were to glow with fire. And you would say, "Oh! Oh! Oh! That is glorious! Oh, God. Thank You for speaking to me. Thank You. And then you die. And stand at the judgment and the Lord says, as He does in Matthew 21:23, "Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity, I never knew you." But you said, "Lord, what about the sign?" The devil could point his finger at you and say, "You fool. You fool! That was me. That was me. I deceived you with fire from Heaven!" When you demand signs and wonders and miracles, it is dishonoring to God, it is dangerous to man. And that's why Jesus remonstrated with this man. And Jesus said, "Except ye see signs and wonders you'll not believe."

But not only was his faith a second-handed faith, not only was it a sign-demanding faith, it was a **self-centered faith**. Look again, if you will in verse 49, we're back to chapter 4. "The nobleman saith unto Him, 'Sir, come down ere my child die.'" Now what's he interested in? The welfare of his child. Is anything wrong with that? No. Just like there's nothing wrong with miracles. And I will promise you if I have a child that's sick I'm going to be bombarding Heaven in prayer. Nothing wrong with that. But this man has yet to bow at the feet of Jesus Christ and worship Him. So many of us are so concerned about our health, our welfare, our children, our families, our future; all of these things. That's not strong faith. There's nothing wrong with asking God to bless us. But strong faith is interested primarily in the glory of God and the heart in its right relationship to Him. This man was interested in the physical, not the spiritual; in the temporal, not the eternal.

Now here's a fourth thing that was wrong with his faith. Remember we said what? It was a second-handed faith. Number two it was a sign-seeking faith. Number three it is a self-centered faith. Number four it is a **strong-willed faith**. Now, notice what he says in John 4 verse 49, "Lord, come down ere my child die." He's telling God what to do. He is instructing the Lord. But notice verse 50, "Jesus saith unto him, 'Go thy way.'" No, no, now don't miss that. This man says to Jesus, "Come!" Jesus says, "Go." Hum? He's trying to dictate to the Lord. He's trying to tell the Lord how He's going to do what He's going to do when He does it. Have you ever been guilty of that? Have you ever been guilty rather than saying, "Speak Lord, Thy servant hears," you're saying, "Listen, Lord, I'm talking to You. Now, Lord, here's what You must do." That, friend is weak faith. Strong faith waits upon God and listens to God and gets a message from God. Weak faith is strong will.

Let me tell you what faith is. "Faith is not so much receiving from God the things that you want as it is accepting from God the things that He gives." Say again. Let me say that again. "Faith is not so much



receiving from God the things you want as it is accepting from God the things that He gives." That's the reason this, what's the word I'm looking for, bosh, B-O-S-H, bosh. That's a good Greek word for "this bosh about name it and claim it." You can't claim it 'til He names it. 'Til He names it.

Faith is not dictating to God. Faith is hearing God, believing God, and acting on what God says. This man is a nobleman. He's been used to telling people what to do. He has servants here, there. "Lord, come down and heal my son." The Lord just says, "No, you go. You go." So that's weak faith.

It is second-handed faith. It is sign-seeking faith. It is self-centered faith. It is **strong-willed faith**. Maybe better than no faith at all but it's certainly not strong faith. Now this man is going to go through a metamorphosis. Something is going to happen to this man and he is going to have now strong faith. And he's going to go beyond miracles and on to Jesus. Now what is strong faith? I want you to see the radical dramatic change that takes place. Begin now in John 4 verse 49, "The nobleman saith unto Him, 'Sir, come down ere my child die.' Jesus saith unto him, 'Go thy way thy son liveth.' And the man believed the word." Underscore it, put a big star out by it. Get your Bible out now and look at it. I'm going to tell you friend what strong faith is. Strong faith, number one is this, **you must hear the word**. Look in verse 50, "Jesus saith unto him." You must hear the word. The Bible says in Romans 10 verse 14, "How shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard. And how shall they hear without a preacher." And then in Romans 10 verse 17, "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."

Now in order for you to have faith, you must know what God has said. Wake up! Listen. In order for you to have faith, you must know what God has said and is saying. Because faith is a response to the Word of God. Jesus said something to him and he heard the word. Romans 10 verse 17, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." That's the reason that we have this pulpit. That's why we have this church, that's why we preach. So people can hear the Word of God. Do you understand that? If you want people to believe you've got to give them something to believe. And you must give them the Word of God.

So, what's the first step in faith? Number one, you hear the word of God. Number two **you must believe the Word of God**. Look in John 4 verse 50 again. And the Bible says, "And the man believed the word." Now hearing is not enough. There are some who will sit before me this morning and you will hear but you have not yet believed. You must hear. That's important. Romans 10:14, "How shall they believe without a preacher? How shall they hear without a preacher?" That's fine. But you must hear and then number two, you must believe the Word.

You say, "Well, Pastor, that is my problem. I just have trouble believing. I can't help it if I can't believe." Oh, yes you can. Folks, let me tell you something. You don't have intellectual problems if you don't believe; you have moral problems. Your problem is not in your head, the problem is in your heart. The Bible says in Hebrews 3:12, "Beware lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief." And then in Psalm 14 verse 1, "The fool has said in his heart there is no God." It is not that you cannot believe, it may be that you will not believe because Christ gives faith to every man and what you must do is accept it, receive it, and believe it. Christ is that light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. You can believe if you will believe. Unbelief is not weakness, it is wickedness. It is rebellion. If you want to believe today, God will enable you to believe.



The man heard the Word. Secondly, the man believed the Word. What is faith? Faith is a response to God himself. Not to what God has done, not to miracles. Now remember, this man believed before he saw a thing now. He doesn't see any sign, he doesn't see any wonder. What does he have? Here is the man, here is Jesus Christ. This man is looking into a face of Jesus. Jesus says to him, "Go thy way, your son lives." This man now is captivated by the person, the character of Jesus Christ Himself. No sign, no wonder, but Jesus. Now, listen to me. What is faith? Faith is the heart response of the soul to the character, the nature of God. It does not demand signs, it does not demand wonders. It's so very important that you understand this. You see God created you, the God who made you, He created you this way. God created my eye that my eye would respond to light. God created my ears that my ears would respond to sound and God created my spirit that it would respond to the character and the nature of God! Not because of signs and wonders, but because of God Himself. Here the Lord Jesus is speaking to this man and the man believed the word.

Now watch it. You must hear the Word of God. Number two, you must believe the Word of God and you can if you want to. Number three, **you must obey the Word of God**. Now look if you will in John 4 verses 50 and following, "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. And as he was now going down his servants met him." He is doing exactly what Jesus told him to do. Jesus said go and now he goes. Now had he not believed he would have stayed there still demanding a sign, still posturing, still asking Jesus to do it. But now it's settled. Now faith is shown by obedience. You must hear the word, you must believe the word, you must obey the word. You see, true faith is always linked to obedience. Romans chapter 16 in verse 26, you may put that in your margin, it speaks of the obedience of faith. And James said this, in James 2 verse 26, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Faith without works is dead. Sitting in a church, nodding your head, taking notes, is not faith. You must hear the word, you must believe the word, you must obey the word.

Well, you say, "Pastor, are you telling me that I'm saved by faith and, and works? Oh, no. I'm telling you that you're saved by faith that works. Faith that works. If it doesn't work it is not faith. Just simply saying that you believe but not obeying is not faith, there's no substitute for obedience. Faith that does not lead to obedience is not faith at all.

So here's the man who hears the word, he believes the word, he obeys the word. But now wait a minute, here's the sweet part. Look if you will now in John 4 verse 51 to 53, "As he was now going down, his servants met him and told him saying, 'Thy son liveth.' Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend." That is to get better. "And they said unto him," now understand this, be careful now, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.' And the man knew that is was at the same hour in which Jesus saith unto him, 'Thy son liveth,' and himself believed and his whole house."

Now, here's something that's always been sweet to me. Do you know how much time has taken place between when Jesus said to this man, "Your son is okay," and this episode when he meets these servants, this entourage coming out to meet him? Twenty-four long hours. Now this man lived where? In Capernaum. Where did Jesus have the encounter with this man? In Cana. How far was it? Twenty miles. He could have made that on foot in seven of eight hours, but he was a nobleman. A nobleman wouldn't walk this far. He would go by chariot or by camel or by some conveyance. But 24 long hours have passed. Let me ask you a question. If you left home and you had a son that was at the point of death, desperation,



and somebody said to you, "He's alright, go home." What would you do? You would go as fast as you could back home to see wouldn't you? I would. I mean I'd get back there as quickly as I could to see, "Yes, He said it's okay. But I've got to go check." This man takes 24 hours. He could've been there in two or three hours. What is this? Folks, this is one of the most incredible demonstrations of faith, I believe in the Bible.

That brings me to the fourth thing of what real faith is. You must hear the word of God, you must believe the word of God, you must obey the word of God, and then **you rest in the word of God**, you just rest in the word of God. Do you know what the Bible says, in Isaiah 28:16 it says, "He that believeth will not make hast." You don't have to worry, I mean, you can wait on the Lord. I was reading in the Word of God in Psalm 37 where the Lord said in verse 7, "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." Friend, don't get all upset and go around with nervous frustration. Rest in the Lord. Commit your way to the Lord.

Now, why, why did the Lord do it this way? Why did the Lord say, oh, hey, get ready for a blessing! If this doesn't bless you, you've got callouses on your soul. Now listen. Why did not Jesus go with that man and heal his son? Why did Jesus just say, "You go, your son is healed." Now remember, what did the man have? He had the word of God. He had the word of Jesus. Now, when I need a blessing, when I need an answer to prayer, do I have to have Jesus here with me physically to get it. No, sir. No, sir. That boy was 20 miles away and Jesus healed him long distance, didn't he? Sure did.

Now, you know there's a verse in the Bible that says this, "He sent His word and healed them." He sent His word. Psalm 107 and verse 20. Jesus is not here in a body today. But we've got this book don't we. We've got this. Friend, this is not just a book; this is the Word of God. The Word of God. I mean, what He's saying is, "It doesn't matter whether you're here or there, wherever you are, just take My Word. He sent His word and healed him. And so, when I have this Bible in my study, it's like having Jesus in my study. When I have this Bible in my home, it's like having Jesus in my home. Well, you say, "Oh, you're worshiping the Bible." I don't mean it that way. I am saying, though, when I pick up the Word of God and read it, God speaks out of His Word and faith is finding a promise in the Word of God, brought home by the Spirit of God and standing on it.

Now, here's the last thing, and I have just a couple of minutes to give you the last thing and I wish I had more. But, we talked about the obstacles of strong faith, and then we talked about the operation of strong faith. Now, let me talk to you about **the objective of strong faith**. Read the last two verses in this wonderful chapter. Now, the Bible says in John 4:53, "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." Now wait a minute, wait a minute, Adrian. I thought you said he already believed. Look if you will in verse 50. The Bible says, "And the man believed." But now you go down to verse 53 and it says, "and himself believed." Well, when did he believe? What is the last verse talking about or verse 53? Now the man is not believing for physical healing, he's believing for salvation. Now he's believing not in a miracle but in a Messiah! Now he is gone beyond the miracle and he has gone on to Jesus! That's why the miracles were there. That he might go on and believe in the Lord Jesus. I can see him as he goes back home and he gets out the Old Testament Scriptures, and he says, "Wife, son, family, household, I've met the Messiah. Believe on Him, trust Him. We'll be saved."

Now, what good would it have done if this boy had been healed and then later died and went to Hell? Jesus didn't heal everybody. But He'll save everybody who'll call upon Him. He did not come as a teacher or as a healer, He came as a Savior. The Bible says in Luke 19:10, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to



save that which is lost." We'll have to talk more about this later on. But here's the point, John said in John 20 verses 30 and 31, "Jesus did many miracles, but these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ and that believing that you might have life through His name."

I was visiting in the hospital and I was praying with a woman. And Joyce said to me, "Adrian," she says this from time to time, "Adrian, listen, if you don't want anybody to hear you, don't talk. Because," she said, "Adrian, you cannot whisper." And you know, I said, "Well, I'm just whispering." She said, "They're hearing you all over this restaurant." And so, I was in the hospital. I was not trying to broadcast anything. But I was praying with a woman in one room. And all the way across the hallway I heard somebody say, "Come see me, too." I thought they were calling for a nurse. So I kept on, after a while, they said, "Come see me, too." I said, "Are you talking to me?" She said, "Yes, come see me, too."

So I went all the way across the hallway and there in that hospital bed was a precious lady. Her white hair, I can see her now, spread out on that pillow. Pain was on her face. Despair was in her heart. You could tell by the look on her face that she had very little time to live. There was that color of death. That ashen grey. The smell of death was in that room. She said, "I'm not ready to meet God. Mister, can you help me?" I said, "Yes ma'am, I can." And I told her about the Jesus that I'm preaching about this morning. And I said, "Lady, if you'll trust Him, He'll save you." She said, "Would you help me?" I said, "Yes I will."

And I said, "Pray this prayer after me, 'Dear God,'" She said, "Dear God," "I know that You love me." "I know that You love me." "I know that You want to save me." "I know that You want to save me." "Jesus thank You for paying for my sin with Your blood." "Jesus thank You for paying for my sin with Your blood." "Jesus, I believe God raised You from the dead." "Jesus, I believe God raised You from the dead." "I open my heart." "I open my heart." "I receive You now as my Lord and Savior." "I receive You now as my Lord and Savior." "Thank You for saving me." "Thank You for saving me." "Amen." "Amen."

I opened my eyes, I expected to see peace on her face, but I saw a tortured look on her face. And she said to me, "But I don't see how just saying that can do any good?" And I said, "Lady, you're right. You're right. Just saying that can't do any good at all! It is believing that, trusting that, that's what saves you! Now, let's pray it again and this time put your faith in Jesus. We pray it again and she said, "Lord, I really trust You." And I saw the peace of God come over that precious woman's face. I expect to meet her in Heaven. I really do. Friend, that's what these miracles are about. Believe in miracles, but trust in Jesus. Trust in Jesus. "These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ and believing you have life through His name."

Bow your heads in prayer. And if you've never trusted Jesus, you may believe about Him, you may have heard about Him, you may have a second-handed faith, you may have a self-centered faith, but what you need is a saving faith, a strong faith. And if you want to be saved would you pray a prayer like this, "Dear God, I know that You love me." Just pray it now, "I know that You want to save me. Jesus You died to save me, You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You Lord Jesus, I really do. Come into my heart, forgive my sin, save me today, Lord Jesus. Save me Lord Jesus. Hallelujah. Amen."



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