



# HAVING STRONG FAITH

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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# Having Strong Faith

**SERMON REFERENCE:** John 4:46-54

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #2245

In the Kingdom of Heaven, faith is the medium of exchange. Whatever we receive from God is according to our faith.

Adrian Rogers says, “The greater your faith, the greater glory God gets; by faith man gives God pleasure and by faith God gives man treasure.”

John 4 tells the story of a man whose superficial, superstitious faith was transformed into a strong, saving faith.

“So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. 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. Then Jesus said to him, ‘Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe’” (John 4:46-48).

## **First, we must see the problem of superficial faith.**

In this passage, the nobleman had heard about Jesus’ first miracle, turning water into wine, and was blown away. But Jesus knew that signs and wonders do not truly help in developing a strong faith.

## **We must also consider the problem of superstitious faith.**

God performed miracles through Jesus to authenticate His ministry. It is dishonoring to demand a sign from God in order to believe in Him. It is also self-deceiving; signs and wonders can easily deceive; it is how our enemy leads others astray.

**This passage also shows the progression of strong faith.** There are steps in developing this sort of saving faith, the first being hearing the Word of God, and then believing it. What we believe is not contrary to reason; it goes beyond reason. We must obey the Word of God, and then rest in it.

Adrian Rogers says, “Faith is not seeing signs and wonders, rather, it is a response to the character of God.”

**Finally, this passage shows the provision of saving faith.** After the nobleman’s son was healed, he not only believed in a miracle worker but in a Messiah.

All of Jesus’ miracles point to the greater miracle, which is the new life in Him.

## **Life Application**

If you want to strengthen your faith, get a good grip on the Word of God. Don’t look to the miracles, but to the Messiah; do not follow the signs, but the Savior.



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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) In our economy, money is the medium of exchange; but in the kingdom of Heaven, faith is the medium of exchange.
- b) Matthew 9:29
  - i) What we receive from God is according to our faith.
    - (1) Not according to our friends.
    - (2) Not according to our family.
    - (3) Not according to our fortune.
    - (4) Not according to our feelings.
    - (5) Not according to fate.
- c) Not only do we need to possess faith, but what we need is for faith to possess us.
  - i) We need a mighty faith because we have a mighty God.
- d) Doubt sees the obstacles, faith sees the way.
  - i) Doubt sees the darkest night, faith sees the day.
  - ii) Doubt dreads to take a step; faith soars on high.
  - iii) Doubt questions, "Who believes?" Faith answers, "I!"
- e) We need a strong faith, not a weak faith.
- f) Today's message will share from the Word of God a story about a man who had a weak faith.
  - i) This man went from a superstitious faith to a strong faith to a saving faith.
  - ii) This man was a nobleman who had many resources.
    - (1) All of us, no matter our resources, have a problem that only God can solve.
  - iii) This man's son was sick, and he wanted Jesus to heal his son.
    - (1) The dark soil of this problem was the soil in which the seed of faith would grow.
- g) Hebrews 11:6
  - i) No matter how sacrificially we give, how circumspectly we walk or how faithfully we serve, if we are not believing God, then we are not pleasing God.
- h) The greater our faith, the greater glory God gets and the more pleased He is with it.
  - i) By faith, man gives God pleasure; and by faith, God gives man treasure.
- j) John 4:46-48
  - i) Jesus rebuked this man who was looking for signs and wonders.
- k) John 4:49-50
  - i) In these Scriptures, we see signs and wonders in opposition with the Word.
  - ii) Jesus spoke to the man, and we see a transformation.
    - (1) Now, the man believed the Word.
  - iii) On one side are wonders, and on the other side is the Word.
- l) John 4:50-54
- m) In today's message, we will see how to lay believing hands on the promises of God and have a strong faith.

**2) THE PROBLEM OF A SUPERFICIAL FAITH (JOHN 4:48)**

- a) At first when this man met Jesus, his faith was almost non-existent.
  - i) This man had a faith that was based on signs and wonders.
    - (1) His motto was "Seeing is believing."
    - (2) He is dependent upon his five senses and not dependent upon the Word of God.
- b) This man had likely heard that Jesus had turned water into wine.
  - i) John 4:46
  - ii) This was the first miracle that Jesus performed.
  - iii) Jesus knew that miracles, signs and wonders, are very little good in strong faith.
- c) We all want to see a sign, a wonder, a miracle.
  - i) John 2:23-24
    - (1) The words "commit" and "believe" are the same word in the Greek.
    - (2) They believed in Jesus, but Jesus didn't believe in them.
      - (a) This was superficial faith.
  - ii) John 2:24-25
    - (1) Jesus knew that these people were following Him because of the miracle.
      - (a) They didn't have strong faith but superficial faith, almost superstitious faith.
      - (b) Many today, including Christians, ask for signs and wonders in order to believe.
- d) Jesus did perform miracles.
  - i) He gave signs and wonders to authenticate His ministry.
  - ii) Acts 2:22
  - iii) John 20:30-31
    - (1) God did miracles to authenticate the ministry of Jesus, but the miracle was not for the miracle's sake.
      - (a) The miracle was that we might believe on Jesus and have eternal life.
      - (b) Not that we might seek a miracle, but the Messiah; not a sign, but the Savior.
- e) The apostles also did signs and wonders.
  - i) 2 Corinthians 12:12
  - ii) The apostle Paul had power to do miracles.
  - iii) God authenticated the ministry of the apostles with signs and wonders.
  - iv) Hebrews 2:4
    - (1) They did not have the power to do signs and wonders according to their own will.
    - (2) But because they were apostles and were setting the foundation of our faith, God authenticated their ministry with signs and wonders.
- f) What is wrong with seeking a sign?
  - i) "An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign."
    - (1) Matthew 12:39
  - ii) It dishonors God.
    - (1) When we ask God to give us a sign or a wonder so that we can believe, it dishonors Him because we have His Word.
    - (2) 1 John 5:10
    - (3) John 20:25-31
      - (a) Thomas missed the blessing of simply believing the Word of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
  - iii) It can be deceiving.



- (1) Signs and wonders can easily deceive.
- (2) The coming antichrist, the devil incarnate, will authenticate his ministry with signs and wonders.
  - (a) Matthew 24:24
    - (i) If it were possible, Satan would deceive the very elect.
  - (b) 2 Thessalonians 2:9
  - (c) The antichrist will be able to make people think that black is white and good is bad.
    - (i) He will have the ability to deceive.
- (3) The devil can do signs and lying wonders, and he will do them through his antichrist.
- (4) Revelation 13:13-14
  - (a) This passage is speaking of the false prophet, who is the sinister minister of propaganda for the coming antichrist.
  - (b) This propaganda agent for the antichrist has the ability to do signs and wonders so that people will literally worship the antichrist.
- (5) Don't let some miracle worker, some sign-giver, some emissary from Satan deceive you.
- (6) Matthew 12:39

### 3) THE PROGRESSION OF STRONG FAITH (JOHN 4:50-53)

- a) This man moved from a weak faith to a very strong, solid and substantive faith.
- b) There are progressive steps for moving from signs and wonders to the Word.
  - i) Hear the Word of God.
    - (1) John 4:50
      - (a) The man heard the Word of God.
      - (2) Faith is not naming it and claiming it.
      - (3) Faith is not receiving from God what we want.
      - (4) Faith is accepting from God what He gives.
      - (5) This man was a nobleman, and he tried to tell Jesus what to do.
        - (a) John 4:49-50
          - (i) The man told Jesus to come, but Jesus told the man to go.
          - (b) He was not to demand or command the Lord Jesus.
          - (c) He was to get a Word from Jesus.
            - (i) Romans 10:14
            - (ii) Romans 10:17
        - (6) If we want strong faith, we must hear the Word of God.
        - (7) Faith is taking God at His Word.
          - (a) If we are to have faith, then we must know what God has said.
          - (b) If we want others to have faith, then we must tell them what God has said.
            - (i) Romans 10:14
      - ii) Believe the Word of God.
        - (1) John 4:50
        - (2) It is not enough to just hear the Word of God.
          - (a) If we don't believe the Word of God, then we're not going to have faith.
          - (b) We must believe the Word of God.
        - (3) Some people say that they cannot believe, but we can believe if we want to.



- (a) 1 John 5:10
- (4) The problem of unbelief is not an intellectual problem; it is a moral problem.
  - (a) The problem is not in the head but in the heart.
  - (b) What we believe is not contrary to reason; it goes beyond reason.
  - (c) Faith is a gift of God.
  - (d) If a person wants to believe, then God will enable that person to believe.
    - (i) Romans 14:23
- (5) Faith is not seeing signs and wonders.
  - (a) Faith is a response to the character of God.
  - (b) When the Lord Jesus came to this Earth, He laid aside all of the glory, the splendor and the majesty that was inherently His; but He kept His deity.
    - (i) Isaiah 53:2
  - (c) There was in Jesus Christ the grace, the glory and the fullness of God that when a person's heart was right, he knew that Jesus was speaking with authority and his heart responded to Him.
- (6) When our heart is right, our heart will respond to the Word of God in faith.
  - (a) Just like our eyes respond to light when our eyes are right, and our ears respond to sound when our ears are right.
  - (b) Our heart will respond to God when our heart is right.
    - (i) That heart response is faith.
    - (ii) When God speaks through His Word, there is something in us that knows that it is true.
      - 1. The Holy Spirit of God whispers "Amen" to our heart.
      - 2. We can only preach truth, but the Holy Spirit of God imparts truth.
- iii) Obey the Word of God.
  - (1) John 4:50-51
    - (a) The man did exactly what Jesus told him to do.
  - (2) This is the obedience of faith.
    - (a) Romans 16:26
  - (3) Real faith is belief with legs on it.
  - (4) James 2:26
  - (5) We do not have strong faith if we do not obey the Word of God.
- iv) Rest in the Word of God.
  - (1) John 4:51-53
    - (a) This nobleman was approximately seventeen miles from his son.
    - (b) The nobleman could have gotten to his son in about two hours by chariot, but 24 hours passed and he had not gone home yet.
      - (i) We don't know the reason for the man's delay, but he could have been resting in what the Lord had done.
  - (2) Psalm 37:5-7
  - (3) The nobleman did not demand proof, and he didn't speed home to see if his son had been healed.
    - (a) The rest of faith is the mark of real faith.
  - (4) We are to rest in the Lord.
    - (a) It is like the sun coming up.



- (i) We can't hurry the sunrise, but we can't stop it.
  - (b) We can't hurry God, and we can't stop Him.
  - (c) Isaiah 28:16
- c) We must hear the Word of God, believe the Word of God, obey the Word of God and rest in the Word of God.
  - i) If we don't, then we will be stampeded by all kinds of things.
  - ii) Don't try to live by emotions, feelings, visions, dreams, signs or wonders.
    - (1) Signs and wonders had their purpose.
- d) God does still heal in answer to prayer.
  - i) But this is not something that causes us to believe in Him.
    - (1) God doesn't always heal the sick.
  - ii) It is not wrong to go to a doctor.
    - (1) Matthew 9:12
      - (a) In this passage, the Lord Jesus used a truth to illustrate spiritual things.
  - iii) When we are sick, we pray and then go to the doctor and do what the doctor tells us to do.

**4) THE PROVISION OF SAVING FAITH (JOHN 4:53)**

- a) The man believes now, not in a miracle worker, but in a Messiah.
  - i) The man is born again; he believes in Jesus as His Lord and Savior.
- b) John 20:31
- c) Jesus did not come as a healer; He came as a Savior.
  - i) Luke 19:10
- d) The Lord Jesus did not heal everyone.
  - i) There were many sick people at the pool of Bethesda, but He healed just one.
  - ii) All of these miracles point to the greater miracle, which is the new birth.
- e) Trust in Jesus.
  - i) Don't put your faith in miracles.
  - ii) Suppose the nobleman's son had been healed but never got saved.
    - (1) Then, he would have lived a few more years and died and gone to Hell.
    - (2) This is why so many people are seeking the wrong thing.
      - (a) Many people seek a sign and a wonder rather than seeking Jesus the Messiah.

**5) CONCLUSION**

- a) Why I follow Christ.
  - i) There is no statistical evidence that fewer Christians die of cancer or other disease than non-believers.
    - (1) Therefore, I will not follow Christ for promised healing.
    - (2) I will not deny or dispute evidence of restoration of health.
    - (3) I will rejoice in the recovery of those from certain death.
    - (4) I will continue to pray for the healing of others.
  - ii) There is no evidence that Christians escape disaster and accident more than non-believers.
    - (1) Christians are equally affected by natural disasters.
    - (2) A bullet does not detour around the body of a believer.
    - (3) Therefore, I will not follow Christ for promised protection from disaster.



- (4) I will not scoff at amazing survivals.
- (5) I recognize that God's will has and continues to be at work.
- (6) I will pray for protection from wicked men and tragedy.
- iii) There is no evidence that Christians are especially favored with prosperity.
  - (1) The rich often oppress the poor.
  - (2) Justice in this world is rarely perfect.
  - (3) Psalm 37:25
  - (4) We all know people with integrity who have not prospered.
  - (5) Therefore, I will not follow Christ for promised freedom from physical want or hope of affluence.
- iv) There is no evidence that Christians have stronger personalities or fewer neurosis than non-believers.
  - (1) There is no bitterness like that of religious bitterness.
  - (2) Christians suffer under emotional and mental disabilities.
  - (3) There is no doubt that the Christians attitude and actions will be improved by his Christianity.
  - (4) But I will not follow Christ for any promise of personality enhancement or perfection.
- v) Why then follow Christ?
  - (1) In Jesus we behold the face of God.
    - (a) He is the everlasting truth; God in human flesh.
    - (b) In His life, death and resurrection I am reconciled to God.
    - (c) He has all power and goodness and we can trust Him in His promises.
    - (d) He is the one certain thing in an uncertain world.
    - (e) He is to be worshipped, not so that something will happen to me.
      - (i) Something already has: God, through Christ, has reconciled the world to Himself; He saves us.
      - (ii) He is our justification.
  - (2) We offer our lives to God, not to be healthy, wealthy and wise or to gain strength to do things for Him; but because He alone can claim us.
- b) Don't look for some sign, wonder or miracle.
- c) Jesus is the Savior who lived, suffered, bled and died for us; and He rose from the dead.
- d) If you will trust Him, then He will save you and will keep you.
  - i) Believe in miracles, but trust in Jesus.
- e) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- f) 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



# Having Strong Faith

**SERMON REFERENCE:** John 4:46-54

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Would you take God's Word and turn, please, to John chapter 4, the Gospel of John, and in a few moments we're going to begin reading in verse 46. And I want to speak to you today about faith; having strong faith. Now in our economy, the dollar is the medium of exchange, but in the kingdom of Heaven, faith is the medium of exchange. The Bible says, "According to your faith, be it unto you." Whatever we receive from God is according to our faith. Not according to our friends. Not according to our family. Not according to our fortune. Not according to our feelings. Not according to our fate, F-A-T-E; I hope you're not watching the horoscope. But according to our faith, "According to your faith, be it unto you." Not only do we need to possess a faith. What we need is for faith to possess us. We need a mighty faith because we have a Mighty God.

"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.'" I believe. But you know we need a strong faith, not a weak faith, but a strong faith. And I'm going to share with you from the Word of God a story about a man who came to Jesus, and this man had a weak faith. I would call it a superficial faith, even worse a superstitious faith. But he went from that superstitious faith to a strong faith, to a saving faith. And that's what I want us to see today, and I hope that you today will grow in faith.

Now this man in the story we're going to read about, was a nobleman. That is, he had much to commend him. He had many resources at his hand, but he had a problem. And you know, many of us, no matter what we have in our bank accounts, and what we have on our biographical sketch, we have problems that only God can solve. This man had a problem and that was a son that was sick. And this nobleman wanted Jesus to heal his son. And the dark soil of that problem was the soil in which the seed of faith would grow.

Now do you want a strong faith? Do you? Really? Would you like to really believe God and please God? For you know, the Bible says in Hebrews 11 verse 6, "Without faith it's impossible to please God," no matter what else you do. I don't care how beautifully you sing this morning, how sacrificially you give, how circumspectly you walk, how faithfully you serve; if you're not believing God, you're not pleasing God. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." And the greater your faith, the greater glory God gets, the more pleased He is with it, and by faith man gives God pleasure and by faith God gives man treasure, real treasure.

So, let's see here something about a strong faith. Begin reading with me in John verse 46, chapter 4 verse 46 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. When he 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," that is the son, "was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.'" Now Jesus was not giving that just simply as a statement of fact. He was giving that as a rebuke to this man. Jesus is rebuking this man who was looking for signs and wonders. "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." Now if you don't mind marking your Bible, would you underscore that? Would you underscore that? "And the man believed the Word."



Now what we have here is in opposition: signs and wonders and the Word. That's what we have. First, Jesus rebukes him, "Except you see signs and wonders, you'll not believe." And then Jesus speaks to him and there's a transformation, and now it says, "And the man believed the Word." What you have on the one side are wonders and what you have on the other side is the Word. Now that's very key, so I hope you'll keep your heart and mind on that.

"And the man believed the Word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And when 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. And they said unto him, 'Yesterday.'" That's very interesting, too. Mark it right now, "Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him." That's probably, according to their time, about 1 p.m. "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." Well, I thought he'd already believed. Now it mentions he believes again. "This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee."

Now are you ready to have a strong faith? Would you really like to have a strong faith? Would you like to be able to believe God and lay believing hands on the promises of God? Well let me lay three things on your heart this morning.

First of all, what I want to call **the problem of a superstitious faith**; or, if you rather, problem of a superficial faith. It makes no difference how you say it. At first, when this man first met Jesus, his faith was almost non-existent. Look again in John 4 verse 48. Go back and look at it, "Then said Jesus unto him, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.'" This man had a faith that was based on signs and wonders. Evidently his motto was, "Seeing is believing." "God, if You'll just give me sign, if You'll just give me a wonder, then I can believe." And what had happened to this man, therefore, is he is dependent upon his five senses. He's not dependent upon the Word of God.

Now, doubtless, this man had heard that Jesus had turned water into wine. Look if you will in verse 46, it's not put there just by happenstance, "So Jesus came again unto Cana, of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum."

Now Jesus had done a miracle. The first miracle that Jesus performed was turning water into wine. This man had heard about this and he was taken with this; and so he was kind of, as we would say in the vernacular today, he was blown away by this miracle. Here was somebody who could turn water into wine. But Jesus knew that miracles, signs and wonders, are really very little good in strong faith.

Now you may not believe that. If you're like I am, when you were a younger Christian, you were saying, "Oh God, I just want to see a miracle." You ever been, "I want to see a miracle. I mean a genuine, industrial-strength miracle. I mean one that cannot be explained any other way except that You supernaturally do something." I'm ashamed to admit it, but when I was in college, I got in the room one time and prayed and asked God to move a chair from one side to the other; I'm so glad the devil didn't nudge that chair. But I wanted to see, and I was just saying, "Now Lord, I want to see something that, you know, that I can say, "I have seen, I've felt, I've experienced a miracle."

How many of you have kind of been that way some time? Be honest. Come on now, I've already confessed. I mean, we want a sign, we want a wonder, we want a miracle. And this man had heard about Jesus turning water into wine. And so he's coming now to Jesus. He's come all the way from Capernaum, about 17 miles away, and he's saying, "Now, come down and heal my son. Anybody who can turn water into wine can heal



my son.” And Jesus rebukes him. Jesus said, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.” That was the same way that they were when Jesus turned water into wine.

Now you’re in chapter 4. Be easy for you just turn back two chapters to chapter 2 and look at it. Chapter 2 verses 23 and 24, “And when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles that He did.” Well, you say, “Isn’t that good? They believed in Jesus when they saw the miracles that He did.” But notice verse 24, “But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them.” And the word commit and the word believe in the Greek, are the same word. They believed in Jesus, but He didn’t believe in them. It was a superficial faith.

And notice how, what it goes on to say, “He did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men. And needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man.” Jesus knew that these people were following Him; they were, quote, “believing on Him,” because of the miracle. They didn’t have strong faith; they had superficial faith, almost superstitious faith. And he, this man in John chapter 4, has plenty of brothers in the 21st Century today.

You would be amazed how many people today want signs and wonders. They want visions. They want emotions. They want dreams. They want liver shivers and icicles going up and down their spine and angels playing tic-tac-toe on their ribs. They want something so they can say, “Hey, I know, I know it is real. Now I have seen. Now I’ve touched. Now I’ve smelled. Now I have heard. And now I know it is real. Oh God, give me a sign! Oh God, give me a wonder.” And I want to tell you that the world is full of people just like that, and many of them sit in our churches today. It is amazing what some people will believe.

In December 1996, in my home state of Florida, something happened. There was a customer in the Seminole Finance Corporation looked out the window across the street to a car sales place, a place called Ugly Duckling Car Sales. And this person saw on the window of the Ugly Duckling Car Sales a picture of what appeared to be the Virgin Mary, just somehow in the glass, just different colors in the glass in the sunlight, just, it wasn’t painted on there or anything, but she just saw what appeared to be an image of the Virgin Mary. Well, she went out and said, “Look, I have seen a miracle. I have seen the Virgin Mary on the windowpane of the Ugly Duckling Car Sales.”

Well, would you realize, or do you understand that, folks, down there in Florida, it was near Christmastime, they had a traffic jam of nearly 60,000 people coming to see the Virgin Mary on a windowpane. And some brought flowers to place it beneath the window. Some were sure that the image was an absolute miracle. Dignar Feldman brought her 20-month-old grandson to see the image. She said, “This is a miracle. I pray for her,” that is, the image on the windowpane, “to protect him.” And then there’s another woman named Tammy Parker said, “Oh, she’s beautiful. This is unbelievable.” I would say, “That’s right, it is unbelievable.” And she brought her daughter and prayed to the image on the windowpane that God would perform a miracle; that the image on the windowpane would perform a miracle and heal her daughter of a disability.

Now, Jesus did perform miracles, no ifs, ands, and buts about that. And why did He do it? Why did Jesus give signs and wonders? Well, He did that to authenticate His ministry. Let me give you a couple of verses to put in your margin. One is Acts chapter 2 verse 22. Just put it in your margin, Acts chapter 2 verse 22, “Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.” Jesus did signs and wonders. You cannot take that out of the Word of God, nor should we wish to.



Well, why did He do signs and wonders? Well, we're in the Gospel of John. If you were to fast forward to John chapter 20 and look in verses 30 and 31, you'd read, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; But these are written," now listen, listen carefully, "these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." Now, God did miracles to authenticate the ministry of Jesus. But the miracle was not for the miracle's sake; the miracle was that you might believe on Jesus and have eternal life. Not that you might seek a miracle, but a Messiah; not a sign, but a Savior.

Now it's also clear that the apostles did signs and wonders. Some people think that we ought to do signs and wonders because they were done in the New Testament, but these were the signs and wonders done by the apostles. Put this verse down, Second Corinthians 12 verse 12, "Truly, the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." Now the apostle Paul had power to do miracles, "Signs and wonders and mighty deeds." And God authenticated the ministry of the apostles with signs and wonders.

Hebrews chapter 2 verse 4, put that verse down, "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will." Now, they did not have the power to do signs and wonders according to their own will, but God took the apostles, and because they were apostles and they were setting the foundation of our faith, God authenticated their ministry with signs and wonders.

But folks, that is not the program for the whole age. God has given us something better than signs and wonders, and I want to show that to you. Listen, what is wrong with demanding a sign? What is wrong with what this man first did when Jesus rebuked him and said, "Except ye see signs and wonders, you'll not believe?" As a matter of fact, Jesus said in Matthew chapter 12 verse 39, "An evil and an adulterous generation seeks a sign." Now, boy, that's pretty strong. "An evil and an adulterous generation seeks a sign." Well, why is it so bad?

Well, first of all, it's **dishonoring to God**. Why is it dishonoring to God for you to say, "God, give me a sign, give me a wonder, so I can believe?" Well, we have His Word. Suppose I come to my son; I say, "Now, Son, I want you to know that I love you and I have deposited a thousand dollars in the bank for you. It's in your account. I've opened up an account for you. And I've done that for you. Son, you've got a thousand dollars in the bank."

Suppose he says to me, "Dad, how do I know I have a thousand dollars in the bank?" "I know, I just told you." "Well, Dad, you know, Dad, it sure would mean a whole lot to me if you would show me the deposit slip. I mean, or you could just take me down there to the bank and let me see it so I would know it." I say, "Son, I just told you." "No, but I want a sign, I want a wonder, I want something that I can see, I want something I can touch, I want something I can taste, I want something I can smell. Don't just give me your word." You know in First John 5:10 the Bible says, "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar."

Now, there was a man named Thomas in the Bible. We call him Doubting Thomas. Jesus was raised from the dead. The apostles were preaching the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, according as He had promised in His Word. Do you know what old Thomas said? In John 20 verse 25 he said, "Unless I put my finger in the nail prints and in His side where the wound is," he said, "I'll not believe."



Now, I want you to go John 20 and look at it. Look in John 20. Just turn over to it, John 20 verse 29 through 31. Jesus appeared to him, and said, "Okay, Tom, put your hand there. Go ahead. Thrust your hand into My side." And notice in verse 29, "Jesus saith unto him, 'Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed.'" Did Thomas get a lot of credit for that? Notice what Jesus said, "Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name."

You see, was it good for Thomas to believe after he's had a sign, a wonder, after he's felt with his hands? Well it was okay, but he missed the blessing of simply believing the Word of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Why are seeking signs and wonders dangerous? Number one, it dishonors God.

Number two, it can be **deceiving to you**. It can be very, very deceiving. Signs and wonders can easily deceive. Joyce and I were talking as we were getting dressed for church about the coming antichrist. And I said, "Joyce, I'm going to be speaking about that a little bit this morning." There's coming Satan's superman, who will be the devil incarnate, and do you know what he's going to do to authenticate his ministry? Signs and wonders. And do you know, Jesus said in Mathew 24:24, "If it were possible, he would deceive the very elect." Put this verse down, Second Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 9. It speaks of him. "Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan," now, don't miss this, "with all power and signs and lying wonders." The antichrist will be able to make you think black is white, good is bad, and cut your mother's throat with a smile on your face because of the ability that he will have to deceive, "with all power and signs and lying wonders." The devil can do signs and lying wonders, and will do them through his antichrist.

Let me give you this verse, Revelation chapter 13, put that down, verses 13 and 14, speaking of the false prophet who is the sinister minister of propoganda for the antichrist that is coming. Listen to this, "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from Heaven on the Earth in the sight of men, and," watch this now, "and deceiveth them that dwell on the Earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast," the beast now is the antichrist, "saying unto them that dwell on the Earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live." Why, this propoganda agent for the antichrist has the ability to do signs and wonders so that people will literally worship Satan's superman.

So, signs and wonders, to demand signs and wonders dishonors God, but, secondly, it may be very deceptive to you. This says that he makes fire come down out of Heaven. Now what would that be? I don't know. Maybe some dazzling display, it may be an atomic explosion in outer space. I don't know what it may be.

But suppose I say, "Oh God, I want to know whether or not I am right with You. I want to know whether I'm going to Heaven. God, would You give me a sign?" Now I don't just say, "Lord, would You move a chair across the room." I say, "Lord, would You just give me a sign in the heavens?" And when I say that, boy, the heavens are ablaze from pole to pole. I see shimmering fire. I say, "Ha, ha, ha, ha, God and I are tight. Boy, I mean, I've got it made. There's a sign! I have a sign! Now I know!"

The judgment comes; I stand before the Lord. I have never repented of my sin. I've never trusted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior. I have never been twice born. And my soul is dropping into Hell, and I say, "God, how can You do that? You gave me a sign!" And the devil says, "You fool, you fool! God didn't give you that sign. I'm the one that made fire come down out of Heaven to deceive you."



The Bible says, "If it were possible, Satan would deceive the very elect." And don't you let some wonder worker, some miracle worker, some sign-giver, some soothsayer, some emissary from Satan deceive you, and you go following off after something else because of some sign and some wonder. Jesus said, "An adulterous and sinful generation seeks after a sign." It is dishonoring to God and it may be very deceptive to man.

Now, let's move to the second point. I want you to see not only the problem of superstitious faith, but notice **the progression of strong faith**. I want you to see how this man moved from a weak faith to a very strong, solid, substantive faith; and I want to give you the steps because there're progressive steps here. He moves from signs and wonders to the Word, and let me give you these steps.

Step number one, **he heard the Word of God**. Look if you will in John 4 verse 50, and so, "Jesus saith unto him, 'Go thy way; thy son liveth.' And the man believed the Word." Number one, he heard the Word of God. Now let me tell you what faith is. Faith is not naming it and claiming it. Faith is not receiving from God what you want. Faith is accepting from God what He gives. Hear the Word of God.

Notice this man. He's a nobleman. He's trying to tell Jesus what to do. Look in John 4 verse 49, "The nobleman saith unto Him, 'Sir, come down.'" That is, "You come with me. Come on, Lord. I'm going to take You to Capernaum." Now notice verse 50, "Jesus saith unto him, 'Go thy way.'" He says, "You come." Jesus said, "You go. You're not here to tell Me what to do. You're not here to demand of Me. You're not here to command Me. You're here to hear Me, to listen to Me, to get a word from Me."

Romans 10 verse 14 says this, "How, then, shall they call on 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 Romans 10 verse 17, "So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Now, folks, if you want strong faith, you've got to hear the Word of God.

Let me tell you what faith is. Listen to me, faith is taking God at His Word. Did that sink in? Faith is taking God at His Word! The man believed the Word. Jesus said to him, and he heard Jesus. Now, it's very important that if you were to have faith, number one, you must know what God has said. And if you want others to have faith, you must tell them what God has said. And that's the reason Paul said in Romans 10:14, "How can they hear without a preacher?"

This church that is so blessed of God is blessed of God because of this sacred desk. Not the man behind it, but from the inception of this church in 1903, this church has been based on the Word of God, the preaching of the Word of God; not signs, not wonders, not ecstasies, not supposed miracles. We have a lot of churches who advertise signs and miracles and wonders. They advertise them and don't do them. Jesus did them and didn't advertise them. The Word of God. Step number one in having a strong faith, number one is to hear the Word of God.

Number two is to **believe the Word of God**. Now look if you will in John 4 verse 50, "And the man believed the Word." Do you see that? "Jesus saith unto him, 'Go thy way; thy son liveth.' And the man believed the Word." Now that's step number two in faith. It's not enough to hear the Word of God. You can sit here and listen to me preach this morning; but if you don't believe the Word of God, you're not going to have faith. You have to believe the Word of God.

Well, you say, "Adrian, I can't believe. That's my problem. I just can't believe." May I tell you, Sir, may I tell you, Madam, that you can believe if you want to. The Bible says in First John 5 verse 10, "He that believeth



not God hath made Him a liar.” Well, you say, “I have intellectual problems.” No, you don’t. You don’t have intellectual problems. Your problem is not intellectual; it is moral. Your problem is not in your head; it is in your heart.

You say, “Well, I know some intellectuals who don’t believe the Bible.” Well, I know some intellectuals who do. Say, “Well, I know some foolish people who believe the Bible.” I know some foolish people who don’t. What we believe is not contrary to reason; it goes beyond reason. Faith is a gift of God, and if a person wants to believe, God will enable that person to believe. And never say to God, “God, it is not my fault if I don’t believe.” The Bible says in Romans 14 verse 23, “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”

You see, faith is not seeing signs and wonders. You know what faith is? Faith is a response to the character of God. That’s why when Jesus came to this Earth, He laid aside all of the glory, the splendor, the majesty that He had that was inherently His, but He kept His deity in human flesh and He walked in sandaled feet. And when we saw Him, there’s no form nor comeliness nor beauty that we should desire Him. You can read that in Isaiah 53 verse 2. He didn’t come in a jeweled chariot in a dazzling display of glory. He came through the portals of a virgin’s womb, born in a smelly stable, worked in a carpenter’s shop, but yet there was in Jesus Christ the grace, the glory, the fullness of God that when a man’s heart was right, he heard Jesus, he knew that Jesus is speaking with authority, and his heart responds to Him.

Listen, when your heart is right, your heart will respond to the Word of God in faith, just like my eye responds to light when my eye is right, and my ear responds to sound when my ear is right. Your heart will respond to God when your heart is right, and that heart response is faith. It is not when God does miracles. No. When God speaks through His Word, there’s something in you that says, “That is true.” The Holy Spirit of God whispers “Amen” to your heart. That’s the reason before I come out here, I get on my knees and pray. Because I can only preach truth, but the Holy Spirit of God imparts truth. And He will impart it to your heart. You must hear the Word of God. Number two, you must believe the Word of God. “Jesus saith unto him,” and then it says, “And the man believed the Word of God.”

Now you’re not there yet. Here’s the third step. Not only must you hear the Word of God, not only must you believe the Word of God, you must **obey the Word of God**. Begin now in John 4 verse 50 and 51 and look at it, “Jesus saith unto him, ‘Go thy way.’” Now watch this, “And the man believed the Word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.” He went his way. “And as he was now going down,” and so forth. He does exactly what Jesus tells him to do. This is what the Bible calls the obedience of faith in Romans 16 verse 26.

Do you know what real faith is? Real faith is belief with legs on it. Real faith, don’t miss that, it is belief with legs on it. James told us in James chapter 2 verse 26, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.” You don’t have strong faith if you do not obey the Word of God. You hear the Word of God, you believe the Word of God, and then you obey the Word of God. Had this man still had his superficial, superstitious faith, he would have still been there, begging Jesus for a sign, a wonder. But, no, he just leaves it with Jesus. He does exactly what Jesus tells him to do and he believes the Word of God.

Now, I want you to notice something very interesting now concerning faith. After he believes the Word of God, and here’s the fourth and the final step which shows he has this strong faith, he is **resting in the Word of God**. Look if you will now in John 4 verses 51 to 53, “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 in which he began to



amend," now don't miss this, "and they saith unto him, 'Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him.' So the father knew it was at the same hour in the which Jesus saith unto him, 'Thy son liveth.'" Now, the point is this. It has been 24 hours, 24 hours. "When did my son get well?" "Yesterday." "At what time?" "Well, at about one in the afternoon." And the man said, "Well, that's just when I was talking to Jesus. That's just when Jesus said to me 'Go thy way, thy son lives.'"

Now I want to ask you a question. If you had a son that was 17 miles away and Jesus had said, "Go thy way, thy son lives," what would you have done? You'd have gone straight home, most of us would, straight home. Why? To see, to see! Now, there's about 17 miles. He could've been there in five or eight hours by foot. He could've been there two hours by chariot. He's a nobleman; he certainly wouldn't be on his feet. But 24 hours have passed. 24 hours have passed and he's not gone home yet. Tell me why? I really don't know why. Maybe he's so tired; he's been sitting up by his son's bedside all this time, and his son's at the point of death. Now Jesus says, "Your son is alive." He says, "Fine. Thank you." He is resting in what our Lord has done and it is what I want to call the rest of faith.

Here's a Scripture that I copied out for you, Psalm 37 verses 5 through 7, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." Now he's not demanding proof. He's not even hot-footing it home to see if it has happened. The rest of faith is the mark of real faith, of real faith.

You know, He says He's going to bring forth your righteousness as the noonday. Have you ever thought about that? The Lord says, "You just rest in Me." It's just like the sun coming up. Friend, you can't hurry the sunrise, but you can't stop it. And you can't hurry God, and you can't stop Him. The Bible says in Isaiah chapter 28 verse 16, "He that believes in Him shall not make haste." And here's this man. He has gone from a superficial faith to a strong faith. He hears the Word of God, he believes the Word of God, he obeys the Word of God, he rests in the Word of God. And if you don't learn how to do that, you listen to your pastor now, you're going to be blown about, you're going to be stampeded by all kinds of things. You get a bulldog grip on the Word of God and don't be trying to live by emotions and feelings and visions and dreams, signs and wonders. They had their purpose.

Now, if I get sick, or I have a loved one that's sick, can I pray and ask God to heal that loved one? Of course, of course. And does God heal in answer to prayer? Of course. Could that be a sign and wonder? Of course, but it's not something that causes me to believe in Him. God doesn't always heal the sick. I come to Him and I ask Him, and I thank God that He heals, and I believe He has healed me. Is it wrong to go to a doctor? Not at all. Jesus said in Matthew 9 verse 12, "They that are whole don't need a doctor, but they that are sick." Well, you say, "He's talking about spiritual things." Yeah, but He used a truth to illustrate spiritual things with. He wouldn't have illustrated spiritual things with a lie. Jesus said sick people need a doctor. So what do you do if you get sick? You pray and then you go to the doctor and do what the doctor tells you to do.

Now, here's the last thing. I want you to see now **the provision of saving faith**. We've talked about superficial faith, strong faith, and now it moves to saving faith. Look in John 4 verse 53, "So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said unto him, 'Thy son liveth,' and himself believed, and his whole house." Well, wait a minute, I thought he already believed? Well, no, this is a different kind. He's moving up another notch. The man believes now not in a miracle worker, but in a Messiah. This time the man is born again. He believes in Jesus as his Lord and Savior.



Can you imagine him getting home? What a time of rejoicing there must have been as they hugged. He sees his son. He's well, and so forth. And then this man says, "Now, wait a minute. Let me tell you; let me tell you about Jesus. Let me tell you about the Messiah." And they come to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, because that's what the Gospel of John is written about. John 20 verse 31, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and believing you might life through His name."

Jesus did not come as a healer; Jesus came as a Savior. Luke 19:10, Jesus said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." And so He didn't heal everybody. He went to the pool of Bethesda. There were many sick people there. He just healed one, as we're going to see in another chapter. No, all of these are miracles that point to the greater miracle, which is the new birth. I wrote a book, called Believe in Miracles, but Trust in Jesus. Trust in Jesus. Don't put your faith in miracles. The only reason for signs and miracles and wonders are to trust in Jesus.

Now suppose this boy had gotten healed and he never got saved. Think about it. Suppose he got healed and he never got saved. Then, he'd live a few more years and die and go to Hell. That's the reason so many people, they're seeking the wrong thing. They're seeking a sign, a wonder, a miracle rather than seeking Jesus the Messiah.

Listen, you hear the Word of God. You believe the Word of God. You obey the Word of God. And you rest in the Word of God. And, folks, whatever else God does, you can be certain.

I'm going to read something to you and somebody sent me this. It's one of the most moving things that I've ever read. A lady sent it to me. It was written by her father who was sick. I want you to listen to it. It is very pertinent. Forgive me for reading it, but I don't want to miss a word. Here's what it is called, "Why I Follow Christ." This person said, "I've not seen clear, statistical evidence that fewer Christians die of cancer than non-believers, or that they are immune in greater degree from the diseases that afflict the human race. Some of the kindest, most selfless persons I have known have had more than their share of bad health. The fact that they belong to Christ did not insulate them from disease. Therefore, I will not follow Christ for promised healing. I will not deny or dispute evidence of restoration of health. I will rejoice at every recovery from what seems to be hopeless, threatened death. I will not hesitate to pray for recovered health for my loved ones and acquaintances. I will set no limits on what God may do, but I will not follow Christ for promised healing.

"I see no sign that Christians escape disaster and accident more often than others. I have helped dear friends empty muddy water out of dresser drawers and new appliances after a disastrous flood. I remember as a child taking clothes to a widow with five children whose house had burned to the ground. A bullet makes no detour around the body of a believer. Therefore, I will not follow Christ for any promised protection from disaster. I will not scoff at amazing survivals nor deny that providence has and continues to work through the good of God's own. I will continue to pray for protection from wicked men and tragedy, but I will not follow Christ for promised protection from accident or catastrophe.

"I do not observe that Christians are especially favored with prosperity. Like James said in James 2 verse 6, we have all seen the rich oppressing the poor. And justice is rarely perfect in this world. The Psalmist has said in Psalm chapter 37 verse 25 that he had not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread, and in the deepest needs of life that is certainly true. But all of us have known people of integrity who have not prospered. Therefore, I will not follow Christ for promised freedom from physical want or the hope of affluence.



“I am not sure that Christians have stronger personalities or fewer neuroses than non-believers. I do know that there is no bitterness like religious bitterness and no arrogance more insufferable. I have watched Christians suffer emotional and mental disabilities. And though it may seem heretical, I’m not sure that I would really enjoy living in the same house with either the apostle Peter or Paul.” That’s interesting. “God wills that the mind of Christ be formed in us, and there’s no doubt in my mind that the Christian’s attitudes and actions will be improved by his Christianity, but I will not follow Christ for any promise of personality enhancement or perfection.”

Now listen to this, “Why, then, follow Christ? Why become a disciple of Jesus when life may become more complicated as He so often warned? For one reason alone; in Jesus we behold the face of God. He is the truth, the everlasting truth; God in the flesh. I know that in His life, death, and resurrection I am reconciled to God, the Giver of life. I believe that nothing can separate me from the love of God. He has all power and goodness. I trust in Him and His promises. To Him I offer my life, damaged or whole, brief or full of years. It matters not. He is the one certain thing in an uncertain world.

“He is to be worshipped, not so something will happen to me or to the world, something already has happened to me and the world, but because He is God, who through Christ has reconciled the world to Himself. He saves me. He is my justification. He is the center that holds. To worship the God of our salvation, to offer sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, that alone is our vocation. We offer our lives to God, not so as to be healthy, wealthy, or wise, not even so as to gain strength to do great things for Him. We offer our lives to Him because He alone has claim upon us.”

Boy, is that not great? Is that not great? Don’t be looking for some sign, some wonder, some miracle that’s going to get you out. Let me tell you something. Jesus is the Savior. He suffered, bled, and died for you, rose from the dead; and if you’ll trust Him, I promise you, according to His Word, He will save you and He will keep you. And one day we’ll be gathered around the throne to give Him praise forever and ever and ever. Believe in miracles, but trust in Jesus; and you go from a superficial faith, to a strong faith, to a saving faith. That’s what matters.

Bow your heads in prayer. Father God, I pray today in the name of Jesus that many will give their hearts to Christ and be saved. If you want to be saved, I want to guide you in a prayer. I want you to pray this prayer, “Dear God,” just pray it, “I’m a sinner. I’m lost. My sin deserves judgment, but I need mercy. I repent of my sin. I’m sorry for my sin. I turn from my sin. Lord Jesus, I open my heart. I receive You now as my Lord and my Savior. Forgive my sin, cleanse me, and save me right now. I don’t ask for a feeling. I don’t look for a sign. I believe Your Word. I stand on Your Word. I trust You to save me. Thank You for doing it, Lord Jesus. And now, Lord, I will obey Your Word and make it public. I will not be ashamed of You. Give me the courage to do it this morning. Amen.”



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