

Livin' the Life
Faith that Honors Jesus, part 16
John 4:43-54

February 18, 2018

We continue our series in the Gospel of John, Livin' the Life, today with "Faith that Honors Jesus" in John 4:43-54. My great desire for this series is that we see and savor the glory of Jesus. And by doing so, we will see more clearly that Jesus is better, more satisfying in our daily battle with sin. I want us to be convinced that Livin' the Life, is found in faithfully following Jesus! Today we look at the story of a desperate father and a dying son in John 4:43-54.

Last week we saw a spiritual harvest in Samaria, many Samaritans coming to faith in Jesus (3). Now Jesus is returning to his old stomping grounds. The passage begins with statements that seem to contradict one another. John tells us that Jesus had told them that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown (44) but then when he arrived in Galilee he was welcomed (45). Doesn't that sound confusing? I want us to think about this for a moment to clarify them. To honor someone is to attribute true value or worth to them. So for instance, Jesus was honored by the Samaritans when they believed that he is the Christ and the Savior of the world. And so not honoring Jesus is not believing Jesus for who he is. Why do the Galileans not see him for who he is (1:11)? Scripture tells us that we naturally suppress the truth (Rom 1:18). Or another way Scripture describes this is that Satan has blinded us from seeing the light of the glory of the gospel of Christ (2 Co 4:4). So the Jews in Galilee do not honor Jesus, that is, they do not see the glory of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. Yet verse forty five tells us that they welcomed him because they saw the miracles he did in Jerusalem while they were at the feast (45; 2:23). So now we understand the statement that Jesus had no honor in his own hometown yet they welcomed him. They did not honor him as the Christ, the Son of God, but welcomed him as a miracle worker (see also 3:2). So, this welcome is not honoring him for who he truly is. We see this same attitude from his brothers (7:3-5). This sign faith does not honor Jesus because it does not recognize his glory as the Messiah and the Son of God. We need to be careful how we present Jesus when we share the gospel.

Then when Jesus is in Cana he runs into an official from Capernaum, a servant of the king, probably Herod Antipas (Mt 6:4). This official heard that Jesus was in town and so he approached Jesus and asks him to come to Capernaum to heal his son (47). You can almost hear the desperation in this father's voice. When your child is sick, you will do almost anything to save them. He came to Jesus because he believed that Jesus could heal his son. But instead of responding to the father, Jesus rebukes the crowd for just seeking miracles. Jesus is always turning the circumstances he finds himself in into an opportunity to teach a spiritual truth. Jesus is always pointing people to their greatest spiritual need and trying to get them to consider spiritual truth seriously. Jesus said to the crowd, unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe (48). But he is not just talking to the father, he is talking to the crowd (the you is plural). Sign faith, only seeing Jesus as a miracle worker does not honor Jesus. Immediately the official pleads, sir come down before my son dies (49). Jesus tells him to go, your son will live (50). A simple command and a promise. Jesus can say this will happen because Jesus makes it happen.

The man believed Jesus' word and went home (50), trusting the word of Jesus. As he was traveling home, his servants met him along the way and told him that his son was recovering. Put yourself in the father's shoes. His son, maybe his only son, is dying and his only hope is if Jesus will heal his son. I think he has been thinking about his son all the way home, a day's travel. When they tell him that his son is recovering, his mind races, wondering when his recovery came about so he asks his servants when he started getting better (51-52). Realizing that it is the exact time he talked to Jesus, he and his household believe (53). What is the difference between believing Jesus' word that his son would live and this believing, when his son was healed? I think John is making a distinction between two kinds of faith or belief. The first was a sign faith, a belief that his son would be healed, but this second believing, is who Jesus claimed to be, the Christ. In the first, he saw Jesus as a miracle worker but now he saw the glory of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth or that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing he may have life (20:30-31). John

confirms as the story wend with this statement, this is now the second sign that Jesus did when he came from Judea to Galilee (54). In the end, the father and his household saw Jesus as more than a miracle worker, more than a man empowered by the Spirit but the only Son of the Father. He is the Word became flesh and dwelled among us (1:14). Jesus performed miracles that we would believe that he is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing have life in his name. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (1:29), the Savior of the world (4:42). John is showing us that the Messiah's reach and purpose is much broader than ethnic Israel. But even more still, he is the Son of God. He is the one of a kind Son who has a unique relationship to the Father. He is also the Word who was with God and is God from all eternity (1:1-4). True faith must recognize Jesus for who he is.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. Have you ever seen God heal someone?
2. Have you ever felt the desperation and helplessness in a situation? Describe it?
3. How did Jesus heal the son?
4. Jesus in the gospels always healed individuals who came to him desperately seeking help. Why do you think he did this?
5. Why does sometimes heal and sometimes does not heal?
6. What are some of the reasons God heals?
7. What is the difference between sign faith and saving faith?
8. What is the ultimate reason God heals (Jn 20:30-31)?
9. How does this story encourage you?
10. What is your greatest struggle in seeing Jesus as better and more satisfying than your sin?
11. What are ways God is asking us to respond to this story?

Cut:
Current longing for justice in the Me Too campaign but even that you see confusion about what is sexually assault; what is right and wrong between adults because without a Christian foundation of right and wrong, it is left up to the individuals. The good guys win There is the longing for joy that seems so elusive in this life points to the fact that we were created for something beyond this world. Our desire for love and affection, human touch cannot be explained by naturalism and evolution. And the desire for meaning and purpose in this life, living for something greater than ourselves points us to the Christian narrative. When we are empty, pain we seek ways to cover or mask that pain. It may be a relationship, pornography, drinking, drugs, food. We all want to be part of something larger than ourselves, that gives us purpose and meaning. Why Star Wars is so good. It has so many of these qualities to it.
