

A summary of John 4:43-54

- 1. Growing from believing the testimony of brothers and sisters to believing the word of God:** the Samaritan woman believed because of a miracle (Jesus knew her history and exposed her past). This convicted her and because of this, she gave a very precious testimony to the people in her village. Eventually, when Jesus came to the village and stayed there for two days, the people believed not because of the woman's testimony but because they heard for themselves the word of Jesus (v. 42). The case of the royal official and his son is a continuation of this growth process. The royal official had no sign or wonder to believe that his son would be healed, other than the accounts of what Jesus had done in Galilee before, and also in Jerusalem. However, he believed in the word (in Greek, *logos* which is the constant or unchanging word). In our church life, we need to hear the word of God again and again, that we may believe in His word. The Lord does perform signs (in Greek it refers to a supernatural indication) and wonders in our environment. This is a process which we see in chapter 4. Eventually, all the signs must lead us to believe the word of the Lord Himself. Unfortunately, often, we may go elsewhere to see signs and wonders which may eventually lead us, not to God, but to idols. Even the Antichrist will perform signs and wonders and deceive many people (2 Thessalonians 2:9). The wonders and signs must lead us to believe in the Lord Himself.
- 2. The real purpose of signs is to confirm the word already spoken and believed:** The official believed the word of the Lord with a simple and pure heart. But he did not stop there. After he returned home and found his son alive, he inquired of his servants when the fever had broken (v. 52 and 53). He followed up his prayer to look for the Lord's operation, to see how the Lord had answered his prayer. Do we follow up our prayers to see how the Lord is responding to our prayers. It is good to write down what the Lord speaks to us, and also to write down our response. In this way, we may know the Lord and the saints more intimately and also know the needs of the church, and how to meet them.
- 3. Our prayers:** The royal official really cared for his son. He came to Jesus with a desperate request (prayer). He was alert and sober. He knew that Jesus had come, and no doubt he had heard what Jesus had done. He paid attention to Jesus. Whereas the Samaritan woman testified to her neighbors and people in her village, the royal official came to the Lord concerning a member of his own family. We also must be alert and sober to come to the Lord, to have many prayers for our own relatives. Is our heart alert? Do we treasure all the opportunities to hear the word of the Lord and to respond to Him through our prayers?
- 4. Our faith is limited:** In one sense, the royal official's faith was limited. He wanted Jesus to personally come to his home (v. 47). He did not ask Jesus to speak the word, as, for example, the centurion did in Matthew 8:8. This shows that however little of Christ we have, however small our faith is, we can still pray to the Lord. The official's heart was pure. The Lord knew him, and purposely went to Galilee to meet his need, just as He went to Samaria to meet the Samaritan woman's need. Even though his faith was little, the Lord answered his prayer.

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- 5. We need to come to the word again and again, even though we may not understand:** In John 2:22, the disciples remembered the word of the Lord spoken to them concerning the temple (of His body) much later, after He had died and resurrected. This means that we may not understand what we read or hear today, but one day we will understand. We will remember what we heard, and it will come home to us. We need to treasure the various opportunities for fellowship that we have (through Skype, for example). We need to treasure the written word of the Bible, as well as the word spoken through the brothers and sisters. Then we will remember one day what the Lord spoke to us. Thus, we may live (have life spiritually), and others around us may also live, even as the official lived by believing in the word of Jesus, and as a result his whole family lived because the father heard and believed the word of Jesus.
- 6. The Lord treasures household salvation:** The royal official believed along with his whole family. The Lord treasures our prayers for our household salvation. The salvation of the official's family was a real honoring of the Lord. This is in contrast with v. 44 where Jesus says that a prophet has no honor in his own country. In an environment where people in His hometown did not honor Him, Jesus finds a family that proves Him wrong (in a sense)! Capernaum is about 40 kilometers from Nazareth (the city where Jesus grew up), and Cana (where Jesus performed the first sign of changing water into wine) is about 10 kilometers away, so we may say that Jesus was not actually exercising His ministry in His hometown, but He was pretty close by.
- 7. Preach the gospel according to burden and not because people will receive:** In one sense, Jesus went against His own word referred to in v. 44. Why should He go back to Galilee when His own people did not really receive Him? This shows that He did not preach the gospel according to who would receive Him or not. He went according to burden and according to the Father's sending. He went to Samaria for the Samaritan woman, and He went to Capernaum for the sake of the royal official. Do we preach the gospel because people will receive us, and if they do not, we lose heart and do not preach any more? We go because the Lord sends us, because we are close to the Lord and we know His heart for people.