

## "How to Have a Long-Distance Faith"

### John 4:43-54

Jesus might seem strange to some people because he seems too "far away":

- Time ... 2014 years is a long time!
- Israel ... 6,173 miles. [@ 3.1 mph it would take you until October 13th! to walk there, going 8 hours per day.]
- Culturally ... Middle eastern, "ancient," clothes, language, customs, etc.

But, today we learn that Jesus can feel far away to us, and STILL He can make a big difference in our lives. In John 4:43-54 Jesus heals from a distance ... he didn't have to "be there" to perform a miracle. That's GOOD NEWS for anyone here today who feels distant from God.

#### A. Welcome Jesus!

<sup>43</sup> At the end of the two days, Jesus went on to Galilee.

<sup>44</sup> He himself had said that a prophet is not honored in his own hometown.

<sup>45</sup> Yet the Galileans welcomed him, for they had been in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration and had seen everything he did there.

There were two broad groups of people in Jesus' day (and our day also):

- Those who did not honor Christ.
- Those who welcomed Christ.

By the way, you can welcome someone you don't know, who might want to know, or maybe you've heard about him ... you can say "door's open."

Revelation 3:20, Jesus said, "Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends."

Jesus really is saying, "if you would welcome me, I'd come hang out with you."

#### B. Ask Jesus!

<sup>46</sup> As he traveled through Galilee, he came to Cana, where he had turned the water into wine. There was a government official in nearby Capernaum whose son was very sick.

<sup>47</sup> When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged Jesus to come to Capernaum to heal his son, who was about to die.

<sup>48</sup> Jesus asked, "Will you never believe in me unless you see miraculous signs and wonders?"

<sup>49</sup> The official pleaded, "Lord, please come now before my little boy dies."

Do you need a miracle to believe? Each of us already can find ourselves in this story ... each of us is facing some crisis, or problem, or "situation" that needs God's attention. But, are you like this city official, you need Jesus to "come through for you" with a miracle, in order to have faith.

Which came first, the chicken or the egg? The faith or the miracle? Each produces the other.

My personal opinion is that it's okay to ask God for a miracle, there's no danger in it ... the danger is in hanging our faith upon the miraculous, because you can develop a dependency upon them. Jesus has already done ENOUGH for me on the cross, taking my sin upon Him. But, still my human desperation prompts me to call out, "Lord, I need you!" just like this guy did. What would Jesus do? Turn His back? Scold the man? Rush to the child's side?

None of these. In the next verses He is speaking directly to us ... "I don't need to be THERE to help."

### **C. Believe Jesus!**

<sup>50</sup> Then Jesus told him, "Go back home. Your son will live!" And the man believed what Jesus said and started home.

<sup>51</sup> While the man was on his way, some of his servants met him with the news that his son was alive and well.

<sup>52</sup> He asked them when the boy had begun to get better, and they replied, "Yesterday afternoon at one o'clock his fever suddenly disappeared!"

<sup>53</sup> Then the father realized that that was the very time Jesus had told him, "Your son will live." And he and his entire household believed in Jesus.

<sup>54</sup> This was the second miraculous sign Jesus did in Galilee after coming from Judea.

This passage really fits into our sermon series this year ... the man "believed what Jesus said and started home." The question I'm putting before you this year is, "do you believe the claims of Christ?" So far we've seen these claims:

"I can do more than you expect"  
"I can clean your life completely"

"You must be born again"  
"I am the Messiah"

“You can change the world”

Do you believe each of these? The man believed and found his son well when he returned home. Coincidence? Maybe the boy was getting better already? The timing was clear to reveal the boy’s fever broke when Jesus spoke those words, “he will live.”

**MAIN POINT:** The Words of Jesus have power!

A closing prayer ... “Dear God, let us hear Your words freshly and believe them eagerly. Change us by the power of Your Word. In Jesus’ name, amen.”