



John (So That You Might Believe) (Week 3/12) Healing Official's Son

Small Group Discussion Questions

Connect: *How can you sip God's joy now, in anticipation of the future he has prepared for us in Christ?*

Warm-Up

1. When you are worried or desperate, where do you instinctively turn first? And why?
2. Have you ever noticed the difference when you pray more generally versus when you pray leaning on specific truths about who Jesus is or his promises?

Read John 4:43-48

3. What do you notice about the Galileans 'welcoming of Jesus (v.45) and Jesus' reply (v. 48)? With v.44, what might John be showing us about the kind of welcoming this is?
4. What are the differences between believing in Jesus Christ himself and putting faith in the church or church-related activities? Are there any 'signs or wonders' that can distract us from Christ himself?
5. Why do you think the official wants Jesus to come down in person? What does that reveal about his understanding of Jesus?
6. How would you respond if Jesus offered only his promise, without his physical presence or immediate proof? How do we enjoy both the *promise of Jesus* and the *presence of Jesus*? When will we know the fulfilment of both in full?
7. What do you think it looks like in everyday life to *long for Jesus* more than just want he can do for you? Why is it good to grow in our longing for Jesus?

Read John 4:49-54

8. Why would Jesus choose to give his word rather than to go with him? What is Jesus teaching us about who he is and the authority that he commands? (*Try to think specifically of the opening words of John.*)
9. How is it evident that the official's confidence is based on *who speaks the words* rather than the precise words that Jesus speaks? What does "believed...and went" look like for you?
10. What is the significance of the timing of when the person is healed? How might this "confirmation" strengthen and deepen the faith of the official?
11. As a "sign" points beyond itself, what does this sign reveal about Jesus? How might this revelation helped shape your relationship with and your trust in Jesus?
12. How do you think this second sign (in John) fits John's purpose for writing (cf. 20:30-31)?

Apply *What is one area where you might be tempted to demand Jesus "come down", and what might it look like to "Go" trusting in Jesus himself this week?*

Pray *Lord Jesus, we thank you that you do not merely give us signs, but you give us yourself. Help us today to believe you, whose promise is trustworthy and powerful, even when we cannot see immediate proof. Grow our love and desire for you as we see you more and more. In Jesus's name we pray. Amen.*

GOING DEEPER

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On Your Front Line this Week

What role or task do you need the Bible's wisdom for this week?

For Families

- *Download:* some of the family resources to use at home: stbartskids.org

Listen, Watch, and Read

- *Listen (sermon):* "The Healing" by Tim Keller:
<https://gospelinlife.com/sermon/the-healing/>
- *Listen (sermon):* "An Illustration of Faith" by Alistair Begg:
<https://www.truthforlife.org/resources/sermon/illustration-of-faith-an/>
- *Read (article):* "Snowballs and Bowling Balls: (1) Reading John's Gospel" by Brian Rosner:
<https://www.ridley.edu.au/resources/snowballs-and-bowling-balls-1-reading-johns-gospel/>

Series Resources

- *Read:* "John: An Expository Commentary" by R C Sproul.
- *Read:* "The Gospel According to John" by Don Carson.
- *Read:* "The Message of John" by Bruce Milne. 📖
- *Read:* "The Gospel According to John" by Leon Morris.
- *Read:* "John for Everyone: Part 1" by Tom Wright. 📖
- *Read:* "Can We Trust the Gospels?" by Peter Williams. 📖
- *Read:* "Signs of the Messiah: An Introduction to John's Gospel" by Andreas Köstenberger
- *Watch:* "John" by the Bible Project: <https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-john/>
- *Previous Series* from St Bart's (including Children's Resources):
<https://www.stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/jesus-is>
<https://www.stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/i-am>
<https://www.stbarts.com.au/sermon-series/truth-glory>

📖 Available to borrow from the St Bart's Library (Toowoomba): stbarts.com.au/library

JOHN (SO THAT YOU MIGHT BELIEVE)

Week 3/12 “Healing Official’s Son”

by Justin Lai (15/02/2026)

관리의 아들을 고치심 | Mëth cök Dëm | 医治官员之子 |
அதிகாரியின் மகனை குணப்படுத்துதல்

Bible Passage: John 4:46-54

*Gracious God, thank you that you have revealed your glory to us in your Son.
Please help us to recognise and believe in him. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.*

Imagine, just for a moment, that last week someone really did perform a miracle here—like turning water into wine. Would you come back to see more? I think I would.

- And that’s probably how many people in Galilee felt about Jesus. “Have you heard what Jesus did? Sign me up for more!” Almost like saying, “Can we get another show?”
 - Now, this might sound a bit cheeky, even disrespectful.
 - And John actually wants us to feel that tension.
- Leading up to our passage today, in John 4:44, Jesus himself points out that “a prophet has no honour in his own country.”
 - So in verse 45, John tells us that the Galileans welcomed Jesus—but they still missed the point.
 - As one commentator puts it, “The Galileans welcome him—not as the Messiah, but because they had seen all that he had done at the Passover Feast in Jerusalem.” (Carson, *John*, 236)
 - Many were chasing the miracles, but not Jesus himself.
 - That is exactly why John records these signs for us.
- As we explore the signs in John’s Gospel this term,
 - the goal is not to chase spectacular moments.
 - The goal is to clearly see who Jesus is—and then to respond to him.
- In today’s passage, we are given a sign. But we are not meant to stop at the sign.
 - We are meant to see who the sign points to—Jesus.

- And even then, we do not stop there.
- Once we see who he is, we are meant to respond.
- Following the movement of this passage, we can break it down into three parts:

Longing for More

Taking Jesus at His Word

Believing in Jesus

LONGING FOR MORE | VERSES 46-48

더 갈망함 | Tīit Piiny nē Dēt | 渴望更多 | பெரிய எதிர்பார்ப்பு

46 Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. 47 When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death. 48 “Unless you people see signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.”

Father of a dying child v.46-47

- After visiting Samaria, Jesus now returns to Cana in Galilee.
- John deliberately reminds us that this is the place where Jesus turned water into wine.
- In other words, John is preparing us for another sign to unfold.
- Here we meet a *royal official*—a father with a dying child.
 - This man likely served under Herod Antipas. Herod was not technically a king, but he was commonly regarded as one.
 - Anyone in his “royal” court would therefore have carried real social status.
 - Yet despite his status, influence, and wealth, none of these could save his dying son.
 - He comes to Jesus not as a powerful man making demands, but as a desperate father pleading, “Lord, please save my child. My son is dying. Nothing else can save him but you.”

- Many of us know what that kind of desperation feels like. When someone we love is sick, we realise how little control we truly have.
 - And often, all we can do is *come with empty hands*.
- This father does not come from just around the corner. The distance from Capernaum to Cana is roughly 30 kilometres.
 - For St Bart's Toowoomba, that would be like walking east to Gatton.
 - For St Bart's Brisbane, it would be like walking west to Ipswich.
 - It would take about eight and a half hours of nonstop walking. Whether he walked or rode a donkey, the point is clear.
- This is not casual curiosity; this is desperation.

Jesus' unexpected response (deeper challenge) v.48

- But perhaps to our surprise, as this desperate man asks Jesus to heal his son, Jesus responds in an unexpected way.
 - Jesus says, **"Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will never believe."**
 - If you are listening to this as a parent—or as anyone who has longed for a loved one to be healed—Jesus' words can initially sound hard, even cold.
 - We might instinctively ask, "Jesus... why that response?"
 - But we must remember *who Jesus is*.
 - He is not indifferent to suffering. He comes not for the healthy, but for the sick.
-
- He is tender with the broken.
 - So what is going on here?
 - In verse 48, notice the wording: "you people." It is *plural*.
 - Jesus is not speaking only to the father but also to the wider Galilean crowd.
 - He is exposing a real and precarious spiritual danger among them.
 - We see this more clearly from the context of chapters 2 to 4, John invites us to compare responses.
 - We see how different people react to Jesus and his signs. Some respond with genuine faith, while others are merely superficial sign-chasers.
 - They are interested in the spectacle—the next sign, the next wonder, the next experience. It is almost like a "concert or conference junkie," chasing the next adrenaline rush.
 - Jesus will not allow this attitude to go *unchallenged*.
 - Signs can impress you without saving you.
 - Miracles can move you emotionally without leading you to repentance.
 - The great tragedy—and the great danger—is that we can enjoy what Jesus does yet still *miss who Jesus is*.
 - When Jesus responds the way he does, he is exposing something *deeper*.
 - He is not being harsh; he is being honest.
 - He is challenging the hearts of the people—and perhaps our hearts as well.
 - Yes, Jesus' miracles truly save. But the sign always *points* beyond itself—to *Jesus*.

- If you are drowning, a rope matters.
- But what truly saves you is the one holding the rope.
- Jesus calls for a check of the heart—not only for the Galileans then, but for us today. Are we more drawn to the experience, the blessing, or the activity—even good church things—than to Jesus himself?
- Here is the good news. Jesus says this for our sake as well.
 - He wants to *train our hearts* so that we would not see the sign and stop there. He wants us to see the one to whom the sign points—and to long for him.
 - Jesus is not simply useful, like a genie in a lamp. He is Lord!
- He is **more**, and he wants to give us **more**—he wants to give us **himself**.
- Jesus is the Word, the Creator of all and the Redeemer of all!

Jesus' greater purposes

- His purposes are greater than a moment of relief.
 - He came to die for our sins, so that we may be forgiven.
 - He came to save, so that we may become children of God.
 - He came full of grace and truth, to give life that is abundant and eternal.
 - Therefore, he did not want Galilee then—or us today—to *miss him*.
- As we read through John's Gospel, we ask God to help us not merely to be fascinated by signs and wonders.
 - We ask him to help us see that these signs point us to Jesus himself, and to our need for him.
 - This applies to our life together here at St Bart's Toowoomba and Brisbane.
 - We see inspiring testimonies, mutual encouragement, joyful celebrations, and even the sharing of grief and tears.
 - God is at work in all of these things, and we give thanks for that.
 - But behind every good gift stands the Lord himself, and we lift our hearts to him.
- Some of us may wonder, "What if my faith feels small or mixed?"
 - Take heart—the gospel still invites you to come.
 - Jesus does not despise small beginnings.
 - He welcomes us even when our faith feels weak or incomplete.
 - And we will see this clearly in the royal official as the story continues.
- **Jesus refuses to be treated as a miracle-machine, so that we would want him, not just his gifts.**

TAKING JESUS AT HIS WORD | VERSES 49-53a

예수님의 말씀을 신뢰함 | Löm wët dë Yëcu | 相信耶稣的话语 | இயேசுவின் வார்த்தையை நம்புதல்

49 The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” 50 “Go,” Jesus replied, “your son will live.” The man *took Jesus at his word* and departed...

The father's motive

- The father pleads, “Jesus, sir, you must come with me now, before it’s too late.”
 - He is not concerned with whether Jesus is the Messiah who fulfils prophecy.
 - He is not interested in discussing whether his faith is big or small.
 - His son is dying, and he needs help urgently.
- Jesus does not dismiss the father; but neither does he follow him home.
 - Instead, Jesus does something greater.
 - He **speaks**.
 - He says, “Go. Your son will live.”
- That would have been hard to receive.
 - In the father’s mind, healing required Jesus to be physically present.
 - How could mere words heal a dying child miles away? How could something like “tele-health” save someone dying in a car accident?
 - By every human calculation, it makes no sense. It seems utterly insufficient.
 - And yet, all the father has now is the promise of Jesus.

- So what do you do next?
 - Do you roll your eyes, file a complaint, or walk away disappointed that Jesus has let you down?
 - John tells us in verse 50 that “the man took Jesus at his word.”
 - The original word for “took” can also be translated as “believed” (πιστεύω).
 - In other words, the man *believed the word* that Jesus spoke.
- Notice the *object* of his faith.
 - He did not believe after he saw.
 - He did not believe when the outcome was confirmed.
 - He did not believe because he felt positive.
 - He **believed the word spoken by Jesus**.
- What he may not yet fully realise is that he is trusting the very Word who is God himself. And yet, even so, he believes.
 - This father shows that he is not a sign-chaser.
 - He hears Jesus’ words and, as Leon Morris observes, is “prepared to act in accordance with that trust.” (Morris, *Exp. of John*, 160)
- Trusting Jesus is not merely an emotional response.
- It is a confident belief grounded in Jesus’ *promise*.
- And from that trust, obedience flows.

51 While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. 52 When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, "Yesterday, at one (seventh hour) in the afternoon, the fever left him." 53a Then the father realised that this was the exact time at which Jesus said to him, "Your son will live."

Journey of faith

- There is some debate about whether the "seventh hour" in verse 52 refers to 1 p.m. or 7 p.m. But ultimately, that detail is not the main point.
- What is unmistakable is this: at the precise moment Jesus *spoke the words*, even from a great distance, the son was healed.
 - We are not told how the father felt on the way home. He may have felt calm, resting in Jesus' words, or he may still have had questions.
 - But what we do know is this: he *kept walking* because he *trusted* Jesus' word.
- This is the kind of faith that blurs the line between promise and fulfilment.
 - It is not blind faith. It is not positive thinking.
 - It is faith grounded in the word of Jesus, even without immediate confirmation.
 - We live this way too.
 - We look forward to the day when God's promises are fulfilled in full.
 - We do not know when that will happen, or exactly how it will come about.
 - Yet we walk forward with confidence, trusting that God is faithful to his word.
- And the amazing news is that we can do this with even *greater confidence*.
 - We can look back and see what Jesus has already done.
 - He died for us. He rose victoriously. And he will come again.
- *Real faith walks home on Jesus' promise before it sees the fulfilment!*
- As the man nears home, he discovers that Jesus is true to his word.
 - What a relief! What a joy!
 - And when Jesus returns, we too will rejoice in the goodness of our Saviour!

Word shows Jesus is Son of God

- But John is not only telling us that the child lived.
- He is also showing us whom this healing points to.
- This sign tells us that the one who spoke did not merely offer hope.
- *He commands life!*
 - And only God gives life by his word.
 - In the beginning, God spoke, and creation came into being. Life began.
 - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
 - and the Word was God."
 - *And that Word is Jesus!*
- So when we come to God's word today, it is the *same* Jesus who speaks to us.
- And it is the *same* Jesus who is *present with us* through the power of his Spirit.

- That matters deeply, especially when life feels heavy.
 - Are you walking through darkness or feeling lost?
 - Are you worried about your child drifting away?
 - Are you facing frailty, or the fear of death?
 - In those sleepless nights, we may pray like that father, “Lord, would you come now?”
- Beloved, hear what Jesus—the Son of God—says to you:
 - “I know my sheep, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.” (John 10:27–28)
 - “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.” (John 11:25)
 - And the list goes on.
- These are not empty words.
 - They are promises you can take Jesus at his word on.
 - The one who speaks them is the Son of God.
 - As the official responds to Jesus, he shows us this truth:
- **Real faith learns to walk home on Jesus’ promises, even before we see them fulfilled.**

BELIEVING IN JESUS | VERSES 53b-54

예수님을 믿음 | Yǎ nǎ yěē Yēcu Gām | 信靠耶穌 | இயேசுவின் மேல் விசுவாசம்

53b So he [the father] and his whole household *believed*. 54 This was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

Believe the Person

- Notice the *movement* in the father’s faith.
 - Back in verse 50, he has already shown faith by believing Jesus’ word. But now, after confirming the timing and understanding the sign, his faith deepens.
- He no longer merely trusts a sentence; he **believes the Person**.
 - The crisis drove him to cling to Jesus’ word.
 - But the sign brings him to cling to Jesus himself—
 - the Son of God, the promised Messiah, and the giver of life!
 - His faith becomes fuller and more personal.
 - And it does not stop with him; his whole household believes as well.
- This is the purpose of John’s Gospel.
 - John records these signs so that we would **believe** that **Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God**. And by believing, we may have life in his name.

- Today, we have even more reasons to believe than the royal official did.
 - We do not have just one sign.
 - We have the whole Gospel and the full witness of Scripture.
 - All of it points to the same invitation: **see Jesus, and believe in him.**
- Now, to avoid misunderstanding and to care for one another well, we need to be clear.
 - This encounter does not mean that Jesus will heal every sickness now.
 - What it does mean is something deeper and more secure:
 - *Jesus is utterly trustworthy!*
 - Even when we do not understand his timing, we can entrust ourselves to him.
 - Because through the cross and resurrection, he has secured life for us.
- You may be new to church, curious, or simply checking out who this Jesus is.
 - John is not asking us to switch off our reasonable minds.
 - He shows us a *sign*, with witnesses and details, so that we can look at Jesus honestly.
 - And as he **invites you, believe in him.**
- And if you are a Christian who feels anxious or weak, *take heart!*
 - Real faith is not the absence of questions.
 - It is not measured by how big or small your faith feels.
- It is learning to walk while holding onto Jesus' promises, even before we see the outcome.
- Because when the Son of God speaks, his *word is trustworthy.*
- **It is not about how great your faith is, but how great Jesus' faithfulness is!**
- So whether you are investigating Jesus for the first time or have followed him for many years, do not settle for merely "welcoming" him.
 Entrust yourself to him.
 Take him at his word.
 Believe in him.
 And live!