

## Crisis For Faith

### John 4:46-54

- 46 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.
- 47 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.
- 48 Then Jesus said to him, “Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.”
- 49 The nobleman said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies!”
- 50 Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your son lives.” So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.
- 51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told *him*, saying, “Your son lives!”
- 52 Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.”
- 53 So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives.” And he himself believed, and his whole household.
- 54 This again *is* the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

## Introduction

I can say with some certainty that many of you have already experience tragedy in your life and if you have not already faced a tragedy in your life, you will....

We all live in a fallen world that is affected by sin and tragedy is a natural product of a sinful fallen cursed world.

With all its beauty and wonder and love it is to often tainted but the curse of tragedy

But as scripture so plainly teaches and illustrates, All tragedy has a purpose.

The promise is given to the believer in Romans

8:28

“All things work together for good”

Even in I Cor 15

there seems to be an indication that some come to Christ as a result of the death of a loved one.

Paul and Silas were placed in prison, and thru these events prison Guards were saved.

Tragedy is often a means God uses us to drive us into his presence.

It may be

- a money problem that does not allow you to pay your bill
- a doctors appt that informs you that you have cancer
- the words that we will no longer be needing you and you loose your job
- or the tragic news
- the death of a child, spouse or loved one

As much as we may wish that these tragic events wont come visit us, The sad reality is they will and for many of us we will have a uncommon familiarity with tragedy

Tragedy is defined  
as

a lamentable, dreadful, or fatal event or affair; calamity;  
disaster:

It is absolutely true that the word 'tragedy' has roots in a Greek word meaning 'goat-song'. Many theories have been offered to explain it. One is that Greek tragedies were known as goat-songs because the prize in Athenian play competitions was a live goat. The contests were part of worship to Dionysus, involving chants and dances in his honour. The Romans knew Dionysus later as Bacchus, god of all things 'bacchanalian': in other words he freed people from their normal self through madness, wine, and ecstasy.

Sometimes the goat would be sacrificed, and a goat lament sung as the sacrifice was made. Hence the goat-song became intertwined with the Greek plays.

The great new is the our God is a God the Meets us in the tragedy and carries us thru.

Jesus was one who could take the worst of tragedy and turn it into a an event for joy.

His miracles where examples of his power to overcome a crisis to a full blown tragedy

A list of the miracles of Jesus confirm this

### **Control of Nature**

1. Calming the storm – Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:37-41; Luke 8:22-25
2. Feeding 5,000 - Matthew 14:14-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14
3. Walking on water - Matthew 14:22-32; Mark 6:47-52; John 6:16-21
4. Feeding 4,000 – Matthew 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-9
5. Fish with coin – Matthew 17:24-27
6. Fig tree withers – Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-14, 20-25
7. Huge catch of fish – Luke 5:4-11; John 21:1-11
8. Water into wine – John 2:1-11

### **Healing of Individuals**

1. Man with leprosy – Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-44; Luke 5:12-14
2. Roman centurion's servant – Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10
3. Peter's mother-in-law – Matthew 8:14-15; Mark 1:30-31; Luke 4:38-39
4. Two men possessed with devils – Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-15; Luke 8:27-39
5. Man with palsy – Matthew 9:2-7; Mark 2:3-12; Luke 5:18-26

6. Woman with bleeding – Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48
7. Two blind men – Matthew 9:27-31
8. Dumb, devil-possessed man - Matthew 9:32-33
9. Canaanite woman's daughter – Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30
10. Boy with devil - Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:17-29; Luke 9:38-43
11. Two blind men – including Bartimaeus - Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43
12. Demon-possessed man in synagogue – Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37
13. Blind man at Bethsaida – Mark 8:22-26
14. Crippled woman – Luke 13:10-17
15. Man with dropsy – Luke 14:1-4
16. Ten men with leprosy – Luke 17:11-19
17. The high priest's servant – Luke 22:50-51
18. Nobleman's son at Capernaum – John 4:46-54
9. Sick man at the pool of Bethsaida – John 5:1-15
20. Man born blind – John 9:1-41

### **Raising the Dead**

1. Jairus' daughter – Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56
2. Widow's son at Nain – Luke 7:11-17
3. Lazarus – John 11:1-44

In fact, the miracles of Jesus were so ubiquitous that at the end of the gospel of John, the very final statement, 21:25 says, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written."

A miracle is a supernatural event which has no human explanation. More than that, a miracle is a supernatural event which suspends natural law. In other words, natural law stops and is suspended while God acts, moves back out and then the natural course continues.

A miracle then is an extraordinary event wrought by God that cannot be explained by any natural means. That would be the technical definition. It might sound something like this. A miracle is an event in nature so extraordinary in itself and so coinciding with the prophecy or command of a religious teacher or leader as fully to warrant the conviction on the part of those who witness it, that God has wrought it with the design of certifying that this teacher or leader has been commissioned by him. Now, that takes us to another dimension, and I wanted to read that. That's from Augustus Strong written way back in 1907, and what he is saying there

is that anytime a miracle occurs, it is associated with the certification of a teacher or a leader commissioned by God.

Theologians prior of course to the Charismatic movement, the Pentecostal movement and this century, were united in the understanding that **miracles** did not happen randomly, they did not happen through history in a willy-nilly sort of way. God did not do them capriciously or whimsically. There wasn't a continual flow of **miracles** at all times and places through church history, but rather, miracles, that is God stepping in to the natural world, suspending natural law, doing something that had no natural explanation, pulling back out again and letting natural law then run its course, did that only in certification of especially commissioned teacher. In fact, **miracles** in Scripture, all the way from Exodus through Deuteronomy to Nehemiah through the Psalms, Jeremiah, Daniel, into the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, John, Acts, Romans, 2 Corinthians, Thessalonians and Hebrews, **miracles** are called signs and wonders. They are signs, and what are signs for? A sign is to point to something, and what were they signs of? They were signs authenticating a divinely commissioned teacher. When God supernaturally, superhumanly suspended natural law and acted in human history, He did so as a sign to point to a teacher who was speaking for Him.

## **review**

# Lesson

- I. A Crisis Faith
- II. A Confident Faith
- III. A Confirmed Faith
- IV. A Contagious Faith

## I. A Crisis Faith

- 46 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.
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- 48 Then Jesus said to him, “Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.”
- 49 The nobleman said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies!”

Crisis is often a means God uses us to drive us into his presence.

It may be the loss of a job,

a money problem that does not allow you to pay your bill



a doctors appt that informs you that you have cancer  
the death of a child, spouse or loved one

46 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.

Jesus' ministry began in the south, in Judea, the southern part of the nation Israel, and He did many miracles in Judea. In fact, verse 45 says that when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast, for they themselves also went to the feast. So around the Passover, down in the area surrounding Jerusalem, Jesus had done many miracles. And, of course, at the Passover season and the subsequent festival after the Passover, the Galileans were there as they always were at this great event in the calendar year of Israel, and so they saw the miracles of Jesus. He did them in Judea in the beginning of His ministry. He did them in Judea at the end of His ministry. And in the middle of that three-year period of ministry, for about sixteen months or so, He was in Galilee and that's where we find Him in verse 46. He is in Galilee, verse 45 says, He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, they received Him in the same way that the people of Jerusalem received Him, as it

says in chapter 2:23, they believed in Him as a miracle worker. They received Him as a miracle worker but you remember in **John 2:23** to 25 it said, “Jesus didn’t commit Himself to them because He knew their hearts and He knew that that kind of faith was a superficial faith. They believed in Him as a miracle worker. And I want to establish that that was universal. There is nowhere in Matthew, Mark, Luke or John where the leadership who rejected Him as Savior and Messiah ever questioned His miracle power.

46b And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.

Royal official *Basilikos*, that’s a connection to the word *basileus* which is king. This was somebody who was an official of the king. There was only one king in that part of the world and that was the king of Galilee and Perea, an Idumaeen Herod Antipas who was the son of Herod the Great, who was the Idumaeen non-Jewish ruler of that part of the world. The Jews didn’t like him. He was a vassal king that served the purposes of Rome and ruled as a petty tyrant. He was a very evil bad man. You remember John the Baptist denounced him for marrying his brother’s wife and getting involved in incest. And then you remember in a drunken orgy one night this daughter of his wife did a dance and he said, “I’ll give you anything you want.” And she wanted the head of John the Baptist on a platter. He’s a bad man...Herod. He’s afraid of Jesus. He was afraid of John the Baptist. In fact, when Jesus started ministering, he thought John

the Baptist that he beheaded came back from the dead to get him. And by the way, in the entire ministry of Jesus, there was one town in Galilee Jesus never went to, Tiberias...never...one time, the home of Herod. Herod wanted Him dead. Herod was afraid of Him. Bad man.

Here's a royal official connected to Herod...Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee and Perea. He has a son who is sick at Capernaum. Capernaum is the lake town at the north end of the lake, the Sea of Galilee as it's called. He has a son. He believes Jesus is a miracle worker. He believes what the rest of the people in Galilee believe. And what do they believe? Verse 45, "He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast for they themselves also went to the feast." When He was at the feast, He did miracles. **John 2:23**, "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing." They believed but superficially. Remember that? He didn't trust Himself to them for He knew all men. And because He didn't need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.

In other words, they had a superficial faith. What did they believe? They believed He could do miracles, period, paragraph. Nicodemus was one of them. Nicodemus said, "Nobody can do what You do unless God is with him." Nobody can do these signs that You do unless God is with Him. That's what they believed. So that was the popular idea. They believed Jesus was a miracle worker. That's true and that's a starting place, but that better not be the ending place. And here's a man who like Nicodemus

believed Jesus was a miracle worker. Here is a man who caught the wind and look, Capernaum was the headquarters of Jesus' miracle ministry in Galilee. You read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, you're only going to find a couple of miracles in John done in Galilee, but myriads of them are recorded by the other writers. Massive miracles going on in Galilee and centered at Capernaum. So here's where the royal official was. In fact, Capernaum had so many miracles that in **Matthew 11:24**, Jesus said about that city that if Sodom had seen what Capernaum seen, it would still be around...it would still be around. It will be worse for Capernaum in the time of judgment than for the wretched homosexual city of Sodom. Hell will be hotter for the Capernaum people than the Sodomites because of what they saw of the miracles of Jesus. So this is His town. So He knows there's a miracle worker named Jesus. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee and He had a sixteen-month or so ministry in Galilee, he sent to Him...we don't know exactly when this happened during His Galilean ministry, but after He had done enough miracles at Capernaum for him to know He was a miracle worker, he comes to Him.

that's going from Galilee up to Cana of Galilee from Capernaum, the Sea of Galilee in the low country and lake side, all the way on the back side of Nazareth, that's got to be sixteen-seventeen-eighteen miles uphill walking. He comes a long distance and when he arrives at Jesus, he is imploring, steadfastly pleading with Him to come down...down the hill all the way back to Capernaum and heal his son because his son is at the point of death.

Matthew 9 when He said, "The people who aren't sick aren't looking for a doctor. It's desperation that drives people and it drove this man...it drove this man, this royal official under hated Herod to come to Jesus and to beg Him to give life to

his son. The royal official said to Him...again in verse 49...'Sir, come down before my child dies.'" So he believed that He could heal people. He didn't necessarily believe He could raise dead people. He has a belief in Jesus as a miracle worker. We could call it a sort of fearing faith, a kind of faint faith. He's like the man, you remember, who said in Mark 9, "Lord I believe, help my unbelief." It's a partial faith. He believes that He's a miracle worker because there's plenty of evidence of that.

But Jesus accepted that faith because He did miracles to bring people to that initial step. That's a place to start.

47 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.

Once more I repeat, that I speak of the "benefits" of sickness on purpose and advisedly. I know the suffering and pain which sickness entails. I admit the misery and wretchedness which it often brings in its train. But I cannot regard it as an unmixed evil. I see in it a wise permission of God. I see in it a useful provision to check the ravages of sin and the devil among men's souls. If man had never sinned I should have been at a loss to discern the benefit of sickness. But since sin is in the world, I can see that sickness is a good. It is a blessing quite as much as a curse. It is a rough schoolmaster, I grant. But it is a real friend to man's soul. **(a) Sickness helps to remind men of death.** The most live as if they were never going to die. They follow business, or pleasure, or politics, or science, as if earth was their eternal home. They plan and scheme for the future, like the rich fool in the parable, as if they had a long lease of life, and were not tenants at will. A heavy illness sometimes goes far to

dispel these delusions. It awakens men from their day-dreams, and reminds them that they have to die as well as to live. Now this I say emphatically is a mighty good.

**(b) Sickness helps to *make men think seriously of God, and their souls, and the world to come.*** The most in their days of health can find no time for such thoughts. They dislike them. They put them away. They count them troublesome and disagreeable. Now a severe disease has sometimes a wonderful power of mustering and rallying these thoughts, and bringing them up before the eyes of a man's soul. Even a wicked king like Benhadad, when sick, could think of Elisha (2 Kings 8:8.) Even heathen sailors, when death was in sight, were afraid, and "cried every man to his god." (Jonah 1:5.) Surely anything that helps to make men think is a good.

**(C) Sickness helps to *soften men's hearts, and teach them wisdom.*** The natural heart is as hard as a stone. It can see no good in anything which is not of this life, and no happiness excepting in this world. A long illness sometimes goes far to correct these ideas. It exposes the emptiness and hollowness of what the world calls "good" things, and teaches us to hold them with a loose hand. The man of business finds that money alone is not everything the heart requires. The woman of the world finds that costly apparel, and novel-reading, and the reports of balls and operas, are miserable comforters in a sick room. Surely anything that obliges us to alter our weights and measures of earthly things is a real good.

**(d) Sickness helps to *level and humble us.*** We are all naturally proud and high-minded. Few, even of the poorest, are free from the infection. Few are to be found who do not look down on somebody else, and secretly flatter themselves that they are "not as other men." A sick bed is a mighty tamer of such thoughts as these. It forces on us the mighty truth that we are all poor worms, that we "dwell in houses of clay," and are "crushed before the moth." (Job 4:19), and that kings and subjects, masters and servants, rich and poor, are all dying creatures, and will soon stand side by side at the bar of God. In the sight of the coffin and the grave it is not easy to be proud. Surely anything that teaches that lesson is good.

**(e) Finally, sickness helps to try men's religion, of what sort it is.**

There are not many on earth who have no religion at all. Yet few have a religion that will bear inspection. Most are content with traditions received from their fathers, and can render no reason of the hope that is in them. Now disease is sometimes most useful to a man in exposing the utter worthlessness of his soul's foundation. It often shows him that he has nothing solid under his feet, and nothing firm under his hand. It makes him find out that, although he may have had a form of religion, he has been all his life worshipping "an unknown God." Many a creed looks well on the smooth waters of health, which turns out utterly unsound and useless on the rough waves of the sick bed. The storms of winter often bring out the defects in a man's dwelling, and sickness often exposes the gracelessness of a man's soul. Surely anything that makes us find out the real character of our faith is a good.

**48** Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

**John 2:18** So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"

**Mt.16:1** Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven.

**Mt. 27:42** "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.



## I Cor. 1:22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom

But if our Lord rebukes the crowd, He seems to include the royal official as well. Does our Lord not seem to lack compassion toward this desperate man, whose only concern is the well-being of his son? Some might be tempted to ask, “How can Jesus be so rude, so insensitive, so critical?” Let me suggest that the solution to this dilemma may be found in the Gospel of Mark:

24 Jesus left there and went to the region of Tyre. When he went into a house, he did not want anyone to know, but he was not able to escape notice. 25 Instead, a woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him and came and fell at his feet. 26 The woman was a Greek, of Syrophenician origin. She asked him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27 He said to her, “Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not right to take the children’s bread and to throw it to the dogs.” 28 She answered, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” 29 Then he said to her, “Because you said this, you may go. The demon has left your daughter.” 30 She went home and found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone ([Mark 7:24-30](#)).

Is our Lord being unduly harsh with this Gentile woman, who begs Him to cast the demon out of her daughter? I think not. First of all, what Jesus says is true. He has come “**to the Jew first**” and then to the Gentiles (see [Matthew 10:5-6](#); [Romans 1:16](#); [2:9-10](#)). Beyond this, I believe our Lord is dealing with this woman in a way that inspires faith. Having heard Jesus, does this woman cower and walk away? No; she presses Jesus even harder for her daughter’s sake, reminding Him that Gentiles are to benefit from His coming as well as the Jews.

I believe the same thing is taking place in our text. The on-lookers are merely sign-seekers, and our Lord’s words seem to send them home. The royal official is not about to let his son die, and he knows that Jesus is his only hope. It may be that his faith is weak, that he needs to see to believe, but he does believe that Jesus is able to heal his



son, and so he persists with his request. I believe our Lord's words press him in the right direction. They are not intended to turn him away, but to turn him to Jesus in faith.

**49** The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

He uses a very plaintive word for child, "my little boy"

### Mark 5:21

- 21** Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea.
- 22** And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet
- 23** and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live."
- 24** So *Jesus* went with him,

While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

- 36** As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe."
- 37** And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.
- 38** Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly.

- 39** When He came in, He said to them, “Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.”
- 40** And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying.
- 41** Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, “Talitha, cumi,” which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.”
- 42** Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve *years of age*. And they were overcome with great amazement.
- 43** But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

The New King James Version. (1982). (Mk 5:35–43). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The New King James Version. (1982). (Mk 5:21–24). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## II. A Confident Faith

**50** Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your son lives.” So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.

Jesus then responded to the man’s plea. Said to him, “Go, your son lives.” At that very moment that son’s body was instantaneously, miraculously healed. And something also happened to the father. Verse 50, “The man believed the Word that Jesus spoke to him and started off.” At first he believed Jesus was a miracle worker, he believed in His works. Now he believes in His words.

Many times in the gospel of John you’re going to hear that, “Believe Me for the works, believe Me for the words.” Jesus was not only a miracle worker, He was truth teller. Everything He said

pointed to His deity. “Never a man spoke like this man,” they said about Him. So this man is moved from believing in the power of Jesus to believing in the truth of Jesus, in the words of Jesus, the trustworthiness of what He said. This is essential. It’s wonderful to read the gospel account and see Jesus as a miracle worker. But you’ve got to get beyond the works to the words, right? Because the works have no saving power, the words have the saving power and the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him

### III. A Confirmed Faith

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told *him*, saying, “Your son lives!”

52 Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.”

53 So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives.”

As he was now going down, his slaves met him saying that his son was living. I mean, full of life. So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. And they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him, the seventh hour.” There’s a big discussion about whether that’s Jewish time which starts at 6 A.M. and makes it one o’clock, or whether it’s Roman time at noon and makes it seven o’clock.

But that’s not the point. The point is now what time was it. The point was what time was it when the healing happened so he could connect that with the words of Jesus. And they said the seventh hour, so the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives.”

## IV.A Contagious Faith

And he himself believed, and his whole household.

54 This again *is* the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

Now it says, “He himself believed.” Well wait a minute. He already believed, what do you mean he himself believed? Well this is a very emphatic statement that it’s got an emphatic pronoun in there, so his faith has gone to another level. And not only that, he himself believed and his whole household. Well you’ve heard that biblical language before, haven’t you? Remember the Philippian jailor, he believed and his whole household. Now we’re talking about not believing Jesus is a miracle worker, and not believing in His works and then believing in His words, but believing in His person... believing in the name of Christ. I think somewhere in the encounter with this man, Jesus filled in the blanks of who He was, of His person. It simply says, “He himself believed.”

As I close, let me point out a very important principle: God often brings adversity into our lives—adversity beyond our ability to handle—so that we must come to Him as our only hope, so that we must trust in Him alone. I doubt very much that this royal official would have

traveled 20 miles to beg Jesus to come heal his son if his son had athlete's foot or an in-grown toenail. This man is desperate. He is helpless and hopeless, apart from Jesus Christ. Jesus said it: He came to heal the sick, not to minister to those who are healthy. There are those who came to argue with Jesus, who were trying to make themselves look good and Him look bad. But setting these trouble-makers aside, most of those who come to Jesus in the Gospels are those who desperately need help, those who are hurting and helpless. Are you hurting? Do you feel helpless, unable to cope with what you are facing? *This could be the gracious hand of God, drawing you to Himself for mercy and grace in your time of need.* Let's face it; we do not seek God when things are going well for us. We tend to turn to God only in our weakness, in our need, in our despair. *If your life is like this, it may be the gracious hand of God, compelling you to come to Him in faith. Take Him at His word. Come to Him who is the solution to your every need.*