

Jesus was going to Galilee, but got stuck for 3 days in Sychar. Now He finally arrives in Galilee where He will spend most of the rest of His life.

DEAD "FAITH"

We are going to see Jesus take a man who had the inadequate, substandard, bogus "faith" of 2:23, and lift it to the highest level. (Could entitle this, "The Nobleman gets a faith-lift") Every Christian wishes he had greater faith. We all aspire to be men and women of great faith – but it's not something you can manufacture on your own.

2:25

Jn.4:43 After the two days he left for Galilee. 44 (Now Jesus himself had indeed pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.)

45 Nevertheless, when he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, for they also had been there.

The other three Gospels all start right out telling about the rejection at Galilee. John wrote much later (30 yr) and fills in the gaps, and then gives little explanations of how things fit in.

It's true they rejected Him, but the initial reception was very positive. The point is not that they welcomed him, but that they welcomed him based on the miracles at the Passover. (Interesting that they believed based on that but not the water to wine)

4:13

They had a dead faith. It wasn't real – it had to be propped up.

Here comes an example of this kind of faith:

46 Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official (worked for Herod) whose son lay sick at Capernaum. (DIA) 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.

This is tragic. How many have kids? How many have had parents? (So everyone in the room has either had kids or is acquainted with someone who has)

5:55

Imagine being in this guy's shoes. Suddenly nothing else in life matters. Your precious child is sick. The term *avpoqnh,|skein* means that his death was (1) imminent and (2) certain. Think of your little child. This one had some kind of fever, which means suffering, and it was very obvious that there was no hope - it was just a matter of time - very little time.

Think of your child. All the hopes you have for him. Now he is sick. A fatal disease. This royal official had access to the best doctors and care...you take your child to the Mayo clinic. He has an irreversible condition. They give him a couple days at the most.

You can't carry on your duties at work. Your wife is heartsick. You try to comfort her but you are devastated too. *Why?* You are there at his bedside with the family. On top of all your grief is the agonizing process of watching him suffer. The pain on his face and his moaning. But nothing can be done. You look into his eyes. He can't speak, but the pleading look in his eyes say, "Daddy, *please* help me!" You collapse on the bed and weep.

8:33

A friend stops by to see how things are going. The conversation is somber. hushed tones. Your voice cracks when you tell him, "It will probably only be a matter of hours."

Your friend puts his hand on your shoulder and is silent. The painfulness of the situation forces you to change the subject. "So how was your trip? Didn't you spend the weekend over in Cana?"

"Yes, it was a good time. You know that guy Jesus was there. You know - the one who was at the Passover and did all those miracles. I wonder..."

Before he finishes his sentence you are already in a frantic, desperate search for a bedroll and a few other things – a glimmer of hope. You kiss your wife goodbye, and set out for Cana. You are almost running for the first couple miles. It is almost 20 miles, so it will take at least 7 hours just to get there. Your heart sinks as you realize that even in the unlikely event that this great prophet will instantly start coming right away, it will *another 7 or 8 hours.*"

10:36

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.

How will this miracle-worker respond? Will he care? This guy can read people's hearts. Will he rebuke me for working with Herod? He can't stand Herod. Herod threw His cousin in prison. He starts thinking about all the things he has done that Jesus may have heard about. He was so unworthy. Would this prophet just rebuke him?

11:45

48 "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe."

Your heart sinks. A thousand thoughts flood your mind. Should you argue? You know it's true.

What was Jesus saying? Isn't it OK to believe based on miracles? Isn't that what we do? Jn.10:24 **The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."** 25 **Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name speak for me** Jesus repeatedly pointed to His miracles as evidence. It is perfectly appropriate to believe on Christ because his miracles pointed you to him.

13:05

But the Galileans didn't love him based on his miracles, they just loved his miracles (this is the only time John uses "**wonders**"). The word "**never**" is emphatic (ouv mh). There is no way they will believe (follow, have a favorable disposition toward) unless Jesus does tricks.

Their supposed "faith" had no real life of its own – it was like a corpse. It couldn't stand on its own – this kind of faith has to be constantly propped up with spectacles, tricks, emotional experiences, dramatic events.

Some people are always looking for some big spiritual zap – constantly seeking after miracles, perpetually chasing after extreme emotional experiences.

14:15

These people claim to trust God, but their kind of faith does nothing but place constant demands on God. God has to give them everything they pray for, everything they want, everything they think is best, and as soon as some difficulty comes into their lives, it's "I knew it – God doesn't care about me. I

try following Him, and this is what I get? I'm mad at God..."

Someone asked me why trials increase some people's faith, and ruin others? Why do they drive some people to God, and others away from God? Why does God allow trials so severe that they destroy some people's faith?

He doesn't. Trials don't ruin anyone's faith. All trials do is expose the genuineness or phoniness of faith. True faith is strengthened by trials. Trials are like fire, and faith is like gold. If all your gold goes up in smoke, you know it wasn't real.

16:30

That's the kind of "faith" the Galileans had. **Lk.4:14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. 15 He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. 28 All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. 29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff.**

What happened in between? Jesus stopped doing the miracles and started preaching. The amusement was over. When the tricks stopped, they turned on him (like bears at Yellowstone).

That's the way this man was. He didn't give Jesus a second thought until now. He didn't care about Jesus – it's just that he's desperate, and thinks Jesus may be able to pull something off.

So he comes. But Jesus rebukes him!

His worst fears were starting to come to come to pass. The imperfect in v.47 implies that there was a persistent pleading, which means Jesus must have been giving somewhat of a negative response. Now Jesus says this. But the man is desperate.

19:06

49 The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies."

Child – a very affectionate term – "my boy"

lit: "Lord" - same title the woman used 3 times. At the very least it is a term of great respect. Something about the presence of Jesus commanded respect from everyone who met him.

Watch what Jesus does with this man's faith. At the beginning his faith is about as weak as faith can be and still be called some sort of faith. He evidently wouldn't have even bothered with Jesus unless his son was dying. Then he comes and thinks Jesus has to come to Capernaum in person (thinks it's a trick). Then he thinks it's essential for Jesus to do it *before* he dies.

It seems that when Jesus says this, it makes the man think.

The next word out of Jesus mouth must have been the most devastating word he had ever heard...but only for a moment.

50 Jesus replied, "Go." "be gone" – same word used casting out demons

but the next words must have turned his deepest grief into the greatest moment and richest elation of his life.

o` ui`o,j sou zh/ **"Your son lives."** Go to your son – he's fine.

21:08

Believing Faith

Now look at this man's faith.

50 The man took Jesus at his word and departed

A moment ago he required a spectacle just to have a favorable disposition toward Jesus. Now he believed based on Jesus' words. Now he believes Jesus can heal at a distance.

He believes based on Jesus' words. Where have we seen that before? Down in Jerusalem was based *only* on spectacles (2:24) as was the faith of the Galileans (v.45). But what other time have we seen someone who believed based only on the *words* of Jesus? Samaria! (4:41,42)

This is the foundation of true faith. Ask yourself: is there anything you believe *just* because God said it? Some people believe only those things the Bible says that *seem* true. That's not faith.

23:20

Jesus lifted this man's faith to this level. Suddenly he believes Jesus can do it at a distance. Significant. Only two times Jesus said someone had great faith. Both times it was when a person believed Jesus could heal from a distance (Mt.8:10, Mt.15:28). - both

Gentiles (in the Mt.8 account Jesus says he has not found faith like that in Israel. Starting to see the beginning of the inclusion of the Gentiles and the exclusion of Israel).

That's significant, because only God can heal from a distance.

24:53

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, "The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour."

He was so confident in Jesus' words, he waited until the next day to come home!

26:15

Jesus healed him. Think about this miracle. Jesus was standing there talking with the man

in Cana. While the man was saying, "**Sir, come down before my child dies.**" The boy was lying there in his bed suffering, racked with pain pain, his heart about to stop, the cells in his tissues dead by the millions, his temperature lethally high – his body in the process of dying.

Then Jesus says, "**Your son lives**" and at that split-second, suddenly, 20 miles away, the boy is just fine! Suddenly he's just laying there looking at the ceiling, his temperature was 98.6 – there's no pain. The dead cells were alive. He color was normal. As he lay there delirious, suddenly his mind was clear. His pain was gone.

He has energy (probably stood up – don't feel like laying down when you feel good). He up walking around, his mother: Hey, what's going on? I don't know, I feel fine. Can I have something to eat? Can I go out and play?

28:39

Ever want to test a healer? Have him give life to a terminally ill patient 20 miles away while the patient isn't even aware of it. At that moment, as Jesus stood in that place in Cana, God the Son was not only there in Cana working in that man's heart, giving him faith - AND ALSO was there in that house in Capernaum by that bed, re-creating what had died in that boy.

That is the finger of God. And we don't see Jesus praying and asking for this (didn't give up the independent exercise...")

30:06

Jesus a good teacher? A prophet like Mohammed? I don't think so. He is the giver of life.

This time of year is devoted to celebrating one of the greatest, most amazing spiritual

truths of all: the incarnation. Almighty God put on human flesh and came into this world. Why did He come?

I found 9 reasons why Jesus said He came, (the 9 meanings of Christmas) and one was to give life.

Jn.10:9 I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

1Jn 4:9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

That's why we celebrate Christmas with an evergreen.

31:23

3 times in this passage we see the identical phrase: "Your son lives" There is an emphasis on life.

The word "life" appears in Jn. More than double the greatest # of times in any other book.

Jn.1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

Jn.3:14 the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. 16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,* that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

* It's the ability to respond to God and spiritual realities.

* It's a different kind of life. The life we know now is mixed with death. Our physical

36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life,

4:10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you water of life."

11 Where can you get this water of life?...14 whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

32:51

36 Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life

50 Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son lives."

51 While he was still on the way, his servants met him and told him your boy lives.

the fever left him at the the seventh hour."

53 Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son lives."

Now tonight go home and read Jesus' discourse in 5:16-47 all about life. Jesus is the Giver of life, the giver of faith, the author of salvation from beginning to end.

33:20

Jesus' ability to give life to this child illustrates His ability to give us spiritual life. What is spiritual life?

Some think spiritual life means inner thought life and prayers. But you can be spiritually dead and have that. Every person is born into this world spiritually dead.

life now is moving toward death. (death rate is still one each) We think of aging as the process of braking down. Eternal life is when that process is reversed.

35:35

How can we have eternal life now? That doesn't seem to make sense. Eternal life is life that moves toward more life, not death. Eternal life is that kind of life in which you progress toward more life, you improve – With spiritual life, aging means you are getting weller and weller.

36:20

Tony Evens: If you are a messed up person, you contribute to a messed up neighborhood...

What is a "messed up" person? That's what life, subject to the curse is – messed up. It's subject to decay, dysfunction, and death.

But the life Jesus offers is different, it moves toward getting better instead of worse. It is increasing in goodness, not decreasing. It's life as it should be. It's health.

"Your son lives" doesn't mean his heart is still beating. It means he is fine. It carries the idea of energy and vitality.

Jesus is the Author of that life. He came into the world to give us that life, and it comes to us through faith.

ENTRUSTING FAITH :

36:40

53 Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and all his household believed.

(amazing how fast Jesus turns converts into evangelists)

Wait a minute. I thought he already believed in v.50. He started out believing Jesus could help. Then in v.50 he believes in a deeper way. Now he comes to full-blown faith. Saving faith is believing God's Word and entrusting one's life to Him – both your eternal destiny and your present life.

38:13

Jesus not only provides the basis for belief by his works, and the object of faith in his

person, but he *gives* people faith. He is the author of faith from beginning to end. So often the things in life that we don't understand are simply God reaching into our hearts and lifting up our faith to the next level.

He is so patient with our sickly, little, weak faith. But He doesn't leave it that way.

But what is the key to receiving that? Some people do, others don't. The key is humility.

God will take your faith – no matter how weak, how sick – even if it's dead – God will take it and lift it to the next level, if only you respond to what He is doing with humility rather than pride. That's what this man did, isn't it?

- When his boy got a fatal disease, he could have responded in pride and hardened his heart against God – get angry at God. "I don't want to have anything to do with a God who would allow this."

- When time went by, and it became evident that he would certainly die, he could have...
- When he heard about Jesus, he could have said, "I am a royal official. I'm not going to lower myself to go begging some peasant carpenter..."
- When he walked 7 hr. to find Jesus, and then Jesus rebuked him, he could have hardened his heart in pride and said, "A lot of compassion you have. See if I ever show my face in church again..."
- When he had totally humbled himself in front of everyone and made himself totally vulnerable, accepted the rebuke, and continued to persist, and Jesus continued to respond in a negative way, he could have said, "I knew it was all baloney. I tired Jesus, and it didn't work."

- When Jesus said, “Your son lives” he could have said, “I’ll believe that when...”
- When his son was healed, he could have said, “What a waste! I walk all the way to Cana to get help, and here he was going to recover by himself all along.”

When God begins working in your heart to build faith, it’s essential that you respond in humility.

People pray for stronger faith, then God sends it in the form of the flu, and losing your job, or a financial struggle, and then they cry out, “God, how could You let this happen to me? Why? Why? Why? Oh, and by the way, I’m still waiting for that stronger faith I asked for.”

42:47

One of the marks of true faith is a humble, accepting response to what God gives you – like Michelle and Bill.

Do you need a faith lift? We have found that faith is a gift from God, but is there anything you can do? Yes. You can accept it or resist it. As God works to shape your heart, you can harden it like Pharaoh, or soften it like this man.

If you humble yourself before God, you will find that there is sufficient evidence that Jesus’ words are reliable. And if from there you just accept His Word as true, you will progress.

God is taking you along a path designed to build your faith, and at any point you can harden your heart, let it crust over in pride, or you can humbly accept it.

44:51

This applies not just to salvation – Everyone in this room has an area in which our faith is weak. (I get more cards asking for prayers for stronger faith than any other thing.)

Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Pass out cards

Announcements (invitations)

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 6:00

Tonight

Pray (offering)

Benediction

Heb 10:19-22 **Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus...21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.**