

JESUS HEALS AN OFFICIAL'S SON
(The Second Sign--How Faith Grows)

John 4:43-54
Key Verse: 4:50

Lesson #11

"Jesus replied, 'You may go. Your son will live.' The man took Jesus at his word and departed."

The author of John's Gospel states his purpose in writing this Gospel in John 20:31: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." In this event, the Second Sign which Jesus performed in Galilee, the author shows us what believing is and how belief grows. In 2:23 the author tells us that Jesus did many miraculous signs while he was in Jerusalem during the Passover Feast. Many people saw the miraculous signs and believed in him. But Jesus did not trust himself to these people. Their belief was superficial. They believed in his power to do miracles, but they did not accept his person and character. They did not accept him as the Christ. When Jesus returned to his own country, Galilee, the people welcomed him, but these Galileans' faith was also superficial. They believed because they had seen the miracles he had done in Jerusalem. They were not interested in who he was.

Once Jesus visited Cana, the place where he had performed his first sign, turning water into wine. While he was there, an official who lived in Capernaum, the headquarters of Jesus' Galilean ministry, came to him. This official had not seen the miracles Jesus did in Jerusalem, but he had undoubtedly heard about them. He had heard of Jesus' power to heal the sick, and he was desperate. His son was sick, almost to the point of death. So he came and found Jesus in Cana. He came with one purpose: To escort Jesus back to Capernaum so that he might heal his son. So he asked Jesus to go back to Capernaum with him and heal his son. But Jesus did not go with him. Instead, Jesus gave the official a command and a promise. He said, "You may go. Your son will live." Jesus was giving this man an opportunity to grow in faith. It may not have been easy to believe Jesus' promise and obey his command, but the man trusted Jesus and he obeyed. This active belief may have been full of conflict and doubt. As he slowly trudged back to Capernaum, he must have struggled with doubt and belief. Perhaps he thought, "Maybe I should have insisted a little more that Jesus come with me." Anyway, he believed Jesus' words and he went. It was an important decision. Faith that is alive is obedient faith. Obedient faith is real faith and Jesus blesses this kind of faith.

On the way home a servant came with good news. "Your boy is going to

live." This was the real time of testing. He had gotten what he came for. Was he now so overcome by the good news that he forgot everything to run home and see? No, he was not so overcome with joy that he forgot the source of blessing. He was a thinking man. He asked a rational question. "What time was it when my son began to get better?" The time was the same as the time Jesus had said, "Your son will live." The official was no longer thinking about himself. He wasn't thinking about what benefit he could receive from Jesus. He was thinking about Jesus himself. He looked at the facts thoughtfully and his faith in Jesus grew. He was no longer just one of the crowd who believed that Jesus could do miracles. He had personally tasted the grace of God in Jesus. He acknowledged this grace, and he believed in Jesus. Not only did he believe, but his whole family believed in Jesus. This belief was not superficial, benefit seeking faith. It was personal faith which was rooted in truth. It was assurance. There was no doubt in this faith.

So faith begins by hearing from someone else; it grows when we seek out Jesus and bring our problems to him. It becomes saving faith when we overcome our own thinking and doubts and obey his word actively. It becomes the undergirding of all of life when we gratefully acknowledge the grace of God in Jesus Christ and commit ourselves to him in confident faith.