**BCM Bible Study – March 14/15, 2018**

**Sign #2: Jesus Heals an Official’s Son (John 4:46-54)**

Intro: Though we are studying the 7 specific signs listed in the John, that does not mean that Jesus *only* did these signs. In fact, the passage we are going to study today skims over 18 months of Jesus’ life and records only 1 sign! (Herschel Hobbs) The other gospels expound more on this time period. After the miracle of turning water into wine, John records several pivotal moments, namely the conversation with Nicodemus and Jesus’ interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well. John closes that account in this way: **Read John 4:39-42**.

* What was the foundation of the Samaritan’s belief?
* Keep this in mind – it is key to the story for today!

The Official’s Son: **Read John 4:43-54**

* Jesus goes to back to Galilee knowing that he will be rejected there. Why might a prophet’s hometown be where he is rejected?
  + “There is such a thing as a *false* familiarity with Jesus; a dangerous feeling that we know all about Him.” (David Guzik) “We are so familiar with the Bible, and with Jesus, and with Christianity, that it can’t shock us. He can’t do anything really mind-blowingly powerful. He’s too familiar.” (John Piper)
  + It is obviously good to become increasingly familiar we Jesus; our calling is to come to know him more intimately. In light of this, what are Piper are Guzik referring to?
  + Do you ever fall into this trap? What fosters this sort of mindset?
  + What can you do to foster a mindset of awe and wonder about Jesus, knowing that we can never fully grasp who is he?
* What’s odd is that v.45 says that the people welcomed Jesus – based on v.44, you would not expect that!
  + Why does the text say that the people welcomed him?
    - Jesus is referring to what John has recorded in chapter 2 – **Read John 2:23-25**. The people had heard of these signs are were eager to welcome this miracle-worker.
  + **Read John 7:1-5.** Based on what Jesus says to the official (note that the two occurrences of “you” in verses 45 are plural – Jesus has addressing the Galileans as a whole (ESV Study Bible)) and the comment about Jesus’s brother, what is wrong with the sort of “faith” or “belief” that these people are showing?
    - Consider these quotes:
      * “You are sign-seekers. You are ‘wonder-worshipers. You say you believe, but your belief…is not real belief that honors me.” (Piper)
      * “The signs…aren’t about what we can get; they’re about who we can know.” (ACU)
      * “Jesus rebuked those who depended on signs and wonders *before* they would believe…Signs and wonders from God are obviously good things, but they should not form the foundation of our faith. In themselves, signs and wonders cannot change the heart.” (Guzik)
    - How do these quotes impact you? Do you identify with any of them?
    - Why will a sign-seeking/miracle-based faith ultimately fizzle out? In what way does this contradict the very nature of faith?
    - In what way do you tend to be a sign seeker? When do you find it tempting to believe in God for his good gifts/favor and not for himself and who he is?
    - What is the relationship between believing in God and receiving good things from him? Consider Matthew 6:28-34 and Matthew 7:9-11.
* How is this official a model of faith in his response to Jesus?
  + “He urged no merit, but pleaded the misery of the case. He did not plead that the boy was of noble birth. His extremity was his reason for urgency: the child was at death’s door; therefore his father begs that mercy’s door may open.” (Guzik)
    - In what ways is it tempting for you to request things of God on the basis of merit or bargaining? Why is this antithetical to the gospel?
  + It is significant the Jesus does not go with the man, but instead sends him home without any real proof that his son was healed. Moreover, Cana and Capernaum are not two subdivisions in the same town – they are 15-20 miles apart! See this map: https://bible.org/assets/netbible/nt1.jpg
    - How do we see true faith modeled in the man’s obedience to Jesus’ command to go home?
    - How would the story be different if Jesus had done the miracle in his presence? How is the man’s faith built up by the way that Jesus does this?
    - How is this different from the faith of Galileans in general? How is it like the faith of the Samaritans? (Think back to John 4:39-42)
  + **Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-8 and Hebrews 11:1, 12:1-2**
    - How are we, like the royal official, called to believe in Jesus’ word?
      * Consider the story of Thomas: **Read John 20:24-29.** Do you connect with Thomas’ doubt? What makes belief in the unseen difficult?
      * What makes belief in the unseen possible?
    - What are some things in which you are often tempted to place your hope outside of His word?
    - Want does a life of faith look like when it is lived out?

Conclusion

* How is Jesus’ glory revealed in this passage? In other words, what is Jesus telling us about himself through this sign?
* What do we learn about God the Father?