

A Lesson in Long-Distance Faith

John 4.43-54

Jesus performed no miracle in Samaria, yet many believed in Him there because of His *words*. As He returns to Galilee, the people want Him to perform miracles. Jesus restores a royal official's son to life, but does so in such a way that the issue of faith is raised to a new level.

- Back to Galilee: Jesus faces a doubtful audience (43-48)
The benefit – and drawback – of miracles

On what does your faith rest?

- Long-distance miracle: Teaching a lesson of faith (49-54)
A faith that hopes: 'The man started off...'

A deeper faith: 'He believed...and his household'

- Where are you on the 'journey of faith'?

Do you have faith that takes God at His Word?



1. The final scene in John 4 tells of Jesus' return to Galilee, to Cana, a town where He turned water to wine (2.1-11), not far from where He grew up in Nazareth. The residents had evidently also seen miracles He performed in Jerusalem (4.45; cf. 2.23), so they welcomed Him enthusiastically. But something wasn't right. In v44, Jesus testifies that "a prophet has no honor in His own country," and in v48, He objects to their insistence on seeing miracles in order to believe. How is their attitude toward Jesus different from the Samaritans' (see 4.39-42)? Why do you think this is?
2. Jesus clearly performed miracles to convince people who He was so that they would believe in Him (see 2.11, 23; 10.37-38; Acts 2.22), and miraculous signs authenticated apostolic preaching (Acts 2.43; 4.30; 5.12; 6.8; 14.3; 15.12; Rom. 15.19; 2 Cor. 12.12; Heb. 2.3-4). And yet, Jesus clearly denigrates faith based on miracles here (v48; see 1 Cor. 1.22). Why do you think this is? Modern TV evangelists have gained huge followings by claiming to perform miracles. What is the end result of this kind of 'faith'? What is an inherent danger in putting stock in miraculous powers? See Matt. 24.24; 2 Thess. 2.9!
3. Despite a seeming reluctance to perform a miracle, Jesus does – but with a twist: Instead of doing it in person, He says to the official, "Go, your son lives." Why do you think Jesus did this? Did the man believe Jesus (v50)? How would you describe his faith as he started for home? Later, his servants meet him and tell him his son is well. When he realizes his son's fever broke at the exact time Jesus said, "Your son lives," we read that he and his whole household believed. How would you differentiate his earlier faith from his ending faith?
4. Each of us is on a 'journey of faith' throughout our lives. The *object* of our faith is infinitely more important than the *amount* of our faith. Think back to the moment (if you can recall it) when you first came to believe in Jesus as your Savior. How "sure" were you of what you believed right then? Would you say your faith (confidence) in God has grown stronger and deeper since then? What has helped your faith to grow? Is it still growing today?