



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Overcoming a Leader's Unbelief (John 4:46-54)

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*Have you ever had a hard time believing someone? We are surrounded by people who ask for our trust and to make it through life we must eventually hand over control to others; to believe in them and their abilities that we do not possess. Doctors, teachers, journalists, pilots, chair makers – we have to place trust in others on a constant basis, don't we?*

*But somewhere along the path of life we get burned. We get cynical and less trusting of others because we know that imperfect people are sometimes untrustworthy. Placing belief in people gets harder than when we were children since experience teaches us that people are going to let us down.*

*What does this look like in politics? How much trust and belief in people exists in the hallways of the capitol community? When people all around you are seeking more and more power and try to claim credit for others' work, trust quickly evaporates. It has to.*

*In our text today, belief is again at the heart of the story. But Jesus continues to display why He is unlike any other person in history – why He is completely worthy of unconditional belief. To approach Him with unbelief is a serious thing and we must all heed the warning to come to Him with hearts that trust in Him alone and nothing else.*

### I THE CRITICAL REQUEST (4:46, 47)

*John 4:46, 47 — Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine and there was a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and was imploring Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.*

After time in Jerusalem and Samaria, Jesus and His disciples have returned to the place of His first public miracle. The stir through the people in and around the town of Cana must have been exciting since word of His miraculous power had surely spread through the region. Remember, though, that in our last study we saw the unfortunate motivation behind the Galileans' enthusiasm to see Jesus:

*John 4:44, 45 - For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. So 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.*

These seemingly contradictory verses really aren't, since the "receiving" of Jesus in Galilee was based on the crowds' anticipation to see more sign miracles. They had a form of belief but it didn't result in a desire to repent and follow Jesus wholeheartedly. He truly had no honor here for the people only wanted to be entertained. How did He know this? It had happened before.

*John 2:23-25 - Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.*

The royal official, probably a Jew who served in the administration of Herod Antipas of Galilee, came to Jesus because of His well-known reputation as a miracle worker and pled for his son's life. While he was acting as any caring father would, there was still something that the Lord knew about his heart, just as He had earlier with the crowds in Jerusalem.

### II. THE CHASTISING REBUKE (4:48)

*John 4:48 - So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe."*

This was a statement made to all of the crowd, not just the government official, but still proves Jesus' ability to discern the hearts of people and why they wanted to come to Him. He knew their motives to seek Him were not because of His person as the Son of God, but because they sought His miracles.

We can be sure that the same thing happens today. We saw several studies ago that there is a type of belief in Christ that is a self-seeking desire to personally benefit rather than humbly acknowledge sin and trust in Him as the only One who can spiritually save. It is possible to believe in vain.

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### BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: THURSDAYS AT 12:00PM, HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 153

STAFF: MONDAYS AT 11:30AM, HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 218

# Maryland

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This official believed in Jesus' ability to heal his son, but in his heart he didn't believe that Jesus was Lord of all the earth. For this, he and the others in the area were rebuked by Christ.

### III. THE CONSISTENT RESPONSE (4:49, 50)

*John 4:49, 50 - The royal official said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." Jesus said to him, "Go; your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off.*

The government leader persists, clearly convinced that if Jesus would go to his home in Capernaum, He would have the power to cure his son. There is an admirable consistency, even though Christ pointed out an inner lack of faith in who He really was.

There are times when our prayers aren't answered in a timely way to teach us to wait on God and His perfect timing. However, the promise of God is to hear the prayer of faith that admits dependence on Him.

*Philippians 4:6, 7 - Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

### IV. THE CARING RESULT (4:51-54)

*John 4:51-54— As he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living. So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"; and he himself believed and his whole household. This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.*

What an amazing ending to this story. Jesus acted on behalf of this father who lacked belief, even though He was under no obligation. God is a gracious God and sometimes gives good gifts to all (even the unbelieving) in His kindness. There is such a thing as common grace in which God blesses everyone, whether they truly seek Him or not.

*Matthew 5:45 - He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*

Not only did Jesus show tremendous grace to the royal official, but He displayed incredible power. He spoke His words in Cana, but the healing took place in Capernaum, about 16 miles away. Only as the official was heading home and received the report from his servants did he get confirmation of the miracle. The seventh hour would have been 7:00 p.m. the previous day (the Roman system started counting their daily hours at noon), the very moment Jesus spoke.

The result of this sign miracle was true, deepening belief. The official finally saw and believed Jesus for who He is, the Son of God, and his entire household believed as well. This was the same result as the first miracle, when Jesus turned the water to wine.

*John 2:11 - This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.*

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**JUST AS WITH THE WATER TURNING TO WINE, THE REAL MIRACLE IN THIS PASSAGE IS THAT GOD WORKS IN THE REBELLIOUS, SELF-SEEKING HEART OF PEOPLE TO PRODUCE GENUINE BELIEF IN HIM.**

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This was the entire point of John writing his gospel. He actually will write of eight sign miracles performed by Jesus to 1) prove His deity and 2) produce belief in those who read it.

*John 20:30, 31 - Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.*

If you haven't placed your faith in the Son of God, fully trusting Him for your salvation, I encourage you to do it now. As always, please contact me if you have questions or want to talk further about these studies. I'm here to serve you.