

WHO IS JESUS?
Week Four: Healer of the Nations
John 4:43-54

Good morning Lake Wylie. If you have a copy of the Bible begin turning to the Gospel of John. Our passage today is found in John 4:43. If you're using one of the Bibles in the pew rack you will find the text on page.....

⁴³ After the two days he departed for Galilee. ⁴⁴ (For Jesus himself had testified that **a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.**) ⁴⁵ So when he came to Galilee, **the Galileans welcomed him**, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast.

⁴⁶ So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. ⁴⁷ When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸ **So Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe."** ⁴⁹ The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, **"Go; your son will live."** The man **believed** the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. ⁵¹ As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. ⁵² So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." ⁵³ The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." **And he himself believed, and all his household.** ⁵⁴ This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee. ¹

John tells us that this healing in Cana was the second sign that Jesus did. John is revealing who Jesus is to us, and in this passage we'll see three truths that give us a better picture of who Jesus is.

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2016). (Jn 4:43–54).

1. IT'S POSSIBLE TO HAVE FAITH THAT DISHONORS JESUS
2. JESUS' GRACE EXTENDS BEYOND YOUR EXPECTATIONS
3. THE GREATEST MIRACLE IS HAVING A HEART THAT GLORIES IN CHRIST MORE THAN MIRACLES

First let's see that...

1. IT'S POSSIBLE TO HAVE FAITH THAT DISHONORS JESUS

Did you notice the contrast between verses 44 and 45 right at the top of our reading?

⁴⁴ (For Jesus himself had testified that **a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.**)

The word honor here carries the idea of value. Whenever I go to yard sales I always keep my phone out because inevitably I'll see an item that I think is more valuable than what the asking price is and I'll look up what it's selling for on eBay.

So I've done this with power tools, I've bought antiques. You should have seen me about 3 years ago haggling over this set of frilly china.

My goal in when I go to those yard sales is to find items which have been overlooked. Their true value and worth has been missed. They haven't been given honor. That's what Jesus is saying as he travels into Galilee. Now compare that with this:

⁴⁵ So when he came to Galilee, **the Galileans welcomed him,**

It sounds as if these Galileans have finally wised up and recognized who Jesus is and are ready to honor him, but notice

the rest of the verse:

having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast.

Here is what John is setting up for you: **there is a way of receiving Jesus that actually dishonors him.** It is possible for you to live the kind of life that outwardly looks as if you are welcoming Jesus, when in fact you have completely missed him altogether. There is a kind of faith that dishonors Jesus.

What does that faith look like? How can we identify it so that we can be certain that we possess faith that Jesus accepts?

The first clue to understanding what kind of faith dishonors Jesus is found in the verse I just read, the second half of verse 45. John says that the Galileans welcomed Jesus, which should be our goal too; to welcome Jesus, to embrace Jesus, to receive Jesus.

But John tells us that they welcomed him **having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast.** The idea is that there had been no place for Jesus in Galilee, **until they saw what he did at the feast.** So, now they have seen something that has made Jesus finally appealing to them.

⁴⁶ So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill.⁴⁷ When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸ So Jesus said to him, “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.”

In the Greek both instances of the word you are actually plural. Jesus is speaking to this man who has come 15 miles to request a miracle, and the rest of the Galileans and he’s saying, “Unless **you all** see signs and wonders you won’t believe.”

So, here’s the kind of faith that dishonors Jesus: **We dishonor**

Jesus when we care more about his gifts than him. It’s a faith that mistakes his purpose. It’s faith that doesn’t want Jesus, but only wants what Jesus can offer.

Don’t miss this: The Galileans welcome him! **And Jesus says their welcome of him utterly dishonors who he is because they don’t really want him—they only want what he can give them, and if they could get it without him, there’d be no welcome.**

Church, let me give you two categories to help you understand this:

Category #1: Hard Prosperity Gospel

PAUSE

We have a generation of Christians who haven’t read the Bible, and because they haven’t read the Bible they are listening to preachers who preach this:

If you will exercise your faith, if you will obey God, if you will live with positive thoughts, then God will open all kinds of doors of bodily, and financial prosperity for you.

They take the scriptures and twist the promises of God such that the promises of God become more attractive, and more desirable than God himself. This is the heresy of the Galileans.

Now notice, I said Hard Prosperity Gospel. Most of the teachers in this category are easy to recognize because most are on TV and they’re the guys who are asking poor widows to send them the last of their medicine money and have faith. They’re asking you to “sow a seed of faith” or buy their miracle healing water. They are actually peddling miracles for hire.

Now, I’m always amazed at these guys who claim to have healing powers and yet they use reading glasses to read their Bible. And, I always wondered as a kid when I would see them on TV why they

wouldn't go to a hospital and just heal everyone. Wouldn't that be the polite thing to do if you were legit?

Let me give you 2 reasons why this teaching is wrong:

1. We all know faithful people who are sick and dying, or faithful Christians who are poor. Some of the most faithful, Jesus loving people in this church can tell you of deep valleys of physical pain and financial struggle they have walked through. Their own lives are a testimony that being faithful to Jesus doesn't guarantee health and money. That's the first reason. The second is even more compelling.

2. Second, just a cursory reading of the New Testament would reveal that hard prosperity theology is a joke. Why? Because Jesus himself was the most faithful human being who ever lived.

Was his life filled with money? No! Jesus said the birds have nests and the foxes have holes but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head! At the very end of his life all Jesus owned—his only possession was the robe he was wearing and even that was taken from him.

Did Jesus ever experience physical pain? Yes! No one was more faithful to God than Jesus and the result and purpose of his faithfulness was to suffer.

You see, a Hard Prosperity theology loves Hebrews 11:32-35

³² *And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign*

armies to flight.³⁵ Women received back their dead by resurrection.

Sounds pretty good right? But, you have to read the second half of verse 35:

Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life.³⁶ Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

*³⁹ **And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised,⁴⁰ since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.***²

What could be better than conquering kingdoms, enforcing justice, and receiving back your dead just like this Galilean nobleman here in John 4? What could be better than that?

Having the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God, who has been face to face with the Father from all eternity come in human flesh so that he can be face to face with you, be spat on, suffer in your place under the weight of your sin and then present his own righteous record and give it to you as a gift! **That is what God has provided that's better than money and wealth!**

Category #2: Soft Prosperity Gospel.

PAUSE

Hard prosperity Gospel is easy to spot, because it ignores Jesus and goes straight to what Jesus can give you. A soft prosperity gospel is subtle, it's pernicious. And here's what it is:

² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2016). (Heb 11:36–

40). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Living by a soft prosperity gospel means that you assume the gospel. So you would say, “Of course Jesus is most important. Of course having him is most important.” But then you focus, not on Jesus, but on the techniques of Christian living that you believe will offer you financial success, marital bliss, and self-improvement.

It’s the kind of Christian living that focuses on being an “overcomer.” It’s taking a verse like Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”—a verse Paul wrote while in a Roman prison thanking the church for sending him some money because he had nothing—and sticking it on the back of a soccer uniform as if that verse means Jesus is going to help you score a goal.

PAUSE

It’s the kind of Christianity that rushes past the cross in order to grasp a crown.

PAUSE

Friends, true Christianity shuns earthly crowns and bows down and wraps its arms around a bloody cross where the curse of sin was broken!

True Christianity honors Jesus by elevating the gift of having him and him alone above anything he can offer. It’s the kind of Christianity that says, “Give me Jesus. If I can’t have anything else, give me Jesus.”

It’s possible to have a faith that dishonors Jesus. It’s a faith that elevates the gift above the giver.

2. JESUS’ GRACE EXTENDS BEYOND YOUR EXPECTATIONS

⁴⁹ *The official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”*

⁵⁰ *Jesus said to him, “Go; your son will live.” The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. ⁵¹ As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. ⁵² So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” ⁵³ The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.”*

Jesus performs a miracle even as he criticizes the people’s love of miracles.

Think about this: Jesus knows these Galileans don’t understand his worth. They’re taking advantage of him. Yet it didn’t stop him from turning the water to wine in chapter 2. It doesn’t stop him from healing the boy in chapter 4.

Jesus doesn’t perform this miracle as a response to the amazing Christology of the Galileans. They’ve actually misunderstood who the Christ is completely.

Not only that, but...

Jesus gives the gift of this miracle to a man who doesn’t trust his power.

I don’t know if you caught this, but the man insists twice that Jesus come down to his house. He lived 15 miles away. In other words, he’s saying, “Listen, Jesus I have a big problem. I’ve heard you are the local miracle worker. I’ve exhausted the natural remedies. I’ve called all the doctors. I’m desperate so you need to come to my house.”

He thinks Jesus can only heal the boy if he comes to his home. “I know you’re a powerful dude, Jesus, but surely you have to be able to touch my son. Surely your power doesn’t stretch 15 miles.”

And, he thinks there’s only hope if Jesus gets there before the boy

dies. “Sir, come down before my child dies. Jesus I realize you’re a pretty big deal around here, but if my son dies then there’s no hope. Only God can give life. I know you can heal him, but you can’t raise anyone from the dead.”

The gift isn’t a reward for the nobleman’s recognition of Jesus’ divine power, it’s a grace bestowed in spite of the man’s ignorance.

Finally, Jesus gives the gift of this miracle to a man who has wicked connections.

Now, you don’t see this in the English, but the term here for nobleman is *basilikos*. All the commentators point out that this man was a member of Herod Antipas’ royal court. **Herod is the man who would have Jesus cousin, John the Baptizer beheaded.**

Jesus performs this miracle for one of his biggest enemies. This isn’t a gift to a friend. This is service to someone who hates everything he stands for. This gift isn’t given because this nobleman has some connections and can garner some favors for Jesus—no! This gift is given even though the nobleman is friends with someone who hates Jesus and would see him killed.

Here’s what all this means: Jesus isn’t just full of divine power. **He’s full of divine grace.**

And here’s how this should shape the way we think:

The good gifts that come into our lives are more frequently the benevolence of a gracious God who is acting in spite of our ignorance more than they are the well-earned comforts of hard working saints.

Be careful about how and when you say, “I’m blessed.” **Friends, we are blessed if we have received the mercies of God in Christ Jesus and nothing else.**

So many people look at life with the glass half empty or the glass half full. The Scriptures teach us that because of our sin the glass should be full and running over with the wrath of God, but on the cross Jesus drained the cup of justice.

And when you know that the cup should be full with foaming justice, an empty glass never looked so good.

Jesus grace extends beyond our expectations. So go to him. Don’t let your uncertainty of faith shake you from going to him! Don’t let your sin keep you from going to him! Don’t let anything keep you from going to him, because his grace extends beyond your expectations.

3. THE GREATEST MIRACLE IS HAVING A HEART THAT GLORIES IN CHRIST MORE THAN MIRACLES

I don’t know if I’ve ever shared this, but all through middle and high school I played drums in a couple of worship teams as well as a few jazz bands. In fact, as a teenager all I did was eat, sleep, and breath playing music.

In college there was a group of guys I played with and when we’d get together we’d stay up til 3am playing and rehearsing. It was just what we did.

I can remember rehearsing some music, and we’d be playing through a song, and then all of a sudden the bass player would strike a note and one of my drums would start humming as if I had hit it, but I hadn’t. I’d stop the song and I’d tell the bass player to replay the phrase. He’d start playing through the notes and none of them made the drum buzz until he got to that one note. He’d hit it and the drum would go, “HMMMMMMMMM.” And as soon as he would mute the string the drum would stop.

Musicians call this Sympathetic Resonance. The idea is that my drum was tuned to the exact note that the bass was playing, so

that, when that note was struck, my drum began to play. The only way to make the drum stop humming is to retune it.

What this story is telling you is that have a natural, built in sympathetic resonance note. Because of our sin the instrument of our heart resonates with the things God can give us more than we resonate with God himself. We become more excited, we begin to vibrate at the thought of receiving Jesus' benefits, more than receiving Jesus himself.

John Piper puts it this way: "You can be more in love with the power of Jesus than the person of Jesus."

⁵³ *The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." **And he himself believed, and all his household.*** ⁵⁴ *This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.* ³

As you read the Gospel of John you learn that the word "believe" is the central word in the entire book. It occurs 84 times in John's gospel. The reason for that is John's main reason for writing the book is to get you to believe.

John 20:30

³⁰ *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;* ³¹ *but these are written so that you may **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by **believing** you may have life in his name.* ⁴

Now go back to our text:

The power of Jesus over the boy's sickness is astounding.:

- Jesus heals the boy from a distance. He doesn't have to be in the same room as him.

- Jesus heals the boy with a word. He says, "Go; your son will live." He doesn't have to touch the boy. He doesn't have to invoke a long incantation. He speaks, and the sickness leaves.

But as amazing as the miracle is, it's not the culmination of the story. Because, look where John ends:

*"**And he himself believed, and all his household.**"*

The focus of this text isn't so much the miracle that Jesus performed, but what accompanied the miracle: this Galilean man **came to Jesus looking for a cure, and he left with a Savior.** He came looking for a miracle, and he received two. You say, "What do you mean, Jonathan? I only see the one. The boy was healed."

Friends, the greatest miracles of Jesus were not giving sight to the blind, healing the sick, or feeding the multitudes. The greatest work of Jesus was the transforming of dead rebels into living sons and daughters of God.

The greatest miracle that Jesus performs is the retuning of your heart to his graces. The greatest miracle is that whereas you once loved God only for what he could give you, now you begin to love God, you begin to vibrate and resonate with a sense of his presence because you're tuned to his note. You no longer love him for your own sake, and you begin to love him for his sake. Because of who he is!

Let me ask you this, if all we had to offer you was Jesus, would that be enough for you? Has it been enough for you?

What if we couldn't help you have a better marriage?
What if you never get victory over that sin in your life?
What if you live the rest of your life struggling to make ends

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2016). (Jn 4:43–54). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2016). (Jn 20:30–31). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

meet?

Listen, what we are weekly tuning ourselves to is the attitude of life that says, “Jesus is enough for me.” We want to say, with the Psalmist:

²⁵ *Whom have I in heaven but you?
And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.*
²⁶ *My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion
forever.*⁵

Today, let’s retune our hearts to the notes of God’s mercy in Christ Jesus. Let’s hum and resonate with his love this week. Let’s reset our focus on him, and follow him wherever he leads.

Let’s pray.

⁵ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2016). (Ps 73:23–

26). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.