

Today we are talking about John 4:43-John 5:15. This passage is broken up into 3 sections and three different encounters with Jesus. First we meet the Galileans, then the royal official, and thirdly a crippled man and the religious leaders. All these sections show us ways people respond to Jesus and where they put their faith. Who we put our faith in is the main concern. We learn from Romans 1:16-17 The Gospel is the Power Of God for salvation to everyone who believes- to the Jew first and also to the Greek- For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, the righteous should live by faith. Let's pray before we dive in. Father, there is a lot going on in these passages. Will you lift our eyes to you and open our hearts to hear the truth and act from that place? Let your Spirit wash over us tonight and in the days going forward. Let us be reminded of your truths. In Jesus' name.

John mentions the word believe over 90 times in his Gospel.

Tim Keller points out that faith in Jesus Christ starts with thinking! Keller says- “ faith is not opposed to reason” Faith is born by the truth penetrating your heart through God’s Holy Spirit. You have to spend time looking at God’s Word and get the evidence. Pray and ask God to reveal Himself and His truth to you. We do this so we are reminded of what God’s truth is - about His Son, about who we are to Him, and His great love for us. It is way too easy for us to forget so we need to be reminded over and over about the truths of God.

Keller often says you can either listen to your heart or speak to your heart.

Pause

What is the difference? Listening to your heart is reactive but speaking to your heart is massaging the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ into your heart. When we spend time in God’s Word and prayer the Holy Spirit prompts us and we remember what the Gospel tells us when we need it most.

So let's see what is going on in these passages. We will start with the Galileans v 43-45- After two days he departed for Galilee. For Jesus Himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown. 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.

John has just written in the previous chapter about the Samaritans calling Jesus the Savior of the world. They took Jesus at his Word. In Chapter 4:42 it says They said to the woman, "it is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed, the Savior of the world. In contrast, John now shows us the Galileans shallow faith based on signs they saw. They just saw all that Jesus did at the Passover in Jerusalem. It is His hometown- people know His family name. But did you notice the phrase- " For Jesus Himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown" - in John 2 v23-It says, Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in His

name, when they saw the signs He was doing. V24 But Jesus on His part did not entrust Himself to them, because He knew all people v25 and needed no one to bear witness about man, for He himself knew what was in man. Jesus knows what is in us! And that appearances can be deceiving. We see this in Matt 13:57 when Jesus says, “ A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household” and again in Mark 6:4 which adds “And he could do no mighty work there except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief.”

Pause

Jesus knows that signs and wonders can be places people put their faith instead of in Him. The Galilians know of Jesus but they do not have a personal relationship with him. He is someone they admire but they do not recognize who He really is and what lengths He is willing to go to save them. John Piper says this is a

strong indictment of the Galileans. He calls them sign seekers and wonder worshippers. It is the belief in the signs themselves not belief in Jesus, treasuring Him as the Son of God full of grace and truth. God does use his miracles to strengthen our faith. And, often, that is how faith starts.

Pause

This is an example that encouraged my faith. I remember when my daughter, Chrissy, was little there was a thunderstorm and our lights went out. Chrissy was scared so I dutifully said let's pray and ask God to turn the lights back on. Chrissy began to pray and said "God I am scared will you put the lights back on"- you could have blown me over with a feather when the lights came on at the very end of her prayer! This strengthened both of us in our faith - Jesus can use events like this to encourage us and to move us into believing and relying on him alone for salvation. Pause

Sisters- This is Jesus' goal for us to believe and rely on Him for salvation.

PAUSE

The passage goes on and we see Jesus arriving in Cana in Galilee and we read In V46-51. **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.

The Gospel of John reveals seven signs that show Jesus' distinctiveness manifesting the glory of God. Bruce Milne says this about the seven signs "special actions by Jesus which reveal his glory to those who believe and which confront others with the need to decide about Jesus." Today we are focusing on two of them - healing the official's son and healing the lame man.

You may think the healing of the official's son is the same story as the centurion's servant being healed in Matt 8 and Luke 7. I thought it sounded like the same story too but it is not. In our account, the royal official is asking Jesus to come to his house. He believes Jesus must be present to heal his son. He is approaching Him likely because he has heard that Jesus has been doing miracles and he needs one for his son to be healed. He is not approaching Jesus as the Son of God. The man does

not come with belief in who Jesus is but only as a desperate father with no other place to go. Remember he is a wealthy, powerful, and influential man, But he can not save his son. The man is desperate! What a testimony of his love for his son. He has come a long way to seek Jesus' healing touch. But he has it in his mind that Jesus must come with him to heal his son. I have done that- Ask God for something with the way it should work all laid out in my mind. Forgetting that God knows the beginning, the middle, and the end of all things!

Jesus wants more for this man and for us to understand who He is! He knows this man and the onlookers have only believed because of the signs and wonders they have seen“ but they need something more- something deeper!

Their unbelieve must have brought deep sorrow to Jesus but Jesus keeps going to places he knows he will not be honored and performs amazing miracles and teaches people who He really is.

This will in the end get Him killed but that is why He came and part of the plan. That is stunning!

PAUSE!!!!

But back to the official and his son-we notice this desperate man is not put off by Jesus' words. He begs Jesus to come to his home and save his son. Jesus speaks five powerful, healing words- Go, your son will live. The man must leave without Jesus. We are told he takes Jesus at his word and departs. Jesus speaks and things change! The desperate man becomes the believing man. One commentator describes the man as a sign seeker. His son is sick and he wants him healed. And Jesus gives the man the gift of a healed son! But something must have clicked for this man and he started to see the sovereignty of Jesus. Because he walks away, taking Jesus at His Word, and starts the journey home. But the healing is not the main point of this story! The man's suffering points him to Jesus because he

wants relief, and Jesus relieves his suffering but the official gets so much more!

His tiny faith turns to saving faith! This is a beautiful progression.- that we need to pay attention too- it is so important. One commentator says the man moved from crisis faith to confident faith to confirmed faith to contagious faith! Let me repeat that crisis faith to confident faith to confirmed faith to contagious faith! Crisis-confident-confirmed-contagious-

We can only praise God for the truth of a Savior who transforms our desperate need into a saving faith! Thank you Lord Jesus!

PAUSE

This brings us to Chapter 5 and the healing of the lame man. **5**

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. **2** Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. **3** In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed.

5 One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. **6** When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, Do you want to be healed? **7** The sick man answered him, Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me. **8** Jesus said to him, Get up, take up your bed, and walk. **9** And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath. **10** So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed. **11** But he answered them, The man who healed me, that man said to me, Take up your bed, and walk.

12 They asked him, Who is the man who said to you, Take up your bed and walk? **13** Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. **14** Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may

happen to you. **15** The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him

The 1st thing we notice in the ESV is that v4 has been skipped. There is a footnote about v.4. It was not part of the earliest transcripts and was added later as an explanation about why people gathered around the water. Taking verse 4 out and putting it in the footnotes shows the lengths the translators took to ensure the translation could be trusted. And the truth is this is less about the water and more about Jesus and his work!

We are confronted with a scene of a multitude of people with various illnesses and physical impairments. Jesus picks one man to heal. Dale Ralph Davis reminds us that if we ever feel invisible in a crowd- Jesus sees you! Jesus knows the man's misery, he has compassion on him and he relieves his pain with His powerful words. JC Ryle says, "We are taught, for one thing, in this passage, what misery sin has brought into the world. We read of a man who had been ill for no less than thirty-eight years! Thirty

eight weary summers and winters, he had endured pain and infirmity. He had seen others healed at the waters of Bethesda and going to their homes rejoicing. But for him there had been no healing. Friendless, helpless, and hopeless, he lay near the wonder-working waters. But derived no benefit from them. “

Sisters- Sin hurts us! Sin hurts us! Our lives can seem helpless and hopeless and Jesus transforms them and gives us new life!

Jesus is at work! He is returning and will make all things new!

Revelation 21:3-5a it says, And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, no crying, no pain any more, for the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Jesus moves towards the

people with pain- heartbroken people, those in need! He does not take the easy road. He went where no one else would go.

This particular man has been paralyzed for 38 years! Jesus asks him a strange question- Do you want to get well? Milne points out that there are implications for getting well when you have built a whole life around an illness. Anyone who Jesus delivers from sin must also face this question-are we willing to repent of our sin and choose loyalty to Jesus? Jesus wants to restore this man who has no ability on his own to be healed. The man focuses his healing process on the water. He says he has no one to help him into the pool. He is despairing of life and has put all his hope on getting in the water. He is missing what he really needs- Jesus! He has boxed God's work into a pool of water. We can do this too. I want to share with you that I have been praying about one specific thing for over 28 years and several times have told God the way I see things working out! I can only repent! This story gives me the courage and desire to follow and trust God while I wait! I am also

encouraged because even though the suffering lasted a long time- Jesus shows up at the perfect time to change everything! He saw this man's long standing need and had compassion. He also shows us the same.

What happens next in the story is astonishing! Jesus tells him to pick up his mat and go home! As a nurse I can tell you I have seen many people lose their muscularity and strength to walk even after just a few days of not getting out of bed. They need physical therapy and occupational therapy to get back to doing daily activities. The thought of how contracted this man's body must have been! But Jesus, using the power of his Words, defies all of this and the man is healed! We are not told that he has shown any signs of belief but Christ in his loving compassion has healed this man! This gives us a glimpse of great hope! This is a life changing miracle! Jesus speaks and bones and muscles and tendons act right away! He has power! But again the point of this miracle is for us to Fix our eyes on Jesus not on the miracle itself. He

changes and transforms people. He does that today through his Holy Spirit!

Pause

We learn that Jesus withdraws because a crowd was forming. We also learn that it is the Sabbath day. Trouble starts to brew! In Exodus 20:8-11 we read: Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant or your female servant or your livestock or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. There the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” You see the religious leaders had decided to take some of the law and stretch it out to include things very specific that were never the original intent. One of these was you could not carry your mat on the Sabbath Day. I wondered if the man even knew

that was a law- since for 38 years he had not been able to carry his mat. What we do know is that the man does not know who healed him. Jesus fades into the crowd and the man has no idea who He is. This is another example of Jesus wanting more for people than just physical healing. If he had stayed all the people in the colonnade would have flocked to him for healing. Jesus' goal is not just for physical healing. He offers eternal life! It is also a picture of how Jesus cares for people who are not looking for him. Every day in our world someone is being blessed by Jesus who does not know him or seek him.

This is not the end of the story for this man's encounter with Jesus. We learn that Jesus seeks for the man in v. 14 and talks to him. The man has received the free gift of his body being restored and then Jesus seeks him out and tells him to use this second chance to be healed spiritually. There is an inference that something preventable happened to the man that caused his infirmity. Jesus is pointing the man to stay away from sin and

repent and follow Him. He is calling the man to Himself. Jesus calls us to himself and His holiness too- we can meet him there!

When the man finds out it was Jesus who healed him he reports it to the religious leaders. This takes the heat off him and puts it on Jesus. When I read this I felt disappointed by the man's response. It made me think of all the people that I love who are responding to Jesus this way too. But I also realized it is God who is in control of who He is calling to Himself. My role is to tell people about what Jesus has done for me and them, and the Holy Spirit is the one who opens hearts to believe the truth.

We cannot miss the great love Jesus has for this man and for the religious leaders. Jesus knew this conflict would arise and he went willingly into the conflict. Jesus is working in this man's life and the religious leaders lives. They are faced with who He is and have to decide what they will do with that truth. It is the same for us. The religious leaders have gotten so wrapped up in their

version of God's law they have completely missed the true Messiah.

My prayer for each of us, especially in light of all the current conflict in our world, is that we hold lightly to what we think is right based on our own thoughts or the thoughts of others and seek Jesus who has perfect control of all of life and can change anyone and anything with one word from His mouth. That we are people who have their eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the Father.

In closing, here are some questions that are worth considering- Are we only relying on miracles or the one who holds all time in His hands? Do we see the power of Jesus through the Holy Spirit?- we need to wrestle through our beliefs using God's Word as the compass. We are in need of Jesus transforming love every second of every day. That is why it is so important for us to dwell on His Word and pray every day with fervency and ask God to

remind us again and again that He is worthy of all our hope, our trust and our attention! Let's pray!

Father, you are the one who holds the world in place, you created all things and because of you we exist. We ask that you continue to open our eyes to your calling to holiness. Grow our faith and let our eyes always be on you Lord Jesus! Amen