

Sermon Outline

“LIFE IN HIS NAME”:
THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

YOUR SON WILL LIVE

JOHN 4:43-54

I. Introduction

II. No Honor in His Hometown (Jn 4:43-45)

- A. “After the two days he departed for Galilee” (v 43).
- B. We are given yet another reason for why Jesus was going to Galilee: “For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown” (v 44).
- C. Jesus’ entire life is mission.
 - 1. The Lord’s entire life was one of being sent by God.
 - 2. God sends his Son to where the darkness is. That’s the calling of the Messiah.
- D. With that little note in verse 44, we are now prepared for verse 45.
 - 1. When Jesus comes to Galilee, what happens? “the Galileans welcomed him...”
 - 2. They were so welcoming of Jesus, because, as verse 45 tells us, they had “seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast” (v 45).

III. “Jesus Did Not Entrust Himself to Them...” (Jn 2)

- A. John 4:45 brings us back to the events in chapter 2.
- B. In chapter 2, Jesus went to Jerusalem for a Jewish festival. He did several things then:
 - 1. He cleansed the temple (2:13-22).
 - 2. He also performed various signs (2:23) intended to unveil something of the glory that is in him and draw people to himself.
- C. How does Jesus evaluate the seemingly positive response of the people?
 - 1. John 2:23-25: “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.”
 - 2. Jesus knew that the faith of those people in Jerusalem that day was not real, saving faith.
 - 3. While these Jews may have believed that Jesus was sent from God, they were not yet at the point where they trusted him to be all that they truly needed for eternal life.

4. Many of those who were in Jerusalem at the time are now here in Galilee, welcoming Jesus.
- D. When 4:44 says that “a prophet has no honor in his own hometown,” this connects us back to 2:23-25.
—John is telling us how to interpret the situation. Just because people were welcoming Jesus doesn’t mean they were truly sincere in wanting to hear from him.
- E. This is the real nature of the human heart.
1. We want what God can give. But we don’t necessarily want God himself.
 2. We want Jesus to save us on our terms, not on his terms.
—We want Jesus to save us from earthly failure and to give us the good life. But Jesus has come to save us from sin—and from ourselves.

IV. An Official Whose Son was Ill (Jn 4:46)

- A. Jesus comes again “to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine” (v 46).
- B. While Jesus was at Cana, something else was happening in the town of Capernaum. There was “an official whose son was ill” (v 46).
- C. When “this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee,” he is desperate to see Jesus.
- D. He wants Jesus “to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death” (v 47).

V. An Unexpected Rebuke (Jn 4:48)

- A. *Jesus rebukes the official.* “So Jesus said to him, ‘Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe’” (v 48).
- B. When we hear this, we’re shocked, because nowhere are we told that the man doubted who Jesus was. If anything, the official came to Jesus because he knew Jesus could do something to save his son.
- C. Why would Jesus rebuke the man?
 1. To understand what our Lord was getting at, we have to take in the larger context again—namely, John 4:44 and 2:23-25.
 2. Jesus rebukes the man, I suspect, because Jesus knew what was in this particular man’s heart.
 3. Jesus knew that unless this man—and those around him—got the signs that they wanted, got the healing or the food or the water they so desperately wanted, they would *not* commit themselves to Jesus.
 4. Autonomous, consumeristic religion is not a modern-day thing. It is a deeply human problem.

- D. So while Jesus was addressing himself to the man, he wasn't only speaking to this man. He was addressing all those Galileans around him.
 1. The "you" in verse 48 is plural.
 2. Essentially, the Lord is saying, "Unless all of you see signs and wonders, you people won't believe in me."

VI. Faith in the Word of God

- A. There seems to be a contrast between the Samaritans and the Galilean Jews.
 1. Aside from that one demonstration of supernatural knowledge in the conversation between the Lord and the Samaritan woman, there is no record that Jesus did miraculous signs in the presence of the Samaritans.
 2. The Samaritans believed because "*we have heard for ourselves*, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world" (v 42).
—The emphasis was on what Jesus said, not on the signs that Jesus may or may not have done.
- B. What is the Holy Spirit teaching us here?
 1. It is the lesson that will appear when we come to the end of the Gospel of John: "Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'" (20:28, 29).
 2. *Faith in Jesus on the basis of his Word is far better than faith on the basis of our sight.*

VII. "The Man Believed the Word" (Jn 4:49-50)

- A. To his credit, the official is persistent. Here, he is an example for us.
- B. If we are children of God, we can expect that the Father will lovingly rebuke us whenever our hopes are misplaced.
—Rather than rest on his promises, you and I would rather listen to our own feelings. Rather than trust in Jesus, we would rather doubt God—and believe in our own doubts.
- C. But having been rebuked, children of God will go to the Father *anyway*, because they know that salvation and perfect love is found in no one else.
—Having heard the Lord's rebuke, the official still pleads with Jesus: "Sir, come down before my child dies" (v 49).
- D. This government official—who was perhaps a local chief from Herod's court, who was someone who was in the habit of reducing his fellow countrymen to nothing by his sheer arrogance—is now himself reduced to nothing.
 1. He knows that he cannot hold back his trust in Jesus.
 2. Either Jesus alone is the Savior—or the official needs to go someplace else.
 3. By the grace of God, the official chooses wisely. He puts his hope in Jesus alone.
- E. "Jesus said to him, 'Go; your son will live.'"

- F. The official takes Jesus at his Word: “The man *believed the word* that Jesus *spoke* to him and went on his way” (v 50).
- G. The boy is healed. Jesus did not even have to go to Capernaum to see the boy. He healed with a word.
- H. As the man makes his way home, he meets his servants who relay to him the good news (vv 51-53).
- I. What impact did that sign have on the man and his family? “And he himself believed, and all his household” (v 53).

VIII. Grace for Desperate Fathers

- A. A brief fathers’ day note (due to the father-son relationship in this passage).
- B. Fathers’ Day can be a hard day for fathers, because we know only too well how we have not lived up to what God has called us to be (let alone the demands of family, church, workplace, etc.)
- C. We feel helpless so often.
- D. Jesus is the Savior of imperfect fathers and of their ill children.
- E. Fathers...
 1. the best thing that we can do for our fatherhood is to go to Jesus and ask him to form us according to his plans.
 2. the best thing we can give to our sons and daughters is not ourselves (or our wealth) but the Lord Jesus Christ.

IX. The Savior of Helpless Government Officials (and Other Important Types)

- A. This man is not just any father. He is an official. He works for the government (likely Herod).
- B. This man is something like a Nicodemus, a person of social influence and wealth.
- C. But in order for him to truly believe in Jesus, he has to be reduced.
- D. Unless...
 1. you sense your own helplessness, you will not see the need to come to Jesus.
 2. you are persuaded that your problems are bigger than you, you will not see the need to go to Jesus.
 3. you cannot even save your loved ones, you will not see the need of fleeing to Jesus.

4. you see who Jesus is (who God has given him to be for us), you will not trust him.

E. God is at work pointing and bringing people to the Jewish *Moshiach*, the true Savior of the world, who is the Lord Jesus.

X. Two Signs, One Gospel

Why does Jesus heal the official's son? He does it because he loves the boy (cf. Mk 5:41). Compassion is always behind the healings of the Lord. But more than that: Jesus heals the boy to point his countrymen to *himself*. The signs are meant to direct us to Jesus, the ultimate Reality of life. One day, this boy will die physically. What will not die is the resurrected Jesus. All who come to him will rise to life again (Jn 5:25). Verse 54 forms a fitting conclusion to this chapter: "This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee." The first sign was the turning of water into wine. The second sign is the healing of the boy. Two different miracles. But one underlying Gospel message (which only the Samaritans, of all people (!) seem to have understood). Jesus is God's appointed Savior of the world. Let us place all our hopes on him. He will save us to the utmost.

Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything that you disagree with or found difficult to accept?
3. "For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown" (v.44). Discuss the meaning of this proverb. What does this tell us about the place of rejection in the Messiah's mission?
4. According to v 45, how do the Galileans respond to Jesus' arrival? Why?
5. Why did Jesus rebuke the official and his fellow Galileans?
6. How is the official's persistence a lesson for us?
7. How is Jesus the Savior of helpless fathers, desperate government officials, and their sick children? How is Jesus the Savior of *you* today in your present life challenges?