John 4:43-54 Commentary
New Revised Standard Version

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Study Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the *International Bible Study Forum*.

(John 4:43) When the two days were over, he went from that place to Galilee

Jesus led the Samaritans to saving faith in Him by words, not miracles. As a prophet, He told the woman at the well about her past and her sins. In addition, He shared words with her that so totally transformed her that when she went and told the townspeople about Jesus being the Messiah, they rushed out to meet Him. Those who listened to Jesus then "believed because of his word" (John 4:41). After spending two days teaching them more about God the Father and himself as the Son of God, for Jesus had

said they had been worshiping what they did not know, they came to know that Jesus is truly the Savior of the world (John 4:22, 42). Their increasing understanding of Jesus began with Jesus being known as a prophet, then as the Messiah, and finally as the Savior of the world. Jesus being the Savior of the world is good news for the world. Since then, the knowledge of Jesus as the Savior of the world has traveled around the world. Having completed the work His Father had given Him in Samaria, Jesus went on to Galilee with His disciples.

(John 4:44) (for Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in the prophet's own country).

Though born in Bethlehem of Judea, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus made their home in the town of Nazareth in Galilee. In Matthew 13:53-58, Mark 6:1-6, and Luke 4:16-30, you can read more about how the townspeople of Nazareth rejected Jesus, refused to honor Him, and tried to kill Him.

(John 4:45) When he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, since they had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the festival; for they too had gone to the festival.

Many Galileans had gone to the Passover festival in Jerusalem and they had seen Jesus perform many miracles. Perhaps some of them had even heard about Jesus cleansing the temple. Remember: in John 2:23, we

learned, “When he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing.” The Galileans welcomed Him for His healings and miracles and perhaps because some of them also believed in His name. Ideally, those who believed in Jesus would believe in Him because of His words, as did the believing Samaritans (who were despised by the Jews), and then want to know Jesus better.

(John 4:46) Then he came again to Cana in Galilee where he had changed the water into wine. Now there was a royal official whose son lay ill in Capernaum.

Upon returning to Galilee, Jesus went to Cana, where He had performed His first sign in Galilee, and where “His disciples believed in Him” (John 2:11). Now, we learn that Jesus had traveled through Samaria to heal a man’s son before he died, and this became His second sign in Galilee. Jesus’ signs “revealed His glory,” and John made special mention of some of these signs. However, Jesus refused to perform “signs” on demand to prove who He was or to prove He had authority to do His Father’s will (see John 2:18). Jesus performed “signs” to meet real human needs, and meeting real human needs revealed His glory, “the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Jesus revealed His glory supremely when He died on the cross and rose again to save us from our sins. Now, Jesus will help a member of King Herod’s royal court, and this will become a sign.

(John 4:47) When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

When Jesus left Nazareth, He made His home in Capernaum, where this royal official may have learned about Jesus (Matthew 4:13). Having ministered to a woman despised by the Jews, Jesus will now minister to a member of Herod's court, also despised by the Jews. Jesus came to be the Savior of the world, to save sinners and give them eternal life; so, John shows us how Jesus ministered to the rich and the poor, to the honored and the despised, to the young and the old, and to others. Jesus showed God's love for all people, but some still rejected Him. When this royal official heard that Jesus had returned to Galilee, he traveled the twenty miles from Capernaum to Cana to see Him. Probably based on reports, this father believed Jesus had the power to save his son from death.

(John 4:48) Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe."

Samaritans in Sychar believed Jesus "because of His word." To make a point, Jesus told these Galileans that they would not believe Him or believe in Him unless they saw "signs and wonders." Jesus wanted the crowd and this man to believe because of His word, not because He worked signs and wonders in an effort to compel their belief; then, they would want to learn more about Him,

come to know Him as more than the Messiah, and truly seek to know Him as their Savior. Unhappily, no matter how many signs and wonders Jesus performed, some still refused to believe in Him, which fulfilled the word of the prophet Isaiah (see John 12:36-43)

(John 4:49) The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my little boy dies."

The father had not come to Jesus seeking signs or wonders in order to believe in Jesus. He had come because He believed the reports he had heard about Jesus. He believed that Jesus could heal his son, if Jesus would go to his son before his son died. He believed reports, even as the townspeople believed the reports of the Samaritan woman. Jesus chose not to work a sign or wonder before the crowd (see John 4:48). But Jesus did work a sign by healing the father's son in an unexpected way—in a way the crowd would not see.

(John 4:50) Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way.

Just as God spoke the world into existence in the beginning, and just as Jesus was and is the Word of God, and just as "all things came into being through Him," Jesus spoke the word and healed the father's son. The darkness of disease could not overcome the light and words of Jesus (see John 1:1-4). Jesus did not need to go see the boy, but the father needed to believe and obey

Jesus. He needed to obey and "Go" back to his son. He needed to believe and not beg in unbelief for Jesus to come, see, touch, and personally heal his son. The father did not need to believe for Jesus to heal his son. Jesus was not dependent of the father's faith to make his son well. Jesus healed his son the moment Jesus said, "your son will live." Upon hearing Jesus' words, "your son will live," the man "believed the word that Jesus spoke to him;" therefore, he started on his way back to Capernaum. Without seeing a sign, before the crowd the man showed his faith in Jesus when he obeyed Jesus. It is a wonder the man stopped begging Jesus and believed Jesus—such is the power of Jesus' word. *Believing in Jesus* is the beginning of the Christian life that soon leads to *believing Jesus*, *loving Jesus*, and *obeying Jesus*.

(John 4:51) As he was going down, his slaves met him and told him that his child was alive.

The father's faith in and obedience to Jesus was rewarded the moment Jesus healed his son, and then before he reached home his slaves found him and told him that his son was alive. In this way, Jesus overcame any fears and worries that the father might have had before he reached home to see if his son was actually saved from death according to Jesus word.

(John 4:52) So he asked them the hour when he began to recover, and they said to him, "Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him."

In Jesus' day it usually took at least a day to travel between Capernaum and Cana. Jesus had spoken the word at 1:00 pm, and at 1:00 pm Jesus healed the father's son without needing to see him or prescribe a treatment for him. By speaking the word of healing, Jesus did what only God, the Son of God, could do. The first time the father learned of this miracle was from his slaves, and he would soon confirm their words when he saw his son.

(John 4:53) The father realized that this was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he himself believed, along with his whole household.

From their experience of this sign and wonder, the official's whole household believed in Jesus, and from that point on they would obviously seek to know more about Jesus. Just as one woman's transformation led to many in her town coming to faith in Jesus, because Jesus had saved their son from death, the physical saving of this boy led those in his household to come to faith in Jesus—both slave and free believed in Jesus.

(John 4:54) Now this was the second sign that Jesus did after coming from Judea to Galilee.

Though no one outside Capernaum saw this second sign, and though the residents of Cana may have never learned that this boy was saved from his disease and fever, Jesus knew and His disciples came to know that this was the second sign that Jesus gave them in Galilee. Jesus' first

sign depended on His presence, and the obedience of the servants to Jesus' words when He told them to put water in the water jars that Jesus then changed into wine. Jesus' second sign did not rely on His presence in Capernaum or on the obedience of the father or anyone else. Jesus "simply" spoke the word and healed the boy. Still, the father obeyed Jesus' command and then the next day he learned that Jesus had healed his son. In these first four chapters of John's gospel we see the power of Jesus' words demonstrated and the importance of believing Jesus's words and obeying Jesus' words.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why was Jesus welcomed when He went to Galilee?

2. What are the two signs that Jesus gave when He was in Galilee?

3. What kind of person went from Capernaum to Cana to see Jesus? Why did he go to see Jesus?

4. What did Jesus do to meet the person's need? Why do you think Jesus met his need in this way?

5. How do we know the person who went to see Jesus believed Jesus?

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