

The Church of the Servant King

Survey of the Bible Series – The Gospel of John (SB_JN4B_Jesus Heals the Nobleman's Son – the Second Sign)

Introduction

We concluded our lesson last week with the story of the woman at the well and the Samaritans who came to Jesus as a result of her testimony. While Jesus came to offer His gospel first to the Jews, according to John's record, the first large group of people to receive the gospel were Samaritans. This reminds me of the principle stated in Matthew 20:16 and Luke 13:30 that the last shall be first. Today, we see those in lands of plenty and abundant opportunity growing increasingly indifferent whereas those in third world countries are increasingly interested in the eternal truths of Scripture. The Jews (i.e. Jesus' own) were rejecting Him for the most part. The Samaritans responded very positively to Him evidently.

The receptivity by the Samaritans of Jesus caused Jesus to compare them to fields that are "white for harvest" (4:35). The disciples would benefit from what Jesus (and others – perhaps John and his disciples) had sown (4:38). Later, after Jesus' death, Philip would experience similar results in Samaria (Acts 8:4-17).

Note also that the Samaritan woman's testimony had effect in large part due to the fact that she had a genuine personal experience behind it. The change in her life and outlook was dramatic and others couldn't help but notice. *Application:* We can study the Scriptures and know Bible doctrine with pinpoint accuracy, but it is the testimony of a personal experience with the Lord and its effect in our lives that will get people's attention.

The joy that our Lord experienced in watching this Samaritan town come to believe in Him is the same joy that sustained Him on the Cross.

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb 12:1b-2)

No doubt Jesus reflected upon such passages as Isaiah 53:11-12 as He endured the agony of the Cross. The apostle John records the ultimate outcome of Jesus' efforts in Revelation 5:12-14.

Paul knew this same joy. Paul equated the effort of leading others spiritually to the "pains of childbirth" (Gal 4:19) and spoke of the labors of caring for the frail (1 Thess 2:9-11), sleepless nights from deep concern (2 Co 11:27-28). To Paul, the joy that resulted from this effort was his very life (1 Thess 3:8). There is no joy in life greater than that of realizing the eternal significance of one's efforts in time. This is the "eternal fruit" or "wages" of which Paul and Jesus spoke (4:36 cf. 1 Thess 2:19-20). Such is the rivers of living water of which Jesus later speaks (7:38) and which can only emerge out of a life which has experience such joy on a personal level.

Application: Have you ever experience this joy in your life? Are you experiencing it on a daily basis? Periodically? Once, you say you might have?

Jesus Goes to Galilee – 4:43-45

After two days with the Samaritans, Jesus traveled to Galilee. The Galileans welcomed Him (Jn 4:45) and no doubt, Jesus had friends in Cana as a result of the wedding miracles He had performed there recorded in chapter 2.

Jesus Heals From a Distance – 4:46-54

This “nobleman” was a royal officer – one in service of the king or tetrarch of Galilee. It is possible that he was a Jew since Jesus included him among those who desired signs and wonders (4:48). The “you” is plural in verse 48 and indicates that Jesus was addressing the unbelievers of Galilee and unbelievers among the officials of Israel that this man represented. This man’s desperation drove him to go to Cana to find Jesus from Capernaum which was about 20 to 25 miles away. This official was in no position to get into a theological argument with Jesus as to whether He had the omnipotent power of God at His disposal to perform such a healing. He could only plead for mercy.

Jesus’ seemingly sharp reply to the official’s request was in reality a challenge to the man to have a higher quality of faith. The nobleman is said to have believed twice – once in verse 50 and again in verse 53. In verse 50, the man believed that Jesus could heal, but evidently had not accepted Jesus to be the Son of God. However, in verse 53, it appears that the man’s faith was in Jesus’ Person as the Son of God. His faith is connected to the fact that this is the second of seven “signs” in the Gospel of John that were designed to identify Jesus’ Person as the Son of God. John indicates that these “signs” were performed so that people might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing they might have life (20:31). This faith bore eternal fruit in the man’s life – his whole family believed. Those who trust in the Lord will not be ashamed (Ro 5:5; 10:11). *Application:* Are you living your life trusting that the Lord’s word is true or do you live your life with no experiential acknowledgement of its reality in your life? When we sin deliberately or when we quench the Holy Spirit’s ministry in our lives and do not yield to His leading, we have in effect practiced unbelief. We have not incorporated the spiritual reality of our participation in His death, burial and resurrection into our lives (Ro 6:6, 11, 13). We have disregarded the reality of the bema seat judgment, thus we have failed to trust that His word is true (2 Co 5:10).