

YOUR STORIES

Learning to trust starts as an infant and continues throughout our lives. When was a time when you remember learning trust? Where is a place in your life where you regularly need trust? What makes trust a challenge?

AN INTRODUCTION TO THIS WEEK'S PASSAGE

This week's passage finishes a loop of stories of Jesus' early works that reveal who He is, Messiah and Lord. The author selected episodes to reveal that there were (and are) different attitudes toward Jesus. The author was giving examples of those who truly believed. Check out the loop that begins and ends in a village named Cana.

3 - Jesus performed the **first SIGN** in Cana by changing water into wine. This revealed that He has power over creation. The result: His disciples believed in Him. (Side note: This water was used for purification, no longer needed because Jesus would provide purification for those who believe. Some also believe that this was a preview of Jesus providing joy in His future kingdom).

2 - Jesus went to Jerusalem and cleansed the temple. He represented God and had authority over their religious institutions. He was met with hostility instead of belief.

1 - Jesus met with a leading Jewish rabbi, Nicodemus. Jesus said that Nicodemus need to be "born again, born from above." Jesus had insight that could only come from God. Though Nicodemus' should have understood what Jesus was teaching, His immediate response was one of puzzlement or skepticism. (Later, Nicodemus believes.)

PURPOSE: The author then unveils the purpose and importance of Jesus' mission – He has come to save the world. (3:16-17). John the baptizer understood, proclaimed, and believed in Jesus as the Messiah, the Lamb of God.

1 - Jesus intentionally went to non-Jewish Samaria. There He demonstrated omniscience into a woman's personal life. She believed Him to be the Messiah who could give us living water. She hurried to share and bring back people from the town.

2 – Samaritans from the town encountered Jesus. They then believed Him to be "the Savior of the world."

3 - Jesus returned to Cana and performed the **second SIGN**. What was their response?

From this summary, we recognize that the author is contrasting the responses of people. He selected stories which funneled into His purpose for recording the signs: “These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:31)

LEARNING FROM GOD’S WORD

Read through this week’s passage: John 4:43-54.

In the previous passage, Jesus was in Sychar, Samaria. “After the two days, he left for Galilee.” He was returning to His own country, specifically Galilee, where he lived prior to beginning his traveling ministry in Israel. (Galilee was a region of Israel).

Why might the author have included Jesus’ statement about a prophet in “his own country?”



What kind of reception did Jesus receive? Why? What were they hoping to see? (45-48)

How is this similar to the weak faith of John 2:23-25?

The “royal official” would have served Herod Antipas of Galilee. How does it season the story by pointing out that he was a person of position? How would others view him?

How did the official approach Jesus? What specifically did he ask Jesus to do? Did Jesus fulfill his request? (47, 49)

Jesus’ response seems out of character until we know that he was addressing the crowd by saying, “you [plural] people.” (Jesus also included the word “wonder,” which means an act of power that would cause people to marvel.) What was Jesus’ purpose for this statement?

How did the official respond to Jesus’ rebuke and promise? What were his actions steps? How is this an example of true belief?

JUST FOR FUN

Perform a “trust fall” in your group meeting to see who truly believes the others will ‘save you.’ What does the person who falls have to ‘believe?’



DISCUSS TOGETHER

Which of Jesus’ miracles cause you to marvel? Which ones do people talk about? What was the purpose of His miracles?

In the message on Sunday, Pastor Todd contrasted “interest” and “followership.” What are the differences? How might a person detect which is true in one’s own life?

What were the faith actions of the royal official? What does it mean to take “Jesus at His word” in our lives? What are some areas where this is challenging for us?

Perhaps listen to this song together, “Is He Worthy” by Andrew Peterson. Hear it here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Olahc83Kvp4>

LET’S TRUST OUR LORD IN PRAYER

Prayer is faith, trusting God with our needs and desires. Like the royal official, let’s come to God with a humble heart and trust Him.

- Pray for God’s honor and glory, that His love and goodness is known through us
- Pray for burden-bearing love and unity in our church family
- Pray for your friends in stressful and difficult times (illness, family, job, relationships)
- Pray that our watching friends come to know Jesus as Messiah and Lord

Grace to you,

Steve