Series: Hope Again

**Take Jesus at His Word**

John 4:43-54 May 7, 2017

1. Do you believe in the Jesus of your own imagination? (vv. 43 – 46a)

a. The Galileans welcomed Jesus but didn’t honour Him.

* v. 44 *a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.*
* v. 45 *when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him*

b. The Galileans loved the signs but didn’t read them.

* v. 45 *having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem*
* v. 46 *Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine*

c. The Galileans believed but believed wrongly.

* John 2:23–25 *23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. 24 But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people 25 and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.*
* Most Canadians believe in “Moral Therapeutic Deism,” the belief that (1) God rewards people who are nice and withholds from the naughty, (2) God wants everyone to be healthy and happy, and (3) God exists but doesn’t get too involved in our daily lives. (Christian Smith: Soul Searching)

Q. What are some ways that you can welcome Jesus without honouring Him?

Q. Many at Cana had seen Jesus turn water into wine without learning what they were supposed to from it. What were Jesus’ signs supposed to point to? i.e. What were they for?

Q. What are you tempted to believe about moral therapeutic deism? What’s unbiblical about it?

2. Do you believe in the Jesus revealed in His Word?

(vv. 46b – 50)

a. Faith is often born in trouble but trouble alone is a poor teacher.

* v. 46 *at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill*
* v. 47 *he … asked him to come down and heal his son*
* John 12:37 *Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him*

b. Obstacles to believing test our faith.

* v. 46 *an official* 
  + Probably a wealthy, aristocratic, Gentile officer of Herod Antipas. Herod was the ruler who married his brother’s wife and then beheaded John the Baptist.
* v. 47 *he went to him and asked him to come down*
  + He didn’t send his wife or his servant.
* v. 48 *Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe*
  + He takes the rebuke and humbly asks again.

c. Faith to be real must rest in God’s Word.

* v. 49 *Sir, come down before my child dies*
* v. 50 *Go; your son will live.*
* The official wanted a healing on his own terms. Jesus tests him by telling him to go home and take Him at His word.
* v. 50 *The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him*
* John 10:27-28 *27My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*

Q. How has God used crises to help you believe that He’s real?

Q. What would it look for someone to have a faith that rested mainly on circumstances? How can you ensure that your faith doesn’t just rest on your circumstances?

Q. What do you think you need to do to have your faith resting more fully on God’s Word?

3. Do you believe in the Jesus you’ve tested? (vv. 51 – 54)

a. True faith can rest in God’s plan.

* v. 51 *As he was going down*
* v. 52 *Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him*

b. He went to Jesus seeking healing but returned seeking a Saviour.

* v. 52 *he asked them the hour when he began to get better*
* v. 53 *The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.”*

c. Testing confirms and matures our faith.

* v. 50 *The man believed the word that Jesus spoke*
* v. 53 *And he himself believed, and all his household*
* 1 Peter 1:6-7 *6In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Q. When does your faith bring rest to your soul? When do you struggle to rest in God’s plan?

Q. Often our circumstances end at v. 51. Things get better and we become complacent. What are some things you learn from vv. 52-53 about things you should do when prayers get answered?

Q. When we experience trials we want to escape them and look to God as a “Moral Therapeutic Deity” to make things all better. What are some other things we should pray for in addition to asking God to remove our unpleasant circumstances?

Q. What do you feel you need to do to test your faith?

Study ahead: next week, we’ll look at John 5:1-17.

**Notes:**