



**November 12-13, 2022**

### **Ice Breaker Questions**

- In this week's text Jesus returns to Galilee and is welcomed as a local celebrity (John 4:43-45).
  - Who would you consider to be a local celebrity? Why do you think of them in this way?
  - Have you ever met someone you would consider to be a celebrity? If so, who was it? What were the circumstances of your meeting?

### **Understand Their Story**

In John 4:43-54 we see John (the author of the gospel) comparing peoples' responses to Jesus.

#### 1. The Galileans.

- a. The first verses indicate that the Galileans welcomed Jesus, "having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast." (v 45) What is John referring to here? What had they seen? Review John 2:13-25 to find out.
  - [Jesus clearing the temple \(2:13-22\)](#)
  - [They saw signs that he was doing \(2:23\)](#)
- b. According to John 2:23, "many believed in his name because of the signs he was doing" at the feast, but Jesus doesn't necessarily believe in them! What is the core problem of people according to Jesus in John 2:23-25, and how is this core problem expressed in John 4:43-54?
  - [Jesus knows what is in people \(2:23\). You can talk about what this means as a group: Perhaps Jesus knows that people's hearts are evil / fickle / divided / that we aren't trustworthy? Whatever it means, it causes Jesus to not entrust himself to people \(2:24\).](#)
  - [Jesus expresses the problem with people's hearts in 4:48 - they won't believe unless they see signs and wonders. They are skeptical of his ministry and don't believe his words.](#)
  - i. As you read Jesus' words in John 4:48, can you think of people who fit this description? Do you think they would believe even if they witnessed a miracle? Why or why not?
    - [Personal reflection question.](#)

#### 2. The Official.

- a. In this text, an official approaches Jesus and asks him to heal his son. As John describes his interaction with Jesus, do you get the sense that he has the same *kind* of faith as the Galileans, or is he more like the Samaritans (review John 4:39-42 for a description of the Samaritans' faith)? Why do you arrive at this conclusion?
  - [The official asks Jesus to come with him \(v47\), but then believes the words of Jesus and so starts off on his journey home.](#)

- In this way, his faith is more like the Samaritans (who believed because of the testimony of the Samaritan woman - v 39 - and Jesus word - v 41) instead of like the Galileans who were looking for signs and wonders -v 48.

### Connect to His Story.

3. In John 2:11, John mentions that Jesus' first sign was turning water into wine. Now in John 4:54, we read that healing the official's son was Jesus' second sign. As people watched Jesus' ministry, they were likely comparing him to some of the prophets who had come before. Read 1 Kings 17:8-24.
  - a. How do Jesus' first two signs parallel the ministry of Elijah in 1 Kings?
    - In 1 Kings 17:8-16 Elijah provides for the physical needs of the widow (providing flour & oil), in Jesus' first sign in John 2, Jesus provides for physical needs (wine at the wedding).
    - In 1 Kings 17:17-24, and in John 4:43-54 (Jesus' second sign) a boy is brought back from death (1 Kings) and near death (John 4).
  - b. How does Jesus demonstrate that he is the "true and better" Elijah<sup>1</sup>?
    - In 1 Kings 17, Elijah stretches out on the widow's child 3 times and cries out to the LORD on behalf of the child. In John 4, Jesus speaks from over 40 km away, and the boy begins to recover. Jesus' ability to heal is more powerful than Elijah's; he doesn't need to pray on behalf of the child, and he doesn't need to be in close proximity to the child.

### Apply to Our Story

In John 4:43-54, the author challenges his readers to investigate the nature of their own faith. Do we ask Jesus for signs, or take him at his word?

- Although the official originally asked Jesus to accompany him back to his home to heal his son (v 47), he began the 40 km walk home from Capernaum to Cana alone because he believed Jesus' words. Is there a time that you have walked into the unknown, holding onto hope that God's word would be trustworthy?
- Are you, or someone that you know, struggling to believe God's word right now? How can we pray for you or them?

### Prayer

- *Pray in Adoration: Jesus is greater than all the prophets who came before, or have come after.*
- *Pray in Confession: Are there areas / situations in which you are doubting God's words.*
- *Pray in Supplication: Ask God to give you greater faith, and confidence in his word.*

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### God's work and our Work

#### How All of Life Connects to the Gospel - in John 4:43-54

Jesus, who is the Word of God (John 1:1, 1:14), demonstrates throughout John's gospel that he is a person of his word. What he says he will do, he does. What he says will happen, happens.

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<sup>1</sup> If you are unfamiliar with the "true and better" concept, watch this short clip from Tim Keller: <https://vimeo.com/23642755>

While we don't share Jesus' ability to create reality with our words, Jesus calls us to be people of our word in the Sermon on the Mount: "... you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil." Matthew 5:33-37

- Have you experienced a situation(s) when people gradually discovered that someone in a position of authority (teacher, parent, boss) was not a person of his / her word? What happened as a result? (try to share your experience without divulging sensitive information or 'naming names'! The point isn't to throw people under the bus, but simply to reflect on what happens when trust is eroded).
- Conversely, have you experienced a situation(s) where someone showed themselves continually trustworthy. How did they build trust? As you reflect on this scenario, feel free to name names!
- For personal reflection: would the people you lead, parent, or teach identify you as a person of his / her word?