

After the two days he left for Galilee. ⁴⁴ (Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.) ⁴⁵ When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, for they also had been there.

⁴⁶ Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

⁴⁸ “Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.”

⁴⁹ The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”

⁵⁰ Jesus replied, “You may go. Your son will live.”

The man took Jesus at his word and departed. ⁵¹ While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. ⁵² When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, “The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour.”

⁵³ Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and all his household believed.

⁵⁴ This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus performed, having come from Judea to Galilee. (NIV 84)

Theme: Take the Lord at his Word.

“Take me at my word” your friend says to you while promising you something. We all know people who aren’t very trustworthy. And when your friend says this you automatically determine in your head whether or not you can trust this friend of yours—can you take him at his word or has he failed to come through on promises in the past? Of course, what you decide also depends on the situation—are you loaning your friend 1000 dollars that he promises to pay you back next week, or is he promising to show up at your house before kickoff to watch the game together? We’ve all been burned by others in the past. So we have the tendency to be skeptical when people make promises

to us. We often take the wait-and-see approach, we’ll believe it when we see it.

And being conscious is a good idea in this day and age—“you can never be too careful” they say. But the problem is that we may take the same approach with the Lord and his promises?

Jesus was in the beginning part of his ministry. Shortly after turning water into wine in Cana he went down to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. While there, Jesus performed many miracles. On the way back north, on his way through Samaria, he stayed in Sychar for two days after talking to a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well.

By the time he had made it back to Galilee everyone else who had gone down to Jerusalem was already there. And when they saw Jesus they welcomed him with open arms. Word about him spread quickly. It seems as if everyone in Galilee heard what Jesus did at the Passover and word got around that Jesus was back from Judea and many people came to see him.

At first glance it seems if they people loved Jesus—he received a hero’s welcome. It would be as if someone from Standish became a famous musician, actor, or athlete overnight. Many people would be glad to see him when he returned.

But Jesus wasn’t really pleased. John reminds us that Jesus told his disciples that no prophet receives honor in his hometown. They weren’t really honoring Jesus. If they weren’t honoring Jesus by welcoming him and spread the word that he has arrived so that others could come and see him, what were they doing? They only welcomed him because they saw him as a miracle worker. And they wouldn’t believe what he had to say unless he did some cool things in front of their eyes. Perhaps he could be someone who could help out a few sick people or do something else for their benefit and then they might listen to what he had to say.

What is Jesus to you? What do you make of him and his promises? He makes many promises to us: he promises to watch over us and take care of us, to provide for our every need, to guard us from temptation, to never leave us or forsake us. He promises to guard and protect us, to save us from our sins and give us the gift of eternal life. So he promises to be our caretaker, provider, guardian, deliverer, Savior, and so on.

Do you take Jesus at his Word? At times you do, sure. But there are many times when doubt creeps into your mind. You lose your job, have a health scare, or you are staring at your spouse or other close friend or family member lying in a casket. And doubts arise: Why doesn't God keep his word to me? Why does he always seem against us? He promises to take care of me and provide for me, then why am I always struggling to make ends meet? He says he will never forsake us then why did he allow me to get cancer? If he truly loves me and is able to do all things then why did he allow my loved one to die? We've been burned by so many people before, we wonder if God is burning us too. We then take a wait-and-see approach to God and say we'll believe his promises when we see them. Jesus promises to be many things to us—but we so often focus on the earthly that we forget about the spiritual and when we don't see instant proof that he keeps his earthly promises then we begin to doubt. We then, are not different the people of Galilee who needed proof—miracles from Christ, in order to listen to and believe his words. But you believe that Jesus truly existed—he is a real person who did roam the earth. You believe that he is the Christ. You believe that he isn't just the son of God but God himself--true God and true man. You believe that he was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. You believe that he performed miracle after miracle such as walking on water, giving sight to the blind, raising people from the dead. You believe that he paid for your sins on the cross and himself rose from the dead three days after his death. You believe that he is your Savior from sin, death, and the devil. You believe all those things—why? It's not because you have seen proof. You weren't there to see Jesus in person, to hear him preach, or to see him perform miracles with your own eyes. And yet you believe in him. If you believe in him as Lord and Savior without seeing any proof, then why do you need proof that he takes care of you physically, or that he always watches over you and will do what is best for your eternal wellbeing? So when you don't you don't need the instant gratification of proof, you just need to be reminded of his promises and faithfulness.

When Jesus arrived in Galilee and in Cana word began to spread. It reached a royal official some 20 miles away in Capernaum. So he traveled to Cana to ask Jesus to come to Capernaum so that he could

heal his son, who was about to die. This man heard that Jesus had performed miracles in Jerusalem and elsewhere and in his desperate situation he figured that if anyone could help him, Jesus could.

But Jesus responded by saying, **Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, you will never believe.** He had originally come to see a miracle worker, but Jesus' words made him think about what he was doing. The official decided that he didn't need to see Jesus perform a miracle. He didn't need Jesus to prove that he had the power the people claimed about him. He said to Jesus, **come down before my child dies.** He already knew and believed that Jesus had the power to heal his son although we have no indication that he had done anything of the sort before this.

But Jesus didn't need to go with the man. As God Jesus has the power to do anything he wants and so he took away the boy's sickness right then and there! The boy's fever went down and he was going to live. So he told the royal official to go because his son was going to live. And what did the royal official do? He left. He believed Jesus' words that his son was going to be okay and that his son was going to live. Even though Jesus never went to Capernaum, he never saw his son in person let alone examined him; he never even laid a hand on him—and yet he believed Jesus' words when Jesus said his son would live. So he left. And on his journey home some of his servant left to find him. The day before, the son's fever broke and the child was alive and doing well! What Jesus told the man was absolutely true. And then he asked at what time the fever broke—it was the seventh hours; the exact same time that Jesus told him to go because his son would live. It couldn't have been a coincidence—there was more in play than just that. We are then told, **he and all his household believed.** Believed what? More than just that Jesus saved their son. How could Christ save his son when he never saw him? There is only one conclusion: Jesus is God. And if he's God then he must be the Lord and Savior. Sure this man believed in Jesus after he heard that his son was alive—you could say that he needed proof. But remember that he left and believed when Jesus simply told him that his son is living! He didn't need proof. This act combined with Jesus' words led this man to believe that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. And to this day he stands as a great example of what it means to believe—to take Jesus at his Word. As the Writer to the Hebrews says, **faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.**

You haven't seen proof that Jesus ever existed let alone that everything he says about himself is true. There is no video or photographic evidence, but you believe it anyway. Why? Because it's found in the God's Word—the Bible. Since the Bible is the very Word of God, you know it to be right and true—not containing any mistakes or errors. There is no reason to doubt it or question it but instead you simply take the Lord at his Word. You don't need any proof because it's in his Holy Word, which alone attests to him. And that is good enough for you.

Yet there are times when we have our doubts and struggles. When the world attacks you for your Christian convictions, or when friends and family mock your faith. You begin to wonder if they are right after all. When science seems to contradict God's Word, you wonder if it was just all made up. When you struggle financially or health-wise you wonder if God really does keep his promises. When you are staring death in the face, doubt creeps up into your mind whether or not there really is life after death.

So you turn to his Word. And you take the Lord at his Word. And know that the Lord is never wrong; he never lies; he never deceives. Every word of his Bible is right and true. And as you are in the Word the Holy Spirit will work through that Word and strengthen your faith and increase your knowledge of him. If Christ is able to save a boy from 20 miles away, then he is also able to take care of you from his throne in heaven!

And there is another thing to do before the doubt creeps into your heart and mind. Let's call it, preventative maintenance. Get into the Word on a regular basis—read it on your own, study it together with us in Bible Class. Know the Word well and take the Lord at his Word.

We all know some people who aren't so trustworthy—those whom you can't take them at your word, but you take a wait-and-see approach. Not so with the Lord. Sure, we don't have proof, but we don't need it. For the Lord is right and true and faithful in all he does. So we take him and his Word and eagerly wait for our Lord to keep his promises. Amen.