

The Life-Giving Words of Jesus

1. Who is the best storyteller you know, and why?

In this gospel John frequently uses stories as an introduction to a discourse that reveals important truths about the Lord Jesus. These stories or narratives also weave theological insights into the dialog and conversations. We will be looking at two very different stories as we finish up John chapter 4 and begin chapter 5.

Drawing Near: O Father, help me to *listen* and *learn* what the Spirit has for me in this portion of Your Holy Word.

The public ministry of Jesus was conducted primarily in three geographic regions: Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. Although John's gospel tends to emphasize the Judean ministry of Christ, in the early part of the book we are given glimpses of Jesus' ministry in Galilee (chapters 2, 4, and 6). The region of Galilee is the area where Nazareth was located as well as Cana and the large city of Capernaum.

2. **Review John 4:39-43** and note the change of location in the narrative. This completes what was said in 4:3-4. Glance at the map to trace Jesus' steps.

Sandwiched between verse 43 and verse 45 is a parenthesis that reveals something of the heart of the Savior. **Compare** John 4:44 with Luke 4:23-30, a scene that took place in Jesus' home town of Nazareth.

3. As you consider these facts, what does it say about Jesus' character and mission that He returned to Galilee?

4. From John 4:45 and 48, tell what you think motivated the Galileans' welcome of Jesus.

The scene has been set for one of the most inspiring stories of this gospel—a story filled with truths that will grow your faith and relationship with Jesus. **Read John 4:46-54** several times. The royal official in the story was a man of power and wealth and was likely an officer of King Herod's court. As you read, try to connect with the emotions of this man as he walked twenty miles from Capernaum to Cana.

5. Describe the scene as it unfolds in John 4:47.

Note: The Greek word for “begged” (*erotac*) is in the continuous tense and conveys the thought that the man repeatedly begged Jesus to heal his son’s disease.

6. Reflect on Jesus’ unexpected response in verse 48. Observe the verse and context carefully.
 - a. What is the tone of Jesus’ reply?
 - b. To whom is Jesus addressing His comments?
 - c. What is wrong with the kind of belief that is based *only* on seeing signs and wonders?

Keep in mind that faith is a living thing that grows and develops. While Jesus looked for faith that simply trusted Him without any support other than a knowledge of Him, it is better to believe on the basis of the miracles than not to believe at all (John 14:11).

7. Still, the father in this story was desperate for help. In verse 49 he pours out his heart to Jesus. (The term “my child” is a more endearing, affectionate term than “son,” verse 47.)
 - a. For what did the royal official ask in verse 49?
 - b. How does Jesus’ response demand true faith from the royal official? (See verse 50a.)
 - c. What is significant about the official’s response in verse 50b?
 - d. Describe the “wonders of God” that took place on this occasion as a result of Jesus’ life-giving words (John 4:51-53).
8. *“Wonders” is a term that directs attention to the marvel of the miracle. It is something that people see but cannot explain.* In what ways has this “sign” and “wonder” expanded or changed your understanding of who Jesus is and how He works in our lives to develop deeper levels of faith?

9. To strengthen your response of faith, on what aspect of Jesus' character could you meditate? In the following space identify the character trait you would like to meditate on this week.

As we focus upon the person of Jesus we will truly see the Son of God who is exalted above the heavens and clothed in majesty ... and we will experience for ourselves the miracle of all miracles—knowing Him.

10. As we begin chapter 5 there is an abrupt change of scene. Even though the Gospel of John moves through the life of Jesus chronologically, it skips over many things that do not serve the author's purpose while still maintaining the correct order of events.
Read John 5:1-15. What is the time, the place and location of the events described here?
11. Although the description of the healing of the invalid is brief, enough information is given to picture the scene in our minds. **Read verses 3-5 again.** What are your impressions of the man's physical, emotional and spiritual condition?

When Jesus saw the anguish of this man, broken in body and spirit, He asked him a very penetrating question, "Do you want to get well?"

12. Consider the man's answer in verse 7. Does he really answer Jesus question? Why do you think he responded as he did?

Personal Reflection: When Jesus looks at us He sees through all of the deception and disappointments that have threatened our lives. We know that we can no longer go on with the pretense of being a whole person. We are truly broken. Jesus dares to enter our lives and we hear Him gently ask, "Would you like to get well?"

13. Envision the man's face as he heard Jesus' words, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." What happened the very moment these words were spoken?
14. Does this man's healing depend on his faith? How can you tell?
15. In what ways do you see the sovereign grace of God in this event? List your insights.

The last part of verse 9 turns our attention to John's reason for including the healing at the pool in his gospel. This sign sets the stage for the open hostility that developed between Jesus and the Jewish authorities. Take a few minutes to review **John 5:10-15**.

16. The former cripple was no doubt overjoyed at the dramatic change in his life. It is likely that he entered the temple (verse 14) and was suddenly seized by the Jews. Of what is this man accused (verse 10)?

The Old Testament law forbade the carrying of loads for commercial business on the Sabbath (Nehemiah 13:15 and Jeremiah 17:21-27), but the rabbis decided that carrying anything from one location to another was always work and listed 39 forbidden categories. This included carrying a mat.

17. How did the man attempt to defend himself?

18. What does it say about the Jewish leaders that they failed to show any interest in the man's well condition?

19. Even though Jesus slipped away in the crowd after the healing, He found the man in the temple a short time later.
 - a. Of what was the man warned in John 5:14-15?

 - b. In the gospels, Jesus doesn't normally say this to people He heals. Why do you suppose He warns this man?

20. There are always deeper truths to be learned as we study the Lord's miracles. Review your completed lesson and contrast the two responses to *the life giving words of Jesus* in the healing of the nobleman's son and the healing of the lame man.

21. What applications can you find here for your own life? Look for one principle, truth, or example from the lesson that stands out to you. Write *your* response in the form of a prayer to the One who longs to speak the *words of life to you!*