

Lesson #11

Teaching Outline

Jesus Fulfills Prophecy and Heals Nobleman's Son

John 4: 46 – 54

Principle Truth:

TRUST Jesus enough to allow Him to operate in your life in whatever way He chooses.

Teaching Outline:

I. The Place and the Plea

A. Faith involves something we don't have and something we cannot see.

B. When God allows you to experience a place of great desperation, He is up to something BIG!

II. The Proof and the Pay-Off

A. We must believe that Jesus is God – the Redeemer and Savior of the world.

B. Although faith can begin with a crisis, it must grow into confident faith, progress to confirmed faith and culminate in contagious faith.

III. The Application

A. Jesus is the Answer to All our Anxieties

B. We can Always trust the Goodness of our God

C. These Truths are for Everyone

Lesson #11
Series 2 – Story 5

Jesus Fulfills Prophecy and Heals Nobleman's Son

Mathew 13:53-58; Mark 6:1-6; Luke 4:14-30; John 4:46-54

FAITH IS THE ASSURANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE CONVICTION OF THINGS NOT SEEN.

Story Outline:

- I. Scripture Fulfilled Through Jesus' Declaration
- II. Synagogue Leaders Enraged
- III. Son of Nobleman Healed

Life Application Principles:

- 1. Every occasion is a divine appointment and every encounter an opportunity for the believer to share the message of Jesus.
- 2. Jesus is the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecy.
- 3. The revelation of Jesus demands a response – the choice is yours.
- 4. Preconceived ideas and expectations can destroy the possibility of a relationship with Jesus.
- 5. Our days, our times and our purpose on earth are ordained by God.
- 6. God is always seeking obedient hearts to work out his divine purposes.
- 7. Jesus is the Author and Perfecter of our faith.
- 8. The knowledge, mercy and power of Jesus are not limited to time, distance or space.
- 9. Our faith must be based on who Jesus is, not on what he can do.
- 10. Miraculous signs and wonders must never overshadow our relationship with Jesus himself.

NAME OF JESUS

Devotional Reading

“AUTHOR AND PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH”

Are you a good gift giver? Do you enjoy the challenge of finding that perfect gift for that special someone on your list? Do you delight in wrapping the gift, making sure it's done in the most beautiful way with the best paper and most festive trimmings? Do you get excited as you anticipate the moment when the gift will be given and opened? Or, like me, is the challenge of finding that perfect gift that will delight that special person a bit intimidating and even, at times, anxiety producing? Like me, are you inept and uncreative in wrapping, so you settle with a gift bag and few pieces of tissue paper hoping for the best? If so, then I have an encouraging word for you that my mom shared with me long ago: *“The greatest gifts are not necessarily the ones wrapped in pretty paper with frilly bows. The greatest and most perfect gifts are the ones that are wrapped in love and given from your heart.”*

Today, as I ponder her words, my mind is quickly drawn to God, the Father who gave the greatest and most perfect gift in all of history. Not wrapped in pretty paper with frilly bows, but in love from His heart, God gave His one and only Son Jesus Christ to the world that all who believe in Him might be saved. Jesus, His Son secured this great and most perfect gift when He lovingly gave His life in exchange for ours, and died on the cruel Cross of Calvary as payment for our sin. After His death and resurrection, Jesus then gave the precious gift of His indwelling Holy Spirit to all who believe in Him as a mark of His ownership and the guarantee of eternal life. The GOOD NEWS for us today is that God is still offering this great and most perfect gift. More than anything, He desires to give everyone on earth eternal life with Him. But, in order to receive this life, one other gift is needed. A gift that also comes from Him alone. The gift of faith. God makes this clear in His word when He says:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your doing; it is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8)

“Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6)

“Every good gift and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights from whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.” (James 1:17-18)

From these powerful truths we learn that believing in Christ and receiving the reward, or “gift,” that comes through that belief is not something we can acquire in our own power. It is not

something we can earn by “*living right*” and “*doing good things.*” It is something we must receive from the Lord. Believing in Jesus, and receiving the free gift of salvation and eternal life is possible only BY God. It is possible only when we have received from Him the gift of faith. All we need to do is come to Him with open hands and a seeking, willing heart. When we do, God promises through His word, that He will give us what we seek. “*You will seek Me and find Me, when you seek Me with all your heart*” (Jeremiah 29:13). “*Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you*” (Matthew 6:33). “*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find*” (Matthew 7:7). Jesus wants us to ask Him for anything lacking so that we can believe and receive His gift.

The writer of Hebrews, after his encouraging teaching on faith in Chapter 11, goes on to write these instructive words that help us understand the Gift and the Giver:

*“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the **AUTHOR AND FINISHER** of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* (Hebrews 12:1-2, NKJV)

From these words we learn a bit more about WHO Jesus is and WHY He came. The One who gives the gift of faith is described here as the **AUTHOR** of our faith. The Greek translation of this word means that He is the “*Creator*” and “*Originator*” of it. He is the “*Alpha*” the One who begins our faith story by first giving us the gift of faith. Then as the “**AUTHOR**” He writes the rest of the story of our new life in Christ. The Greek word **AUTHOR** can also be translated “*captain,*” “*chief leader*” or “*prince.*” From this we learn that not only is Jesus the One who originates faith in us, but He is also the leader of it. When He gives us the gift of new life, Jesus also gives us the gift of His indwelling Holy Spirit who is the keeping power of Christ in us. Like the captain of a ship, Jesus through the power of His indwelling Holy Spirit, keeps our faith on course. Like the wise leader of an army or a compassionate ruler of a nation, He keeps a close watch over us, guiding our steps and providing for all our needs as we journey through the story of our lives. Paul clarifies, “*In Him, you also when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory*” (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Thus, Jesus is also the **FINISHER** of our faith. Translated “**PERFECTER**” or “*completer,*” He is the One who brings our faith to the finish line of this life on earth. As the “*Omega,*” He is the One who ensures that our faith makes it to the promised ending where we can claim victory over this world and all its evil. Jesus Christ, the **FINISHER** of our faith takes us over the finish line of this life into life everlasting in the eternal Kingdom of God! “*And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you, will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ*” (Philippians 1:6).

As comforting as it is to know and understand that Jesus is the **AUTHOR AND FINISHER** of our faith, we must also understand that there is still a role for us to play. There is something we must do in order to keep our faith alive and stay in step with the Lord Jesus Christ all the way to the finish line. We must “*walk by faith and not by sight*” (2 Corinthians 5:7). We must walk according to His word and not by what we see and hear in this world. Like the saints of old who lived their lives “*BY FAITH,*” trusting in the word of God and the ways of God, so must we. In describing this life of faith, St. Augustine said, “*Faith is believing what we do not see and the reward of this kind of faith is to see what we believe.*”

How do we do this? How do we successfully walk by faith and not by sight? God, through the writer of Hebrews makes it clear: We must “*fix*” our eyes on Jesus. We must set our gaze firmly, steadily and steadfastly on Him and refuse to look anywhere else. We are to “*LOOK,*” to “*LOOK UP*” and to “*BEHOLD HIM.*” Paul tells us we are “*to SEEK things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God and to SET our minds on things that are above, not on things of earth*” (Colossians 3:1-2). We must also strip off and lay aside every unnecessary thing that weighs us down and hinders our progress towards faithful living that leads to eternal life. We must flee from every sin that so easily ensnares us and so cleverly entangles us in its web of lies. We must physically turn away from the world and to God. Then we must run towards the finish line, striving forward with perseverance, courage, patience, strength and energy so that we may reach life’s final reward.

Thanks be to God we do not run alone!! Jesus declares, “*Behold, I am with you to the end of the age*” (Matthew 28:20). Jesus, as the **AUTHOR AND FINISHER** of our faith promises that **WITH** our eyes on Him, we **WILL** make it safely through this life on earth and cross the finish line into life everlasting! I can’t help, but joyfully and gratefully sing that old hymn of promise:

**“Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.”
-Helen Howarth Lemmel**

My friend, what are you fixing your eyes on today? Who are you looking to for help and salvation? Where are you turning for comfort and peace in these troubled times? If it is anything other than God, cast it aside. Stop seeking the things of earth to help you. Turn your eyes to heaven! **LOOK UP!!!** Cry out to the **AUTHOR AND FINISHER** of your faith, who for the pure joy of what God keeps in heaven for those who love Him and believe in Him, died so you could be there, too. Open your hands and your hearts, O sinner and one of little hope, and receive the gift of faith today that you may enjoy every good and perfect gift that comes from above now and forever.

**“Turn to Me and be saved, All the ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is no other.” (Isaiah 45:22)**

THE DOCTRINE

FAITH

Placing Confidence in our Lord Jesus Christ

Someone once defined *faith* as “the effort to believe what your common sense tells you is not true.” That statement is wrong, of course, although that would make a good definition of *superstition*. (Warren Wiersebe, *The 20 Essential Qualities of an Authentic Christian*)

People who jest about faith don't realize how big a part it plays in everyday life. It takes faith to get married, because marriage vows are basically promises. It takes faith to send children off to school. It takes faith to get a prescription filled (pharmacies do make mistakes) and to take the medicine when we get it (doctors can also make mistakes). It takes faith to eat in a restaurant, deposit money in a bank, sign a contract, drive on the highway, or get on an airplane or elevator. Faith isn't some kind of religious experience for the elite; it's the glue that helps hold people's lives together from the infant nursing at her mother's breast to the senior citizen waiting for a pension check. But we must remember – faith is only as good as its object. As Warren Wiersebe says: “*If we trust people, we get what people can do; if we trust money, we get what money can do; if we trust ourselves, we get what we can do; if we trust God, we get what God can do.*”

Four Facts About Faith

Reading Hebrews 11, the great faith chapter of the Bible, we discover 4 facts about faith.

1. *Faith begins with a revelation from God.*

What these heroes of faith did was in response to what God had said to them, because “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10: 17). Faith therefore, is listening to what God says in His Word and acting on it.

2. *Faith grows out of a relationship with God.*

Trust is a relationship that can be built only over a period of time. To hand a large amount of money to a total stranger and then expect to get it back is not faith, it's presumption. The people whose faith is described in Hebrews 11 were people who walked with God and had a growing, ongoing relationship with Him. They knew that His character was such that His word could be trusted.

3. *Faith motivates us to do the will of God.*

If you look at the verbs in Hebrews 11, you will see that they are action verbs. “Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice; Noah prepared an ark; Abraham went out; Abraham offered his son; Moses chose Israel over Egypt, etc. True faith isn't feeling good about what God says; it is doing what God says. Faith isn't discussing the will of

God; it is *obeying* the will of God. James 2: 20 declares: “.....faith without works is dead.”

4. Faith, when acted upon, gives us the witness of God.

“For by it (faith) the elders obtained a good testimony (witness)” (Hebrews 11:2). This means that the elders received God’s approval for what they did. God witnessed to Abel that his sacrifice had been accepted (Heb. 11:4), and to the martyrs that their faith was accepted and rewarded (Heb. 11:39). True faith rests on the objective Word of God. It is however, a subjective witness as well to the person who acts in faith through the Spirit of God. Faith is “*the evidence of things not seen*” (Heb. 11:1), and the word translated “*evidence*” means “*conviction.*” When we have true biblical faith, it produces the inner conviction that God will indeed do what He says. In fact, the very presence of this faith in our hearts is proof that God wants us to trust Him for the miracle.

Trusting God means thinking and acting according to His Word in spite of circumstances, feelings or consequences. The object of our faith is God – not feelings, not faith itself, but Almighty God. Faith is only as good as its object. Warren Wiersebe’s words on this subject are sobering. He says,

“I fear that contemporary society knows nothing about true faith. People sing about faith (‘I believe for every drop of rain that falls, a flower grows’), and talk about faith (‘you’ve just gotta believe, that’s all!’), but they do not personally know the faithful God or ‘the word of faith’ (Romans 10: 8), that God Himself has given to us. It’s a kind of masquerade people play to bolster their spirits and encourage one another. How strange it is that they can have faith in faith and faith in feelings, but they do not have faith in the Word of the living God!”

Our maturity in the Christian life depends upon growing in faith. The Christian life begins with faith (Ephesians 2:8), and it can develop only through faith. We walk by faith (2 Cor. 5: 7) and we stand by faith (2 Cor. 1:24). So serious is this matter of believing God that Paul warns us, “*for whatever is not of faith is sin*” (Romans 14:23). The writer to the Hebrews also observed, “*But without faith it is impossible to please Him*” (Hebrews 11:6). So important is the verse from Habakkuk 2:4, “*But the just shall live by his faith*” that there are three New Testament books written to explain it – Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. Romans tells us who “the just” are; Galatians describes how the just “live” and Hebrews emphasizes that they live “*by faith.*” The phrase “*by faith*” is found nineteen times in the book of Hebrews.

How Do We Know we are Living by Faith?

Answering 4 questions honestly will help to clearly show us.

1. *Is what I am doing based solidly on God's Word?* Faith is our obedient response to God's revelation to us. It doesn't matter how we feel, or what the circumstances are, or even what the consequences may be. We obey God because we have confidence in His Word. It doesn't matter if it is Noah building an ark, or Abraham offering up his son, or Moses and the nation of Israel crossing the Red Sea, the faith sequence in the life of the believer is the same; relationship with God, revelation from God, response of obedience and reward from God. The Word of God alone is the basis for our faith. It reveals the character of God and records His mighty works, both of which encourage us to believe and obey.

2. *Am I willing to wait?* Isaiah 28:16 says, "*Whoever believes will not act hastily.*" Combining the thought in this verse with the verse found in Romans 10: 11: "*Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame*" – we can see that there is a relationship between the two; whoever acts hastily will end up being ashamed! When God leads you to do something by faith, he will give you the patience to wait on His perfect time. You will be among "*those who through faith and patience inherit the promises*" (Hebrews 6: 12). The God of patience gives us patience and encouragement through the Scriptures. Therefore, faith not only accomplishes God's will, but it does it in God's time. If I find myself impatient and anxious to rush ahead, I can be certain that what I am doing is not in the will of God. Waiting is always God's way of preparing us for the next steps. It is a time for watching, praying, seeking, and discerning. Four months passed between the day Nehemiah began to pray for Jerusalem and the day he actually asked the king for help (Nehemiah 1:1 – 2:1), but during that time, he got his heart and his plans ready for the time God would eventually send him on his way.

3. *Do I have joy and peace?* Although faith doesn't depend on how we feel, true biblical faith does bring with it an inner peace and joy that overcomes the circumstances we are in and the consequences we may be facing. At a time when the disciples could have been at their lowest, they "*departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name*" (Acts 5:41). God's Spirit gives to God's servants a peace "*which surpasses all understanding*" (Phil. 4:7), a calm in the midst of the storm, an inner confidence in the heart of the battle. **Peace, God's peace, is the possession of adequate resources.** This statement explains the courage and confidence of those who walk by faith. It is a boldness that comes when you know without a doubt that God is on your side.

4. *Will what I do glorify God?* One reason the Lord waited 25 years to give Abraham and Sarah the promised son, Isaac, was to allow them to be "*as good as dead*" so they could not claim any credit for the miracle of this child themselves. Jesus allowed Lazarus to die because raising him from the dead glorified the Son of God (John 11:4). Genuine faith brings great glory to God. Perhaps Hebrews 11:23-29 speaks most powerfully to giving glory to God through our faith. IN speaking of the great hero of the faith, Moses, the writer says; ". . . *By faith, Moses choose the imperishable, saw the invisible and did the impossible.*"

Faith takes ordinary people (like Moses) and enables them to do extraordinary things. That's why faith glorifies God. The choice Moses made was contrary to human nature, for who would give up an easy and honorable position in Egypt for the tough job of molding a mob of slaves into a nation and leading them to their promised inheritance? Who would reject the pleasures and treasures of Egypt for years of hardship in the wilderness? When because we see the invisible - we choose the imperishable - then we can accomplish the impossible - and God gets the glory. A wise man said: *"If you can explain what's going on, God didn't do it!"*

Christians with no faith or little faith are fearful people who doubt God's word and do a great deal of worrying. They cannot really minister to others nor give a strong witness to the lost. Instead of walking by faith and claiming their inheritance in Christ, they wander in the wilderness of unbelief and miss God's best for their lives. We must heed Jesus' words: *"According to your faith, let it be to you"* (Matthew 9:29).

The Nobleman of John 4 *believed the word of Jesus* that his son was healed before the evidence of the actual healing was confirmed to him. *"Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your son lives.' So the man BELIEVED Him, and he went his way"* (John 4:50). The result of the Nobleman's belief was that not only he but his entire household believed.

God commands the believer to stand firm in faith for those times when you are confronted with dire circumstances and extraordinary difficulties. When we simply cannot retreat or move forward and the way is blocked to the right and to the left, **STAND FIRM IN FAITH** for our God is the God of the impossible. *"Stand firm and you will SEE the deliverance the Lord will bring you today"* (Exodus 14:13).

Questions for Reflection

Read Matthew 13:53-58, Mark 6:1-6

1. How did the people of Jesus' hometown react to Him? Why do you think they found it hard to accept Him? How did Jesus respond to them?
2. Why causes people to reject Jesus to day?
3. Have you, like Jesus, ever tried to do ministry among "your people" but been ill received or rejected? What do you learn from Jesus in these passages to encourage you to press on?
4. Has there ever been a time when Jesus could not do His "mighty works" in you? What was blocking His power?

Read Luke 4:14-30

(From this passage we gain a little more insight into Jesus' rejection at Nazareth)

5. What scroll was Jesus given to read when He entered the synagogue? Who was this prophetic passage referring to?
6. Why do you think everyone's "*eyes were intently fixed on Him*" as He read these words?
7. What astonishing declaration did Jesus make in v.21?

8. In your own words explain what message you think Jesus was trying to convey in vs.25-27. How did the people respond to these bold statements?

9. How did God's will and plan for Jesus prevail in spite of the people's evil plan?

Read John 4:46-54

10. Who quickly came to meet Jesus when he returned to Cana in Galilee? Why? What do you think prompted him to seek Jesus for help?

11. How did Jesus reply to the official in v.48? Why do you think He said this?

12. The official's desperate plea in v.49 shows a measure of faith in Jesus. How did his immediate response to Jesus' reply prove his faith? (see Hebrews 11:1)

13. How did seeing the result of his faith in Jesus impact the official's family? Share an example of how a healing miracle brought you or someone you knowing to saving faith or deeper faith.

14. What lessons from this miracle do you learn about:
 - Jesus

 - Faith

 - Prayer

THE AUTHOR AND PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH

What are you fixing your eyes on lately? Who are you looking to for help in these uncertain times? How has your reflection on this name of Jesus impacted your current tendencies and dependencies? What changes is God prompting you to make so you can receive the fullness of all His gifts?

SALVATION CHALLENGE

Have you believed in Jesus for WHO HE IS and not just for what He can do? Have you truly and fully put your faith in Him and His power to save you from your sin, and set you free?