

Week Two: Faith vs. Facts

Healing the Nobleman's Son (John 4:46-54)

One of the hardest things we have to grapple with in our lives is faith. Christ says, "I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24), but sometimes facts get in the way and prevent us from truly believing. Faith and fact are not opposites of one another but can go hand in hand. Often, we feel that either we must believe in faith (religion) or the facts (science) and we cannot believe in both. However, the truth is they both express and teach different things. Science explains to us the what and how of things, whereas faith teaches us the why of things. The Bible teaches us not how the world was created, but why it was created, not how Jesus showed His signs, but why He did.

Read John 4:46-54

Read Mark 6:1-6

What do you think?

1. How deep is your faith? Has there ever been a time when you were faced with the facts, but your faith was telling you the opposite?
2. Why is it so difficult for people to have faith even when the facts point to it?
3. What does Jesus mean when He says: "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home"?
4. Why do miracles require faith? Have you or anyone you know witnessed a miracle?
5. How or when has your lack of faith prevented a miracle from taking place?

Does Jesus want us to have blind faith? Of course not. As we learned in the last Bible Study, God gives us signs and performs miracles every day. His miracles happen, but we often don't notice them or think that they are luck and coincidence. We try to reason and explain those happenings. Throughout the Bible we see that **reason, wisdom, and logic** are endorsed as good traits. For example, Proverbs 3:13 says we are blessed when we find knowledge and understanding. God created us with the ability to think and reason, and He expects us to use that gift to find the Truth. Jesus made the bold claim that He is Truth (John 14:6), so reason and logic should lead us to Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

What does it take us to believe? Signs and miracles are supposed to defy our reality and understanding, but if we are honest with ourselves, when we see a sign or miracle, our faith is strengthened. Faith based on miraculous works alone is insufficient for salvation. Truly, miracles happen when we are obedient to God, follow His will, and trust in Him. When we begin to contradict His Word and commandments, doubt sets in, and our faith starts to crumble. Faith does not require facts or evidence, but trust. Sometimes events happen which help to build up our trust, but ultimately, our faith is found in Christ our God who never fails us and provides for us always. We can establish our trust in Christ through His willingness to lay down His life for us on the cross.

St. Gregory of Narek prays it best in his Book of Lamentations:

By this plant of bliss (cross- tree of life) may our trust in you as our protector, Creator of all, lord of creation, take root, like the thicket where Abraham found the ram, at the end of whose branches the sacred inheritance of my present salvation hangs before us, caused by you, Christ, to blossom and bear the fruit of eternal life. Amen. (Prayer 92I)

