

Discussion Questions: John's Gospel (4:43-54)

Overview Question:

1. What are your questions, wonderings, disagreements, reflections, AND/OR connections, from the teaching this past Sunday on John 4:43-54, where the royal official seeks Jesus' healing for his dying son?

Connection and Implication Questions:

The theme of belief based upon "seeing versus hearing" comes up in this encounter between the royal official and Jesus. This is a theme that is connected to one of John's overall emphases of Jesus as the embodiment of God's Word: *The Word* that must be "heard" and believed in order to gain eternal life. Therefore the question of whether one can "hear" Jesus (not necessarily "see" his works) is tantamount. Signs and miracles are intended to confirm belief AFTER hearing, not cause authentic belief by themselves.

Jesus' initial response to the royal official's request (vs. 48) appears to be pointing out a problem: The Galileans (vs. 45) had "received Jesus" because of what they "saw" rather than necessarily a reception from an authentic place of belief.

2. So... what's the big deal? Why do you think Jesus/John/God place such an emphasis on "hearing"? Can't "seeing" something cause belief, or can't it? What do you think are the differences between the human senses of hearing and seeing that cause Jesus to appear to prefer one over the other?
3. An adequate answer to the last question also requires a consideration of what "belief" is such that hearing is preferred to seeing. When the Bible and Jesus talk about faith/belief, what is it exactly that is going on? Where does this belief come from or how does it manifest itself in some and not others?
4. In what ways are we humans (even as believers) prone to being like the royal official prior to verse 50? What are specific areas of your life where you prefer sight/concreteness that get in your way of trusting God?