CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
APRIL10 2021

Scripture Story: John 4:43-54.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages,* chapter 20.

seeing is believing?



Photo by Jacqui Janetzco

flashlight

"The nobleman wanted to *see* the fulfillment of his prayer before he should believe; but he had to accept the word of Jesus that his request was heard and the blessing granted. This lesson we also have to learn. Not because we see or feel that God hears us are we to believe. We are to trust in His promises. . . . When we have asked for His blessing, we should believe that we receive it, and thank Him that we *have* received it" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 200).

keytext

"'Unless you people see signs and wonders,' Jesus told him, 'you will never believe.' The royal official said, 'Sir, come down before my child dies.' 'Go,' Jesus replied, 'your son will live.' The man took Jesus at his word and departed."

(John 4:48-50, NIV)

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what do you think?

Have you ever experienced a trust-building activity such as a "rope challenge course" or a "trust fall," or been entrusted to perform a highly responsible job such as babysitting? If so, write what you learned about trust through such activities.

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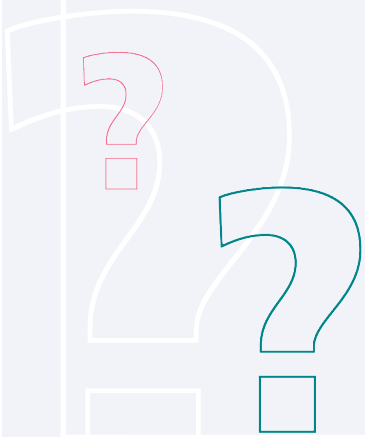
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did you know?

On the matter of seeing is believing, a classic study, conducted decades ago, involved testing infants to see whether or not people were born with a fear of falling. Newly crawling infants were placed, one at a time, on a table. A platform of clear Plexiglas formed a bridge to an identical table. Almost all the little ones refused to crawl across the Plexiglas because the transparent bridge gave the impression they could fall.



INTO THE STORY

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

"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. 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.

"'Unless you people see signs and wonders,' Jesus told him, 'you will never believe.'

"The royal official said, 'Sir, come down before my child dies.' Jesus replied, 'Go,' your son will live.' The man took Jesus at his word and departed. While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, 'Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him.'

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

"This was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee."

(John 4:43-54, NIV)



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OUT OF THE STORY

Upon asking that his child be healed, the royal official took Jesus at His word and left for home, believing that He had healed his son. This was a change from his wanting to "*see* the fulfillment of his prayer before he should believe" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 200).

Why do you think the official came to Jesus in the first place?

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What do you think caused his changed view?

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What did the official believe as he returned home?

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We're told in Mark 13:22 that false christs and false prophets will arise in the last days showing "signs and wonders," attempting to deceive the elect. Compare that to what Jesus said to the people in Cana of Galilee about their wanting to see signs and wonders. How can you go against a "seeing is believing" mind-set and take Jesus at His word, as did the royal official?

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punch lines

"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures" **(James 4:1-3, NIV).**

"So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord!' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe'" **(John 20:25, NIV).**

"Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.' Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" **(John 20:29-31, NIV).**

further insight

"When we have asked for His blessing, we should believe that we receive it, and thank Him that we have received it. Then we are to go about our duties, assured that the blessing will be realized when we need it most."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 200.

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connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read John 4:43-54.

In today's reading, the official was desperate to have his son healed and Jesus cared about healing the official's son, but He cared about something more than that too. What important decision did He lead the official to make that led to his son's healing? See verse 50.

Jesus gave the nobleman His word, and we have access to that word every day. All we have to do is believe, as the nobleman did. "In this Word, God has committed to humanity the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the supreme, authoritative, and the infallible revelation of His will" (Fundamental Belief 1, The Holy Scriptures)

Sunday

Read Mark 13:21, 22.

In today's reading, we are given one example of what will happen before Jesus returns. Satan uses many deceptions during this time. In this case "seeing" should not be "believing." It is important to be aware of the warnings that Jesus has given us about the end of the world and to trust His Word even when appearances indicate otherwise. Will you make a decision to do that today?

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Monday

Read Mark 11:24.

The royal official went from seeing to believing when he took Jesus at His word and believed without seeing that his son had been made well. We're told in *The Desire of Ages* that he did not even hurry home, so strong was his faith that the word of Jesus was sure. Although we cannot present our requests face to face to Jesus as the nobleman did, what can we learn about how to pray from today's reading?

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Tuesday

Read Genesis 3:1-7.

God gave Adam and Eve specific instructions not to eat from the tree in the middle of the garden. But they did it anyway. Read Genesis 3:1-7. What are three reasons that Eve ate from the tree, based on verse 6?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Instead of obeying God's commandment, Eve chose to trust what she saw with her own senses. But God calls us to exercise faith in His Word even when it doesn't look as though we should or can. Will you decide to trust His Word today despite what appearances may suggest?

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Wednesday

Read Hebrews 11:1

Read the *Further Insight* section and Hebrews 11:1. Even though we cannot see the Word of God, if we believe that it will do what it says, we are exercising faith. In this way, our faith is the evidence of the unseen Word of God.

God has made many promises to us in His Word. List two promises that you would like to claim in your prayers this week:

1. _____
2. _____

Thursday

Read John 20:29.

Think of a time someone was offering you a good thing for nothing, no strings attached. Did your doubt radar kick in? Then it turned out to be true, exactly as offered. It is hard to know whom to trust these days, because there are so many people who are dishonest. However, we can always trust God's Word in spite of the fact that we were not eyewitnesses to what is recorded there. What does Jesus have to say, in today's reading, about people like us who believe without seeing?

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Friday

Read John 1:14; John 3:16.

Having faith in God's Word is foundational to our salvation. Read John 1:14 and John 3:16. When we base our faith on God's Word, who are we actually trusting in? What is the result of believing in that person?

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this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 20.

A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages,* entitled *Humble Hero,* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.

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