

Good morning church. Good morning. We have gathered today to celebrate a risen savior to celebrate a resurrection and to rejoice in what God has done in the lives of people we had almost 25 hundred souls here last Sunday for Easter and of those 20 made first time professions of faith in Jesus Christ. We celebrate that it took a lot of courage for many of those all of them to step out and give me a hug and as a follow up to that we just want to give you a few opportunities maybe you're here and this service and made that choice are one of our other services in our bulletin and you'll see that we're starting up an alpha class. Two weeks from today. And what that is what an alpha class is. It it it really addresses a lot of the basic fundamental foundational questions of what does it mean to follow Jesus. What does it mean to be a Christian. And it's an excellent engaging course. So whether you're new to faith or even checking out faith checking got out and have a lot of questions please check this out. E-mail my administrative assistant Jeannie and you see your e-mail address there. And so get involved. And also just a couple other follow ups if you did make that decision and want to have some material in your hands. Or again if you're checking out faith from new to faith. We've got these two pieces that are available at all of our welcome kiosks and our guests Central. So you'll find them in all the gathering spaces. But one is called I'm a Christian.

[00:02:06] Now what. Following Jesus and just excellent practical kind of real basic guidelines for for what is it what does it mean to follow Christ and then a little more in-depth. But we want to put a book in your hands if you're really leaning and seeking called Basic Christianity by John Stott. And it's an outline of the gospel so we want to make those available to you stop as I said it a welcome kiosk or guest Central and take one grab one. We want to help you in that way. So life in his name. Turn with me please to John Chapter 4 we are continuing in in our study this year walking through the Gospel of John and we're looking today at these 12 verses that conclude the fourth chapter. OK. So as I do most Sundays I just want to read them for you with you. And so you can just hear these verses in their entirety and then we'll come back and really I hope to help shine some some light into all of this. So first 43 after the two days that Jesus had been in Sumeria and had just almost the whole town came to faith because of the profession of this woman that Jesus met at the well. He then went back into his hometown Galilee now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his country his own country. When he arrived in Galilee the Galilee ends welcomed him. That seems like a oxymoron or doesn't seem to fit. But I'll explain that in a minute. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover 4. [00:03:52][106.4]

[00:03:53] They also had been there once more. He visited Kaina in Galilee where he had turned the water into wine. There was a certain royal officer official whose son lay sick at Capernaum when this man heard that Jesus came into Galilee from Judea. He went to him traveled 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 officials said Sir come down before my child dies. Go Jesus replied. Your son will live the man to Jesus at his word and departed while he was still on his way a servant met him with the news that his boy was living. When he inquired as the time when the sun got better they said to him yesterday one o'clock. The fever left him. Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said them your son will live. So he hid his whole household believed this was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea. Into Galilee. All right so what's going on here. Let's take a closer look at this. Every account that John includes in his gospel going to tell you it was very carefully chosen if you will very carefully chosen and it was all chosen. It really happened. I mean it's not like he was making stuff up but he was very selective. And when we learn why in John Chapter 20 30 and 31 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples and many others which are not recorded in this book. [00:05:47][114.3]

[00:05:48] But these are written every account you have here in John is written that you may three things believe that Jesus is the Messiah the Son of God and that by believing you will experience life in his name. Every one of these accounts is is for us to lead us into these three things. And and I went ahead and use the metaphor for this whole sermon of this light. This desk lamp that shines very definite light that kind of leaves an inside and outside. This these three things are in the light. This is why John wrote this one. They believe that Jesus is God and not just those that were reading this 2000 years ago. This is written to us to all people throughout the ages that we would believe that Jesus is God that he has absolute power. That we would believe that Jesus left heaven to rescue me. That's what it means to be the Messiah the Christ that we would believe that Jesus is God the Son of God that he is the Messiah Christ and that by believing these things we would experience life in his name how by acting on this by exercising faith by truly believing it and living it in our lives. This is why John wrote the gospel so his gospel so every story we have here is is for this very definite purpose. Now something I want you to notice that we have in chapters 2 3 and 4 as John really kicks this gospel off this thing called Well it's the ten dollar seminary word is called include Zeo. You learn as you read the Gospels there are certain literary devices that the writers use.

[00:07:48][119.5]

[00:07:48] One is inclusion though it signals a section and Chapter 2 Verse 1 down to Chapter 4 verse 46. We have this includes Zeo of Jesus in Kaina in Galilee. So in between we see three things one we see in chapters 2 and 3 as Jesus turns the water to wine. What. What are the disciples. Do they go whoa. They see his glory. They see that this man that they're following is is like divine. They believe it says that he is filled with the glory of God. They believe that Jesus is God. And then in Chapter 3 The Conversation Jesus has with Nikodim as it's all designed to help Nikodim see that Jesus was in fact the son of God and that we are to believe in him. Right John 3:16. Part of that conversation. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life believing that Jesus is God. That's the foundation of the Gospel of John. Then we get into Chapter 4. This was last week where we see the account of the woman at the well and it's very personal Jesus had a plan to meet with this woman. They have this conversation and what does she ultimately profess. She says Come and meet a man that told me everything I ever have done believes she believed that Jesus loved her her whole her heart her soul. She believed that Jesus came to rescue her. And now we get to this last account in this first section of John where we see the account of the royal official. [00:09:41][112.3]

[00:09:42] And this is really what I believe is happening right here in this story. Are you willing to not only believe that Jesus is God that he's capable of all things that he is my rescuer he current cares about me came to save me and thirdly that I am willing to experience live into life in his name if I could sum all of this up. This first section. It's really all about personal faith. All right. Personal faith we can't get to heaven on somebody else's faith. This is for each and every one of us listening online over and Baker here in the sanctuary. This is all about personal faith. In fact I'm going to take this metaphor of the desk lamp and I'm going to give it even a little more definition. I want us to see very clearly that there is there is a darkness and a light there is personal faith which is in the light which again is believing that Jesus is God believing that he came to rescue me and then acting on that faith. And then outside of that personal faith is what John really keeps coming back to in fact all the gospel writers Mark does signs and wonders faith if you were to read Mark if we were to do a study on Mark. There's a word that shows up in the Gospel of Mark. Over and over again it's the word amazed amazed people are Dumais. They they came out to to see him preach a sermon and what does Jesus say. [00:11:19][97.1]

[00:11:19] He says I know why you're here you're here just to have your belly filled and to see a miracle that signs and wonders faith. So really what John is doing in including this story is helping them see very clearly what personal faith is what it means to act on this faith. So look at verse 44 Verse 44 now for two days he left for Galilee. Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country. So parentheses but he keeps coming back to this idea that Jesus is coming into the darkness and he knows what's in everyone's heart. He knows what's in people's hearts and it's going to come down either to personal faith or not. And Jesus points out as he's heading back into Galilee he sees hinting at his guy very kind of parent the parent statically saying you know this is not going to be easy. We're going to see a lot of signs and wonders faith. In fact look back at chapter two. Real quick Jesus did the same thing to kind of introduce this whole section went in verse 23 while he was in Jerusalem the Passover. Chapter 2 Verse 23. Many people saw these signs he was performing believed in his name but was 24 Jesus would not entrust himself to them. Why not. Because he knew their hearts he could discern whether this is personal faith or signs and wonders faith. He didn't need any testimony about mankind because he knew what was in their heart. Fact jump back to chapter 1 verse 11. We see this very same thing in the prologue here Jesus came to that which was his own. [00:13:12][112.1]

[00:13:12] So it's the same kind of picture here of what's happening Jesus is moving into a place he's there in Jerusalem or moving back into his home town or even coming into this world but his own did not receive him yet. To all who did receive him. To those who had personal faith believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God. So that's that's what is happening as Jesus is now moving up back into his hometown. He kind of whispers under his scuse me and his breath to his disciples and says you know this isn't going to go easy. There is a lot of darkness a lot of signs and wonders. Faith here but what do we see here. The galleons welcomed him so that don't get too fooled here by welcomed doesn't mean they had personal faith. In fact we're told again this is signs and wonders faith because they saw what he had done. So don't get thrown off the scent by that verse. Yes they welcomed him because they wanted to see a miracle. They welcomed him. But this was not genuine faith once more. Verse 46. He then visits Canaan Galilee where he turned the water into wine. There was a certain royal officials whose son lay sick at Capernaum when he heard that Jesus came into the area. He left. This is just begging for a map. Just as I'm sorry I had to do it. So Capernaum is the fishing village right there on the sea of Galilee which is where the royal official lived and his son was laying there dying. Jesus is back in the region in a little town called Kaina just north of Nazareth. [00:15:01][108.2]

[00:15:02] And by this by this scale here that's 10 miles it's 16 miles. This man went 16 miles for compendium and he went over to he heard Jesus was in the area. But here was some real effort to go those 16 miles. There was a

certain royal official. And what did he do. He begged him to come and heal his son who was close to death. So now we have him kind of falling at Jesus feet begging him to heal his son. So the question is what is this is this personal faith or is this signs and wonders faith. In fact here's were such when you really see it through this lens. Jesus pushes back and in in fact really is seeking to clarify his heart. Look at verse 40. Forty eight he says unless you people. So he's not just singling these guy this guy up. He knows what's in everyone's heart as he's coming back into his own down. And he says unless you people see signs and wonders you will never believe is that what's going on here. He's really pressing back on this man who's begging him to travel 60 miles and come and see his son. So he it kind of puts up a smokescreen there. I'll show you people. What does the man say 49. No sir. Come down before my child dies. So this man wasn't dissuaded. He leans in. The question is the real question is is this person. Jesus says Dan go. Your son will live. Now in my heart as I read this this is the watershed moment of this passage. [00:16:56][114.4] [00:16:58] This is the moment because he wants them to do what he wants them to come with them. Come on come with me. I want you to see him. I need you to touch my son. But the question is if this man has personal faith he will believe that Jesus is God. What does that mean. That there's nothing God can't do. And that means that this man has to believe or not whether he has faith that Jesus cares about him and came to rescue him or his family member and is he willing to do one act on that belief go he said Your son is healed and I can just feel this man standing there going No please please come come with me no no no I want to see this. Or he says well what does he do. The man took Jesus at his word. And departed. You see it. That's personal faith. The man took Jesus at his word and departed. He acted on his faith. This man exhibited had personal faith. He believed that Jesus was God he believed that he cared that he could heal his son. And he departed and acted on that faith. I see four things about personal faith in this account for things. First of all personal faith is triggered by crisis. Why does God allow difficulty to enter our lives. The answer is because in every case crisis is a prelude to an exercise of faith. That's why I can tell you that's why God has allowed difficulty to come into your life. I don't know what's happening in your life but I know just like me. [00:18:55][117.5]

[00:18:56] You've got issues you've got things in your life right now that are a struggle and this struggle is an opportunity crisis is opportunity to lean in to believe that Jesus is God that he cares about me and that I can act on this faith personal faith is triggered by crisis. This really comes right down to it right here right now. Are you in the light or are you just kind of check this out. Do you really believe that Jesus loves you that he's capable that he's God. And then you act on that. That's the question. And I hope even my words cut a sharp line for you where you say yes I'm in love and yes Jesus I believe that whatever I'm going through right now is an opportunity for me to be in the light and to trust you. Second of all personal faith takes God at His word. Personal Faith trusts in what God that means we have to be in the world. We have to listen to his word obey his word. We take God at His word. I went to a place called Judson University. It was named after a man named at anigh room Judson who was one of the first missionaries fact the first missionary to Burma Myanmar. And he's quoted I've always had this quote of an unarmed from the 1900 in my heart he said. The future is as bright as the promises of God. The future is as bright as the promises of God. Personal Faith trusts in God his word takes God at His word. Thirdly personal faith sees answers as sovereignty. [00:20:46][110.2]

[00:20:48] I love that this is part of the story and in my sermon notes for today if you're working on this and in a Sunday school class I showed the difference between serendipity and luck and happenstance and sovereignty. There's a big difference because this man said what time did this happen. They said 1:00 yesterday. And in that moment he fell to his knees. One grateful that his son was healed. Second of all giving glory to God because he knew at that very moment that was the hand of God answering his prayer. He did not see this as just mere happenstance. I wonder how many times this week did something awesome. God said happened in your life and you guys. Yeah I was pretty cool. I'm not sure it is that God. Maybe God was. You think so. I don't know. Maybe I would encourage you. Keep a prayer list. Personal faith is very specific. Keep a prayer list silent to share. Just quickly my daughter my jamai my 14 year old daughter when she was very young like 4 or 5. She started keeping we'd pray together and at night and kneel beside her bed and nobody prompted her to do this but she started what she now calls has called my list she calls my list and jamai for the last 10 years. Has had three for upwards of five. Depends on what's going on things on her list and they get prayed for every night. I want to tell you some that list has changed through the years. Do you know why. [00:22:40][112.3]

[00:22:47] It's a woman in our church out in Washington named Hazel and Hazel's husband is in her 60s and her husband who had just come to faith thanks be to God. That her husband on Christmas Eve went to take the dog out to a park. Kind of a remote spot along some water and it was frigid out and he disappeared that night never came home they found out that what happened was the dog went out on the ice and he went out to get the dog he was by himself fell through drowned Christmas Eve night. Hazel lost her husband who again had just met Christ literally weeks before this happened. And jamai just heard the stories she knew I had gone out Christmas Eve to be with Hazel and be there at the science scene. Jamai guess what she put Hazel on her list. She started praying for Hazel.

God bless Hazel God he'll help her. And God would you please she she she said would you please send someone else to take care of Hazel jamai was 6 7. You think God hears the prayer of a 6 or 7 year old. Oh my goodness yes. But it's his name entered his her entered her life. She met him through. I think eHarmony I'm not sure that anyone she met bud bud moved over to town he was from the West Side and Hazel Budd an amazing man. And you know what to this day. If you were to talk to Hazel how how Bud came into her life. You know what she would say you who should cite I'm telling you my daughter at her wedding. We celebrated that jamai put Hazel on her list.

[00:24:40][113.2]

[00:24:42] That gives me goose goosebumps. It's true. Personal facies answers a sovereignty. God you are good. You are awesome. This is your work. One of the pastors that I served with a number of years ago had this phrase river crossed bridge forgotten. How many times do we cross a river and look back and say thank you Jesus for that bridge you carried me across personal faith takes God at His word personal faith understands the crisis triggers faith personal faith sees answers as sovereignty and personal faith gives personal testimony. What did he do when he got home. He says his whole household believed. Oh yeah. He gave glory to God and everyone in his home came to faith in Christ. That's what this message today is all about. It's personal faith. That's the question that I'm asking you you have personal faith whatever it is you're going through right now. It's God has allowed it to bring you the faith. And again what is faith believing that Jesus is God. There's nothing he cannot do. You believe that nothing he cannot do nothing. All things are possible. Second of all you believe that he's your messiah. He loves you. He cares about you. What you're going through make it very personal. Understand that and thirdly act on it. At beg god go to him in prayer. I'm not I'm not this is not a sermon that says God will answer all your prayers the way you want them answered. That's not that's not the sermon that sermon doesn't exist. You know what this sermon. You know why.

[00:26:45][123.0]

[00:26:46] John included this account because he wanted us to see that personal faith takes action. And gives God the glory. When he moves we have the opportunity to come to this table this table is a profession of our faith. When we take the bread and when we take the cup what are we told in first Corinthians 11 whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup. What are you doing. You are proclaiming God's death until he comes again. You are proclaiming his death. You are trusting him in him this is an act of faith. This is not an act of ceremony. Please don't for a moment think that you're somehow making you know checking something often as a do good thing. No none. This is an act of faith. This is you stepping into the light right here right now. Taking the bread taking the cup holding them until we partake together and saying Jesus I believe I believe I believe your god. I believe you're capable. I believe you're good. I believe you love me and I believe that you are going to move. God I trust you. Jesus that's what we do right now. This is an act of of personal faith. Where we trust you Jesus we trust you we identify with you we take your body and your blood your flesh and your blood and we identify with you and we take you into ourselves. We proclaim you as our savior. We believe that you died for us. For me and this is a supreme act of faith. Jesus I believe I believe trust you. Jesus. [00:26:46][0.0]

[1569.2]