

1. Faith Hears the Good News and Trusts

The royal official in our lesson had never met Jesus. He had only *heard* about Jesus from Nazareth. Maybe, he had *heard* how Jesus had taken all the water in those huge jars and instantly changed it into the best wine ever at a wedding in Cana, just 15 miles from his home in Capernaum. Maybe, he had *heard* how about Jesus' signs and wonders during his ministry down south in Jerusalem

Either way, when he realized his son was about to die, he knew he needed, so he came begging for Jesus' help. That's because: ***Faith hears the good news and trusts.***

That's what we learn here. And, it's the same way for you and me. We haven't seen Jesus either. We've only heard about him and read what he's done. We weren't there to hear those angels' sing at his birth, or hurry off with the shepherds to the stable. We weren't there to see the miracles that he performed, showing himself to be true God. We didn't stand near the cross on Good Friday, our outside the empty Easter tomb. We haven't seen heaven, or anyone raised from the dead.

Faith doesn't need that. Faith only needs to hear the voice of our Savior in his Word. Yes, we've heard the song of those Christmas angels. We've heard about Jesus' miracles. We've heard from God himself that Jesus died for our sins and was raised for our forgiveness. We've heard that because he was raised, we'll be raised too. We've also heard there's a place called heaven.

Having heard, we believe, we trust. We don't need to see Jesus with our physical eyes, because we see him with the eyes of faith. We confess this truth as we sing: **"My Faith Looks up to Thee."** (p.4)

2. Faith Perseveres Even When It Seems Like God Isn't Listening

This royal official came to Jesus. He begged for the life of his son. The response Jesus gave his faith-filled request isn't what we were expecting, v.48-49: **"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."**

We expected an immediate response with health restored. Instead, Jesus chews everybody out: *"You people are wowed by my works, but you don't know me. You'll never believe if you only want to be entertained."*

It seems like Jesus wasn't listening to him, even ignoring him. But the all-knowing and all-powerful Son of God was on top of things. He knew what he was about to do for that man's son. He also knew what he was doing for that man - testing his faith. From this we learn: ***Faith perseveres even when it seems like God isn't listening.***

What did faith do when tested by Jesus? Faith didn't whine, complain or quit. Faith repeats the request: **"Sir, come down before my child dies."** Faith perseveres because the faith the Holy Spirit planted in our hearts knows that Christ is listening and he'll do what's necessary.

There have been times in our lives when we've asked God for things and it didn't happen as quickly as we'd like, or on our time table. Faith hangs on Christ. Those whining and complaining voices coming from inside of us were never faith. That was someone else's voice - our selfish and impatient Old Adam.

Faith is patient. Faith perseveres. It understands that when we make a request from God, he's got something even better in store for us. We may think that God isn't listening, but faith knows better. Faith knows God is always helping and this truth calms our soul.

We confess this truth as we sing: **"Be Still, My Soul."** (p.5)

3. Faith Takes Jesus at His Word

Our lesson continues, v.50: **“Go,” Jesus replied, “your son will live.” The man took Jesus at his word and departed.**

When you consider this royal official’s reaction, you realize that faith is a miracle which believes Jesus. And that’s what we learn: ***Faith takes Jesus at his Word.***

He could have said, *“No! No! No! Jesus, you need to come with me, to heal my son. You were at the wedding to change the water into wine. You were in Jerusalem to perform those signs and wonders. Jesus, you need to be in Capernaum to heal my son, not here, 15 miles away!”* But he didn’t. Faith in Christ fought through any excuses and took Jesus at his word no matter how difficult it may have been for him.

The faith which the Holy Spirit has given you and me does the same thing. We also take Jesus at his word. Jesus has told us so many wonderful things in his Word. He’s also told us plenty of things that are difficult to understand. When it comes to his will and the Ten Commandments, God tells us some difficult things - especially for sinful human beings. Yet, he tells us that no matter the situation in which we find ourselves, it’s always best to follow his will. And he promises that all things will go well for us.

But how many times haven’t we found ourselves in situations when it seemed that following what God says in his word isn't going to solve the problem isn't going to get us out of trouble isn't going to be well-received by our family or friends?

Faith fights through all those doubting voices inside of us and outside of us and says: *Take Jesus at his word when he tells you what is the best thing to do and when he tells you what he will do for you.* This miraculous aspect of faith, leads us to confess this truth and sing: **“We Walk By Faith and Not by Sight.”** (p.6)

4. Faith Receives What is Promised

By faith in Christ - this royal official trusted what he heard about Jesus. By faith in Jesus - he didn’t give up. By faith in Jesus - he persevered and took him at His word. And now by faith in Jesus: ***He received what Jesus had promised,*** v.51-52: **While he (the royal official) 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.”**

He certainly wasn’t disappointed, because God cannot disappoint us. What he promises, he fulfills. No matter how amazing the promise is, he has fulfilled it or he will one day fulfill it. The incredible things that God has promised us are overwhelming!

He’s promised that our sins are forgiven. Through Baptism through hearing his Word through the reception of his Supper we’ve received the forgiveness Jesus earned for us. What God promises he must fulfill. God cannot lie.

He’s promised that there’s a place he’s prepared for us called heaven where he’s waiting for us to be with him for all eternity. What God promises he must fulfill. God cannot lie.

He’s promised that each of us will have a resurrected body. The God who created our bodies from the dust, is the same God who will also raise our bodies from the dust. No matter how wild and crazy a perfect glorified body may seem, what God promises he must fulfill. God cannot lie.

Faith is never disappointed. It receives from God all he’s promised. That why we confess this truth and sing: **“Faith is a Living Power from Heaven.”** (p.7)

5. Faith is Strengthened and Shared with Each Promise Fulfilled

Our lesson concludes v.53,54: **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.**

As this father headed home, he realized that his son wasn't just on the road to recovery, he was completely healed at the exact moment Jesus said: **"Your son will live."** Although the father had faith in Jesus, when he received what Jesus promised, his faith grew stronger.

That's what we learn: ***Faith is strengthened with each promise fulfilled.*** We first receive faith through Baptism. Then, as we hear Jesus' promises and experience his faithfulness to those promises day in and day out, year in and year out, our faith gets stronger.

During difficult days we recall God's promises: that he's with us that he won't leave us that he'll always working for our eternal good. Having experienced God's guiding hand through those bad and sad times, our faith gets a boost.

There's something else going on with this father and his faith: *"Jesus said my son would live and the exact time Jesus said it, my boy got better!"* What father could keep this news to himself? His faith, first strengthened, now needed to be shared.

Our faith needs to be shared. Have you gotten through a difficult time when someone commented: *"I don't know how you ever get through that?"* And, you responded: *"Yah, I got through it, but it really wasn't me. It was the Lord who got me through it. He's the only reason I'm standing here today."*

With each promise Jesus fulfills we grow stronger in our faith along with our desire to tell others. His faithfulness in the past gives us confidence for the future. That's why we confess this truth and sing: **"I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus."** (p.8)