

Welcoming Jesus
John 4:43-54
Bethany Assembly of God
11/12/2023

Central Proposition: You can welcome Jesus.

Introduction

This morning, we continue our series through the Gospel of John. John wrote so that we might believe in Jesus and that, by believing, we would have life in His name. In other words, belief is a really important theme in this book. In fact, the verb *to believe* is used eleven times in Mark, fourteen in Matthew, nine in Luke, but 98 times in John. And the passage we come to this morning adds to our understanding of the nature of belief, how it can grow, but also some of the roadblocks to genuine faith in Jesus. See John 4:43-54.

When Jesus got to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed Him. But later, in chapter 6, after Jesus rebuked people because they were just seeking signs and told them that they should be seeking Him, the real bread of heaven, many of them left Him. He was no longer welcome.

1. Your faith shouldn't be in faith.

As the late General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God, George Wood put it, **“We don't have faith in faith, we have faith in Jesus.”**

- Faith in faith is what the prosperity Gospel teaches you. It presents to you a Teddy Bear Jesus who can be manipulated by your wants, as long as you get the words right. This is a subtle form of idolatry. It is the substitution of the eternal God who created all things, knows all things, and is over all things for what I want. And so, we see in this story someone far more beautiful and merciful than we expected.
- We need to remember that Jesus is not one of us; we're one of His. Just because we identify with Him does not mean He approves of us. Are you coming to Jesus to find out what He wants, or are you just making demands?

2. Your trust should be increasing.

We come to Him with mixed motives and mustard seed size faith, and rather than rejecting us, He leads us and encourages us to grow, if we're willing. God receives the small, unrefined faith we bring Him, and begins to refine it and help it grow. Jesus wants your faith to grow. Your trust should be increasing. Verse 50 says, “The man believed.” His faith is growing. Now, He doesn't believe only if Jesus does it his way. He believes Jesus' word. He believed in Jesus and so did everyone in his household, not that Jesus was a miracle worker, but as the Savior.

It's easy, almost natural and unnoticed for us to slip into making faith about our own interests. See Philippians 2:21. But growing faith is increasingly more interested in Jesus than it is in itself. **A person whose faith is growing will be increasingly more focused on Jesus' interests rather than on their own.** Growing faith is faith that is moving from hoping I get my way to trusting Jesus' way.

Conclusion

When Jesus returned to Galilee, He was welcomed, but only on the terms the Galileans wanted. When they realized they wouldn't be able to get out of Him what they wanted, His welcome quickly came to

an end. But those who did receive Him, who believed in His name, they received the right to become God's children and were born again.