

BEHOLDING CHRIST . . . THE SON OF GOD

Healing at a Distance

John 4:46–54

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

There are few deeper bonds on earth as those between fathers and their children. Watching a son or daughter struggle against a debilitating disease or manage the painful transition from adolescence into adulthood changes you. The story for today will move you like that.

Our author, the apostle John, weaves a penetrating historical narrative of a once self-reliant man who, desperate to find a cure for his son's terminal illness, received that and so much more in the person and presence of Jesus! While this remarkable drama unfolds, as Chuck Swindoll would say, "Try to stay in your seats!"



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

In this lesson, we'll use the *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study to observe, interpret, correlate, and apply the text. Chuck Swindoll's book, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*, explains these methods in more detail. You can [purchase a copy](#) at Insight for Living Ministries' online store. Also, you may wish to check out [Chuck's commentary](#) on John's gospel.



Observation: What Do You See?

There is much to observe in John's vivid portrayal of this tender scene in which Jesus healed a father's dying son. Let's look closely at the details John included, to understand and hopefully embrace some powerful lessons revealed as the weakness of the human experience meets the limitless power of Jesus.

Quotable

John wrote his gospel so people would believe . . . and he included episode after episode of Jesus, God's Son, performing miracles. Each was a monumental display of Christ's deity.

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Searching the Scriptures Tool

Observation is a critical beginning technique to put together the pieces of a passage of Scripture. Read the passage carefully, noticing features such as contrasts, comparisons, repeated words, cause-and-effect, and emphasized words. Particularly notice imperatives (commands) and verbs (action words), which are like tree limbs. All the ideas in the paragraph, like branches and leaves, connect to these words.

The Occasion for the Miracle (John 4:46–47)

Read John 4:46–54. Write down some initial observations about the occasion and setting of this story. Try to find at least ten helpful observations.

If you recall, this is the town in which Jesus performed His first recorded miracle—turning water into wine. How might that previous miracle have prepared people for the miracle Jesus performed in this account?

Who were the main people involved in the story?





Getting to the Root

The Greek word used to describe the “official” in this story is *basilikos*, which means “the king’s man.” In other words, this individual who approached Jesus was likely one of Herod’s high-ranking appointees. It would have been no small matter for him to have swallowed his pride and humbled himself before this Miracle-worker from Galilee.

What need did the official present to Jesus?

What emotions was the official likely experiencing? How might those emotions have impacted how he approached Jesus?

How did John describe the physical condition of the official’s son (John 4:46–47)?

Physical infirmity can be one of the strongest magnets to draw people to the Savior. Keep that in mind as you study the conversation that prompted Jesus to demonstrate His supernatural power on behalf of this high-ranking official.



The Conversation That Prompted the Miracle (John 4:46–50)

Roman officials had full authority to take charge of a crisis and manage it directly. That mind-set no doubt affected the way in which this man approached Jesus with his personal crisis. Though he pleaded with Jesus out of desperation, he did so in a two-fold request that fell just short of a command. What two things did he want Jesus to do?

How did Jesus respond initially (John 4:48)? What issue did Jesus raise in response to the man's request?



Interpretation: Finding John's Original Intent

Interpretation answers the question, *What does this passage mean?* To clarify the meaning of a text, first view it through the eyes of the original audience. How did John intend his readers to understand this story? What principles or theological truths emerge that help us understand the significance of this wonderful miracle?

The Reaction to the Miracle (John 4:50–54)

John made a point to describe the desperateness in which this father appealed to Jesus, not only to come to his town but to heal his son. So here was an unbelieving government official, brought to a place of desperate need, begging God's Son for a miracle.



Yet Jesus immediately shined the light on the issue of faith (John 4:48). How does Jesus' response relate to John's purpose for writing his gospel (20:31)?

Read John 4:50–54. Trace the development of faith from the time Jesus declared, “Your son will live!” to the end of verse 54. What resulted from Jesus' words?



Correlation: How Does It Relate?

This story resonates with a similar scene that occurred much later, during the period of the beginning of the church chronicled in the New Testament book of Acts. Read Acts 16:25–34. Make some notes about how this story is like the story of the government official's faith.

What resulted from this jailer's faith in Jesus?





Application: Bringing Home the Lessons

The story of this father's desperate plea on behalf of his son, which resulted in him believing in Jesus, provides several specific applications for all of us. Here are a few:

1. *When we turn to the Lord, we must surrender our independence and admit the depth of our needs* (John 4:46–49). This father sought help when faced with a critical situation. He wasn't afraid to admit his own inadequacy or to ask for help publicly. How vulnerable are you with others? How transparent are you about your needs with your friends? With your spouse and children? With yourself?
2. *We must be alert to the genuine physical and spiritual needs of those closest to us—especially those under our care.* It's important to guard against becoming so consumed with our careers, our education, or our ministries that we neglect the genuine needs of those who depend on us for care. That's especially true if you are a parent.
3. *We must not allow pride to hinder our willingness to believe God's Word* (John 4:50, 53). Perhaps, at this moment, you are separated by distance from a situation or person you are very concerned about. Will you trust God to be there? Does your faith in His power compel you to pray boldly and fervently?
4. *We must not allow logic to prevent us from walking by faith.* Do you consider yourself a pacesetter in spiritual matters? As a father or mother or caregiver, are you faithfully shepherding those in your care to pursue the Lord and walk by faith?

What hinders you today from believing in God? Are you ready to surrender that hindrance to Him and lead your family to a greater experience of His power and provision?



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I give You my life, my future, and my family today. Please help me even in my unbelief. Remove those things that are keeping me from experiencing Your limitless power and wonderful grace. In Your Son's gracious name I pray, amen.



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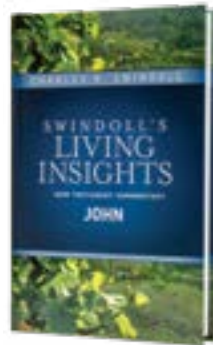
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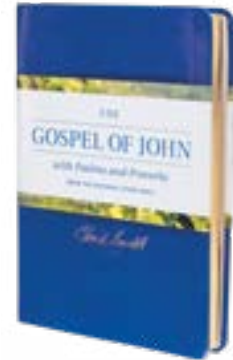
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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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