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Father, we thank Thee for our minds, and for evidence that you expect us to use them in all matters; and especially in matters of Christian faith. We are grateful for the great and logical teachings of our christianity. In Christ we do find satisfaction and nourishment indeed. We would depend on him more, and follow his leading more completely.

Amen.

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Scripture: John 4:46-54

Theme: If You Believe.

Text: Jn. 4:50b ----"The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him..."

Proposition: If you believe in Christ and accept and trust him fully ~~his~~ help for your needs will always contribute to your best long-range welfare.

Date written: Sept. 6, 1962.

Dates and places used:

Sept. 9, 62 - Montrose, Colo.

Feb. 19, 1967 - Alamosa + Blanca

for Feb. 19, 1967

Copyright: John A. ...

Thomas: If you believe.

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Date written: Sept. 6, 1900

Dates and places used:

Sept 1900 - Hartford, Conn.  
For ...

Introduction:

1. A young boy was seriously ill, so ill that he was not expected to live. Naturally, his parents were greatly upset. His father, a government official of some wealth and power, was not a man ~~to~~ give up easily. He was accustomed to trying in every possible way to seek a solution to a problem. He wasn't going to do less than all that was possible when the life of his own son was at stake. When he heard of a person who was effecting healings when no one else could, and this person was not more than a day's trip away, he started out at once to get this man to come to treat his son. You would have done the same, wouldn't you have?

2. The father in this case was a Roman official, and the healer he sought out was Jesus. The story is told in our Scripture of today, John 4:46-54. The account is similar in many respects to a story of faith and healing in Matthew and in Luke, so that many people think it relates the same event, but in different detail and language.

John 4:46-54

1. A young boy was seriously ill. As his father was not expected to live, he was not expected to live. In reality, his parents were greatly upset. His father, a government official of some rank and power, was not a man to give up easily. He was accustomed to trying in every possible way to seek a solution to a problem. He wasn't going to do less than all that was possible when the life of his son was at stake. When he heard of a person who was effecting healings when no one else could, and this person was not there during a day's trip away, he started off at once to get this man to come to treat his son. You would have done the same, wouldn't you have?

2. The father in this case was a government official, and the healing he sought out was Jesus. The story is told in our Scripture of today, John 4:46-54. The account is striking in many respects to a story of faith and healing in Matthew and Luke, so that many people think it tells us the same even, but in different detail and language.

Whether Matthew, Luke and John recount the same story, or whether several very-similar incidents happened in Jesus' ministry, is not important. ~~The chief features of lasting importance are examples and principles~~ <sup>for us</sup> ~~are what count.~~ What did happen when the official found Jesus and asked for healing for his son? Is there any real permanent value for us in what was said and done by Jesus, by the official and by others there? We think there is such value, or we wouldn't spend this time discussing it.

I. The attitude with which one seeks help is important.

1. <sup>see</sup> In the comic strip "Dr. Rex Morgan" recently (August-September 1962), the good doctor had a slight altercation with a playboy at a supper club. The incident arose because an evidently-wealthy young society Miss wanted her rather large group seated together in a good spot in the club, and this necessitated moving the doctor and his two guests, who were already seated.

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 several very similar incidents  
 happened in your history, as  
 important. The other features  
 of these incidents are examples  
 and principles are very good.  
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 women's side that is discussing

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1. In the same way, the text  
 says, "recently (in 18-20th century  
 times), the good doctor had a child  
 at a location with a history of  
 another child. The first nurse  
 became an extremely healthy young  
 society. His wife had a son, Jerry  
 group centered together in a good  
 that in the end, and this necessi-  
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However, the doctor in advance had reserved this very special spot, and was in no mood to be moved. When the playboy wanted to force the situation, and later when he hit at the doctor to get back at him for his replies to some insulting remarks, Dr. Morgan got command of the situation by the old arm-twisting technique. Actually, things like this whole ~~kin~~ imaginary situation probably never would happen if the approach were a bit different. If the headwaiter perhaps had introduced Miss Poole and ~~with her~~ very politely asked if the doctor would mind moving to another just-as-good spot the doctor would surely have been more apt to consent. As it was, a forceful demand got only a refusal, resentment and a generally-bad situation. This comic-strip situation illustrates well the principle that when you are in need of help don't ~~try~~ to get it by demand or force. The attitude with which a request is made is important.

2. When in the Biblical incident which we are studying today the official whose son was critically

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sick approached Jesus it seemed that the first reply that Jesus gave was rather cold and detached. When the man begged Jesus to come to Capernaum and heal his son, Jesus' first reply was, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." That sounds almost like a cruel, cold, heartless answer. The recovery of his son was all that the upset father could think about or want. At this point the speculation about signs, or wonders, or anything else meant little to him. His son's condition was all that counted then. Jesus, however, responded very naturally ~~mf~~ from his point of view, as we can see when we recall the immediately-prior events of his life. He and his teachings had been rejected by his fellow-townsmen in Nazareth, as well as in other parts of Galilee. He had left that area and gone to Judea. In Jerusalem and other parts of Judea he was taken seriously, was listened to, and either was strongly accepted or rejected. His works of healing and other unusual acts drew much attention, and often were the chief basis on which many

John 4:43-44  
 The first reply that Jesus gave was  
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 The rest of his son was all that  
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 on earth. In this case, the question  
 is not about signs, or wonders, or  
 anything else that might impress him.  
 He asks a question that is  
 about faith. Jesus, however,  
 responded very matter-of-factly from  
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 when we recall the immediately-previous  
 events of his life. He and his  
 disciples had been rejected by his  
 fellow-countrymen in Samaria, and  
 left their other parts of Galilee  
 behind to go to Samaria and other parts  
 of Judea. In Samaria and other parts  
 of Judea he was later rejected,  
 was stoned to, and other things  
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 work of his and other things  
 were the chief basis in which they

people accepted or rejected him. In fact, his wonder-working got in the way of the real meanings he was trying to impart. Finally, he left Judea and returned to Galilee, seeking opportunity for some peace and refreshment. Back home, however, he was greeted as a home product who had been taken seriously and made good in the capital. He was besieged by requests for signs of his power, such as healing and magic, and he was tired of and disgusted with the shallow nature of these demands. He to whom God had entrusted a great moral and ethical message was being accepted not for that message but because he was a great wonder worker. So when the official asked Jesus to heal his son it seemed like just another request for proof of his power. That, very probably, is why he said, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe."

3. The sick boy's father really wanted help, however, and he really believed that Jesus could give such help. So he disregarded the seemingly-heartless remark, and said,

people accepted or rejected him. In fact, his former working partner in the way of the real economy was was trying to improve. Finally, he left Texas and returned to Dallas, seeking opportunity for some peace and retirement. Back home, however, he was greeted as a home product. The fact had been taken seriously and made good in the capital. He was hailed as a hero for his efforts in his power, as an leader and leader, and he was hailed as a hero. He was hailed with the same honor as those who had. He had won the admiration of a great moral and ethical message was being accepted for the last message but because he was a great worker. So when the official asked him to lead his son he seemed like a hero and a hero for proof of his power. That, very probably, is why he said, "I hope you see signs and wonders you without belief."

The stick boy's name really wanted help, however, and he really believed that Jesus could do such things. So he disregarded the seeming iv-act less remark, and said,

"Sir, come down before my child dies." Jesus recognized the desperate appeal, and told him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed Jesus and started on home. He didn't need proof. He didn't demand ~~Jesus~~ that Jesus go to his son's bedside. He didn't try to dictate to Jesus how his son should be treated. He trusted Jesus' judgment and statement. Having made his appeal, he left the response to it strictly to Jesus. This is a pretty good example for us when we seek help, either from others or from God: make the appeal sincerely, not as a demand but as a request, and trust the one to whom it is made to use his best judgment and resources to handle the matter. This is a matter of attitude on the part of the needy person.

4. There is the tale of a rather inebriated man who needed a little help. As he stood on a busy street corner he wasn't real sure where he was; so he asked a passerby at what location they were. He was told that he was at the corner of Madison and ~~State~~ streets. The

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intoxicated man replied, "Never mind the details. What city?" (#782, The Public Speakers Treasure Chest, H. B. Prochnow, Harpers, 1942).

5. There are times when we need help in diagnosing a trouble, or in knowing where we are. After that we usually do want to know as much about the details as we can. Most of us say that we believe in Christ, that he is able to and does help us; but we are interested in the details, usually. That is, we often show interest in

## II. How Jesus goesk about helping us

1. There have been many attempts to explain how Jesus did the healing and miracles of his earthly ministry, to explare the details of them.

Some say that he simply made use of natural, ageless, God-given processes which he understood but which were generally unknown in his day. Our modern-day medical miracles, they say, also stem from our ever-increasing knowledge of many of these principles.

re-examined and revised, "Water and  
the Corals, What's in It?"  
The Public Health Research Council  
H. B. Robinson, Harvard, 1962.

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II. How Jesus taught about religion

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2. Others insist that in his wondrous deeds Jesus was using the very power of God to intervene and change the course of nature at ~~ax~~ given points. This, they say, is one of the primary proofs of the divine nature of ~~his deeds~~. Such a view has long tradition behind it, but it does not fit in very well with statements and questions of Jesus, like the one of today's Scripture, in which he obviously disliked belief based on signs and wonders.

3. Some try to explain much of Jesus' success in healing as simply a top-notch example of the power of suggestion. He was an outstandingly attractive personality, whose suggestions and thoughts had almost hypnotic power over many people, it is argued.

4. In the case in our Scripture, Jesus did not even see the sick child. How the healing was brought about we surely don't know. Probably the same divine force was at work which obviously enters into healing and other human experiences of today when earnest prayer is

3. Doctors' trials. In his  
 wonderful book, Jesus was raising the  
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practiced for a person in illness or other distress. I believe that here is a clue to how Jesus performed much of his good work: he simply ~~ph~~through prayer placed the problem in the ~~h~~hands of God, and in complete trust left it there.

5. This, of course, was what he wanted of those whom he helped. He wanted them to believe in him and to trust him because of his message from and about God; because of his special relationship with God. He preferred this trust prior to doing works of healing and other abnormal nature; though there are certainly records of where he did these things ~~simply~~ from compassion. Evidence of his desire for faith prior to the help he gave ~~were~~ several remarks somewhat like, "because you believe, be healed"; instead of "because you have been healed, believe."

6. We really cannot answer our inquiry of "how does Jesus go about helping people?" We do ~~know~~ that he wanted full belief in him as God's son and messenger, that he avoided

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and as man, and that he wanted

being spectacular when he could do so and still give help; that he often prayed about and discussed the problem at hand with his heavenly father; that he did not hesitate to give simple and direct commands to those whom he helped; and that he expected his advice to be followed. We believe these to be good statements of Jesus' methods even now. We may well ask about

III. The solution, or outcome, of the-help that Jesus gives.

1. In our Scriptural illustration the outcome, of course, was that the boy immediately took a turn for the better. Some may argue that he might have done so anyway, even if his father had not appealed to Jesus. That is true: he might have. You could say this sort of thing about almost any modern-day recovery, too, you know, if you wanted to discredit all medical help. The record is that the officer, his family, and his household were convinced that Jesus' efforts had healed the boy; and that thereafter they all believed Jesus to be what he claimed to be, and fully accepted him.

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2. Not always are the results so strikingly quick~~ly~~ and rewarding in relationship to the prayers and requests we make to Christ. Sometimes the result is ab~~o~~viously a "no" to our plea, or some other solution comes which we don't want. Usually, though, if ~~w~~ur faith is sure and strong before we pray, we don't see in any result a particular reason to confirm or deny Christ's personality, nature and power. We know him as our Lord, guide and saviour. We share with him our needs and problems as they arise. We do not judge him by how nearly he performs to our wishes and expectations. We realize that most~~ly~~ of our concerns now, though important, are of a passing nature. We are ready to trust our Christ, his directions, whatever the results.

3. If our faith tells us anything, it says that ~~one~~ sure result will be an eternity in the glorious and everylasting presence of God.

### Conclusion:

1. Let us now~~nt~~ try to draw all this together. In the account of John 4:46-54 about a man who turned

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Conclusion:

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 John 1:1-14 about a man who

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to Jesus to help his sick boy we have found some timeless and currently-applicable christian truths.

2. The first such truth is that the attitude with which we ask for help is important. The attitude should not be a demanding or forcible one. Also, don't present the need for help so that a failure to help would make the one you've appealed to seem either heartless or helpless if he can't or doesn't help, perhaps for some reason he can't tell you and which you can't know. Make your appeal with a complete willingness to let the one you've turned to decide how he'll respond, and don't dictate the details of his response. These are good guidelines for the attitude of a person in need, whether he asks for help from people or from God.

3. Once you have made the appeal show complete trust in the response of your benefactor. Be willing to cooperate by doing the things he asks of you.

4. When appealing, especially to

to Jesus to help his flock by us  
have found some kindness and concern  
in applicable Christian conduct.

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