

A Promise in their Pockets
A Bible study in advance of WLSTC

One of our greatest joys as Christian educators is seeing our students grow in their knowledge of God's Word and in their faith in Jesus as their Savior. God's Word works. That is God's promise, and we see evidence of that every day. But our contact with our students is often limited to 8 hours a day. How confident are we that our students take their faith home with them? Do their parents see the same growth that we do? What about parents who aren't really interested in the Christian education that our schools provide, but rather are focused on a good private school education? Jesus is in our classrooms, but how do we make sure that Jesus is also in our students' homes? Two thousand years ago, a man came to Jesus for help. In his mind, he had the perfect solution. "Jesus, come with me." Jesus did not take his advice, and sent him on his way with only a promise in his pocket.

John 4:45-54: ⁴⁵ When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, for they also had been there. ⁴⁶ Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death. ⁴⁸ "Unless you people see signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe." ⁴⁹ The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." ⁵⁰ "Go," Jesus replied, "your son will live." The man took Jesus at his word and departed. ⁵¹ While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. ⁵² 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." ⁵³ 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. ⁵⁴ This was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

1. v. 45: "When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem." The Galileans' eagerness to see Jesus was conditional—they were eager to see him because they hoped he would do amazing things for them as he had in Jerusalem. A "preaching and teaching Jesus"? That wasn't a Jesus that was quite so appealing. Our students have the same sinful nature as the Galileans. Why don't our students always appreciate the Savior Jesus they meet in their Bible history classes, school and chapel devotions, and worship services? Think like a 2nd grader or an 8th grader and finish the sentence:
 - "I don't always enjoy Christ-Light because _____.
 - "I don't always enjoy grade school chapel because _____.
 - "I don't always enjoy weekly worship because _____.
2. What are possible solutions?
3. We have the same sinful nature as the Galileans and our students. We would like to have Jesus meet us on our terms and according to our busy schedules. Yet other than our personal devotions, it is in the liturgy, sermons and Bible studies where we meet our Savior Jesus more often than anywhere else. Why don't we always appreciate these opportunities? Finish these sentences:
 - "I don't always enjoy worship because _____.
 - "I don't always enjoy my church's Bible study because _____.
 - "I don't always enjoy faculty Bible study because _____.

- “I don’t always enjoy the state teachers’ conference spiritual keynote because _____

_____.

4. What are possible solutions?
5. **v. 48: “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will never believe.”** The Galileans looked to Jesus for miracles, not for salvation. They saw Jesus as a magician, physician, teacher, or a combination of all three, but doubted that he could be the Messiah. For us as called workers and the majority of those we serve, that is not an issue. Yet Satan can still be successful in tempting us to doubt God’s “first article promises”. What does this mean?
6. AGREE/DISAGREE: “More of my students need to be reminded of God’s providence than God’s forgiveness.” Explain.
7. **v.50: “The man took Jesus at his word and departed.”** This royal official went home alone with only Jesus’ promise in his pocket. What are other examples from the Bible where God sent someone out to face a challenge, armed only with a promise?
8. **v. 50: “The man took Jesus at his word and departed.”** What are examples of when we send a student home with God’s promise in his/her pocket but all evidence in front of them seems to contradict those promises?
9. What are reasons that some of our students are more likely to take Jesus home with them than others?
10. A number of congregations have changed their confirmation classes from pastor-led classes to a pastor teaching the parents who then teach their children. This is one way of increasing the number of spiritual conversations between parents and children. What are other practical ways that we can assist our students and parents in taking God’s promises out of their pockets and discussing them together as a family?