

The Miracles of Jesus

This book consists of summaries from "The Miracles of Jesus" sermon series which was written and preached by Bro. Russell Roberts from April-December of 2025. The series was made up of 31 messages that detailed 45 specific occasions recorded in the gospels during which Jesus performed a miracle or miracles.

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The list of miracles cited in this series was adapted from the list found here:
<http://www.aboutbibleprophecy.com/miracles.htm>

Changing Water Into Wine

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No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. - 1 Timothy 5:23

This morning we are beginning a new sermon series titled “The Miracles of Jesus”. Over the next several months we are going to study 45 distinct occasions during Jesus’ earthly ministry when He performed a miracle or miracles. Many of these are described explicitly with great detail while others are mentioned more generally. We will address these occurrences chronologically, with the first taking place just days after Jesus’ baptism and the last a few weeks before His ascension into Heaven.

The miracles that Jesus did during His life on earth are recorded in the 4 gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Some of them are found in only 1 of these books, while others are documented in multiple gospel accounts. As we encounter each of these miracles, we will highlight what type of miracle it was, the manner in which Jesus performed it, and the primary purpose for which it was done.

The first miracle of our series is found in the gospel of John. There are only 7 of Jesus’ miracles discussed in detail in the gospel of John - far fewer than are found in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. These 7 are commonly referred to as Jesus’ “categorical miracles”. Also, unlike the other gospels, John never uses the word “miracle” to describe any of Jesus’ supernatural deeds. Instead, he uses the word “signs”. His word choice reveals that Jesus’ miraculous works were never intended to be an end unto themselves, but were “signs” that pointed to a greater truth.

I. A PROBLEM ARISES (v1-4)

Just days after His baptism and subsequent temptation in the wilderness, Jesus and the first few of His apostles attended a wedding in the small village of Cana. Cana was located in Galilee, approximately 8 miles northwest of Nazareth - Jesus’ hometown. Jesus’ mother Mary was at the wedding and may have been helping conduct the event. She was likely a relative or a friend of the family. The implication is that Jesus and His disciples were invited because of their ties to Mary.

A Jewish wedding ceremony only takes about 20-30 minutes, but the celebration afterwards typically lasts for several hours. The host family is responsible for providing dinner and drinks for the guests. During the wedding at Cana, a major problem arose - as the party went on the hosts ran out of wine! This may have happened because they couldn’t afford enough wine or maybe they hadn’t planned properly. Either way, had this deficiency become known to the guests, the wedding party and family would have been disgraced and embarrassed.

Mary approached Jesus privately and informed Him of the situation. She obviously didn’t want the host family to be embarrassed and she knew that Jesus could do something about it.

However, He seemed reluctant to act because the time had not yet come for Him to publicly launch His ministry. During their brief interaction, Jesus said in effect, "Woman, this is not our problem." Some theologians suggest that He used the title "Woman" to identify her as the New Eve, the mother of the One who would crush Satan's head (Genesis 3:15).

II. A SOLUTION IS FOUND (v5-10)

Despite His initial hesitance, Mary trusted that her son Jesus would intervene and so she told the servants to do whatever He said. The fact that the servants obeyed her suggests that she was assisting with the wedding and they had been placed under her charge. Following His mother's lead, Jesus instructed them to fill 6 stone water pots that were used for the Jewish custom of purification with water. Each of these large pots held 20-30 gallons. The servants did as Jesus requested, filling all of them to the brim.

Then Jesus told them to draw some from a pot and take it to the headwaiter. They did so, and when he tasted it the water had been turned into wine! He didn't even know that a miracle had taken place, but assumed that this was just more of the wine that had been set aside for the wedding. Only the servants, Mary, Jesus, and His disciples knew what had happened. The headwaiter complimented the bridegroom for saving his best wine until last, which indicated that Jesus' water into wine was better tasting than the wine that had been served previously. The celebration continued with disruption.

Jesus made no effort to call attention to this miracle. In fact, according to the text, most of the people at the wedding never knew a miracle had taken place. And, rather than the host family being embarrassed and scorned for a major social misstep, they were likely praised for conducting such a great event and providing such wonderful wine. Except for a few insiders, Jesus was able to keep His identity mostly hidden from those present.

III. A REASON IS GIVEN (v11)

Why did Jesus perform this miracle? Well, He didn't do it so that the guests could enjoy high quality wine, though they certainly did. He didn't do it to spare the host family from shame, although they were spared. He didn't do it to promote Himself or His ministry, but rather kept it concealed from most of the people present. In the end, I believe that Jesus turned the water into wine simply out of respect and love for His mother. Mary asked Him to do it, it wasn't out of line with God's will, so He did. Ask and you shall receive. But, beyond the miracle, what happened that day at Cana was a sign of something even more wonderful.

This was the first of Jesus' many signs to come. By performing this miracle, Jesus manifested His glory making it apparent that He was no mere man. He was declaring His identity as the divine Son of God. Although His first few disciples didn't fully grasp who Jesus was at this point or understand the scope of His redemptive mission, nevertheless they believed that was the promised Messiah who was worthy to be followed. This was just the beginning of a spectacular journey to come!

CONCLUSION

The miracles of Jesus can be divided into 4 categories. He performed healing miracles, demonstrating His ability to cure the human body. He performed natural miracles, exercising His power over creation, its elements, and the forces of nature. He performed exorcisms, revealing His authority in the spiritual realm over evil, demonic forces. And He performed resurrections, demonstrating His power over physical death. Turning water into wine can be categorized as a natural miracle.

We will discover as we progress through this series that Jesus performed His miracles in a variety of different ways. He didn't follow any routine or formula. In the passage we read today, there is no indication that Jesus said any "magic words", nor did He wave anything over the water, touch the water, or put anything in the water. Rather, He simply told the servants what to do and as they obeyed, He willed that the water be turned into wine. Amazing!

There is so much more we could say about this miracle, but our time is short. Therefore, let me offer a final thought. I suspect that many of the guests who attended this wedding never knew the truth of what actually happened. They simply believed that the bridegroom's family had waited to serve their best wine until last. This story always makes me wonder... How many times has God done a miracle in my life that I was and am unaware of? In what hidden ways has He intervened "behind the scenes" for my protection, provision, and well-being? Thank you Lord for your miraculous works!

Next week, will we continue our new sermon series with 2 more instances of Jesus' amazing signs and wonders. I hope you'll join us... and bring a friend. Until then, may God bless you and may you bless Him.

Signs During Passover and the Royal Official's Son

Originally Preached on 5/4/2025

Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord God. - Exodus 23:17

Last Sunday we began a brand new sermon series titled “The Miracles of Jesus”. We studied the first of Jesus’ many miracles - turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana. When the host family ran out of wine during the wedding celebration, Jesus told the servants to fill 6 large pots with water. As they obeyed, He simply willed that the water become wine and it did. The party was saved! Although this was a remarkable sign Jesus chose to keep His actions mostly anonymous, stating that the time to launch His ministry publicly had not yet come.

In today’s message we will examine the next 2 occasions during which Jesus performed miracles. Just like last week, both of this morning’s accounts are found exclusively in the gospel of John. Remember that John does not refer to Jesus’ supernatural works as “miracles”, but rather as “signs”. His physical miracles were signs of His divine nature and identity.

I. VARIOUS MIRACLES IN JERUSALEM (John 2:23-25)

The Jewish Passover was near so Jesus traveled to Jerusalem. When He came into the temple He found money changers and merchants selling oxen, sheep, and doves. They were taking advantage of those who had come to make sacrifices by charging exorbitant prices for the animals and cheating them with a poor exchange rate on their currency. Jesus became angry and overturned their tables, poured out their coins, and then He drove them out with a scourge of cords. This was the first time that Jesus cleansed the temple. He would do it again a few years later just days before His crucifixion.

During the weeklong Feast of Unleavened Bread that followed the Passover, Jesus remained in Jerusalem and performed many signs and wonders. The Bible does not elaborate on these specifically, so we don’t know what types of miracles He did, how many, or the manner by which He did them. However, it is clear that He did them publicly and that many people believed in His name as a result. I believe this was the “official” launching of His ministry. What better time and place than at the temple in Jerusalem during the Passover celebration? Despite the crowds’ excitement and warm reception, Jesus didn’t get caught up in the hype. He knew what was in the hearts of men.

The amazing signs that Jesus did on this occasion caught the attention of a Pharisee named Nicodemus. He came to Jesus privately at night to speak with Him. During their conversation, Jesus taught Nicodemus what it meant to be born again. Though the Scriptures don’t state it explicitly, Nicodemus’ actions after meeting Jesus suggest that may have become a believer (John 7:50; 19:39). The bottom line is that while the miracles themselves weren’t even described, the people believing was stated and emphasized.

II. ANOTHER ENCOUNTER AT CANA (John 4:46-50)

A few months after the Passover had ended, Jesus and his first few disciples left Judea, where they had been baptizing, passed through Samaria, where they met a woman at the well, and then came into Galilee. Once again they made their way to the small village of Cana, where Jesus had turned water into wine. There they were met by a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum. He had heard that Jesus was back in Galilee and went to meet Him. Capernaum was about 25 miles east of Cana.

Many Galileans had travelled to Jerusalem for Passover a few months earlier and had seen Jesus perform miraculous signs there. When they returned home they told others and Jesus' fame had spread throughout the region. This royal official asked Jesus to come to Capernaum to heal his son, for the boy's illness was dire and he was on the verge of death. Jesus seemed a bit frustrated and said, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will never believe." When the official asked a second time, Jesus answered, "Go; your son lives." Hearing this, the royal official believed and started on his way to Capernaum.

Though it was still quite early in His ministry, Jesus was already expressing a degree of frustration with people who only seemed interested in seeing Him perform miracles. They were not asking Him about the Kingdom of God or pleading with Him for forgiveness of their sin. I am not trying to make light of the father's anguish or the son's sickness, but simply pointing out Jesus' own statement. Jesus knew that earthly miracles were temporal at best, but He had come to offer something eternal. Still, He compassionately answered the royal official's plea.

III. AN ENTIRE HOUSEHOLD BELIEVES (John 4:51-54)

As the official hurried home toward Capernaum, some of his slaves met him along the way and reported that his son was still living and his condition had greatly improved. He asked them at what time did his son begin feeling better and they answered, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." The father realized that this was the very hour when Jesus had said, "Your son lives." He continued to his home, most certainly hugged his son, and told his entire household what had happened. All of them believed in Jesus as a result.

The only people who saw this miracle take place, if anyone, were those in Capernaum who were actually with the boy at the moment of his instantaneous healing. The royal official only saw the results of the miracle when he got home the next day, while all of those in Cana who wanted to see a miracle didn't witness anything. In other words, Jesus didn't put on a show or try to dazzle anyone with His amazing feats. The emphasis of this passage, once again, was on the fact that the entire household believed.

CONCLUSION

In closing, last week I listed the 4 categories of Jesus' miracles - natural miracles, healing miracles, exorcisms, and physical resurrections. The restoration of the royal official's son was a healing miracle. As for the manner of this miracle, Jesus spoke and the boy was immediately

healed. What makes this particular instance even more amazing is that Jesus and the sick child were several miles away from each other when it happened. The long distance between them did not prevent Jesus from being able to perform this remarkable sign.

When Jesus told the father to go home because his son had been healed, he could have very easily been skeptical and insistent that Jesus go with him. After all, he hadn't actually seen anything happen. Jesus was teaching him to have faith, and to his credit he believed (Hebrews 11:1). In the same way, the Bible teaches Christians to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). If Jesus said it, we can live with certainty that He has done it or will do it.

Finally, it is worth noting that Jesus answered the royal official's petition at the very moment he asked. However, the desperate father didn't actually find out that his son had been healed until hours later. Sometimes there is a gap between the time of Jesus' work and the revelation of Jesus' work. Don't assume that God hasn't done anything just because you haven't seen the proof yet. Have faith and believe. His answer may already be waiting just around the corner.

Next week we will discuss Jesus' 4th miracle. A word of warning... If you're thinking about skipping church this coming Sunday to go fishing, don't do it. We are going to read a fishing story that will completely blow your mind, and you don't want to miss it!

Catching a Large Number of Fish

Originally Preached on 5/11/2025

And the fishermen will lament, and all those who cast a line into the Nile will mourn, and those who spread nets on the waters will languish. - Isaiah 19:8

A few weeks ago we began a new series titled "The Miracles of Jesus". In fact, this morning's message is just the 3rd sermon in this series thus far. Each week, we will be studying 1 or 2 occasions recorded in the gospels during which Jesus performed a miracle or miracles. By the end of this study, we will have read and discussed 45 such occurrences. So far, we have covered 3 - Turning Water into Wine, Performing Various Signs During Passover, and Healing the Royal Official's Son.

This morning we will consider Jesus' 4th miracle. It is found in all 3 synoptic gospels, but both Matthew 4:18-22 and Mark 1:16-20 give only an abbreviated account and do not include a description of the miracle that took place. For this reason, we will use Luke 5:1-11 as our primary text because it gives a full explanation of everything that happened on this occasion. Today's sermon is called "Catching a Large Number of Fish".

I. TEACHING THE CROWDS (Luke 5:1-3)

Jesus made His way to the Lake of Gennesaret, which is also known as the Sea of Galilee, where He stood on the shore and was teaching the word of God to a crowd of people. They were pressing in and around Him making it difficult to see and address them all. Jesus looked up and saw 2 boats lying on the beach. The fisherman, having gotten out of them, were washing their nets. Jesus got into 1 of the boats, which belonged to Simon, who is more commonly known as Peter, and asked him to put out a little way from land. Then Jesus sat down and began teaching the crowds from the boat.

Though the text does not specifically say it, most scholars believe that this event took place in or near Capernaum. Capernaum was a fishing village on the northwest edge of the Sea of Galilee. The royal official's son, who we discussed last week, was healed there. Capernaum served as the headquarters or home base of Jesus' ministry. Whenever He wasn't travelling and ministering throughout Israel, He regularly returned to and resided in Capernaum.

Jesus had most likely met both Andrew and Peter sometime earlier, around the time of His baptism (John 1:35-42). Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist, and had heard John identify Jesus and the Lamb of God. Andrew went and found his brother Peter, told him that they had found the Messiah, and took him to meet Jesus personally. Apparently, after this initial encounter, Jesus and the brothers parted ways. Now, a few months later, their paths cross once again - I don't believe this was a coincidence.

II. FILLING THE NETS (Luke 5:4-7)

After He had finished teaching, Jesus asked Simon to take the boat out into deeper water and let the nets down for a catch. Simon answered that he and his colleagues had been out fishing all night long and had caught nothing. Simon addressed Jesus as “Master”, perhaps remembering Him from their initial encounter a few months earlier. Though he was surely tired and frustrated from their unsuccessful night, Simon consented to Jesus’ request. He (and Andrew presumably) took the further boat out, dropped the nets, and enclosed a great number of fish, so much so that the nets were breaking. They signaled their partners in the other boat to come help them and ended up filling both boats with so much fish that they were sinking!

This story is often conflated with another similar miracle that we will read about at the end of this series. On this occasion Jesus did not ask these fishermen to cast their nets on the other side of the boat. He simply told them to let the nets down. When they did so, the nets were filled with great quantities of fish.

III. FISHING FOR MEN (Luke 5:8-11)

When Peter saw what had happened, he fell down before Jesus’ knees and cried out, “Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!” Amazement had gripped both he and his companions because of the great catch of fish. In that moment, Peter expressed recognition of His sin and acknowledged Jesus as Lord. This miracle obviously had a profound impact on him and the other fishermen. Then Jesus turned to Peter (and Andrew) and said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Peter’s fishing partners, were also amazed by what they had experienced. Jesus called them to follow Him as well. And so, when these 4 men brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed Jesus. I guess they just left the great haul of fish for others to have! Peter, John, and James would become Jesus’ closest apostles and are often referred to by theologians as “the inner circle”.

The emphasis of this story, once again, is not on the miracle that took place but instead on the calling of these fishermen to follow Jesus. The incredible catching of fish was simply a sign to confirm in these men’s hearts that Jesus was worthy of leaving everything behind. In fact, as stated in the introduction, the miracle is not even mentioned in 2 of the 3 renditions of this account, but the calling to “be fishers of men” is found in all 3.

CONCLUSION

The miracle we’ve discussed today is classified as a natural miracle. Jesus caught more fish in an instant than these professional fishermen were able to catch all night long. As for the manner of this miracle, Jesus told the fishermen what to do and as they obeyed He simply willed the fish to fill up their nets. His approach follows the same procedure as the turning of water to wine at Cana.

Something that strikes me about this particular story is that no one asked Jesus to perform this miracle. No one was sick and in need of healing and no immediate problem had presented itself that needed to be solved. Rather, Jesus did this of His own volition to reveal His glory and declare His divine nature to these would-be disciples. It was quite effective, too, as evidenced by the fact that all 4 of them left their old lives behind and became apostles.

I will close by reminding you that Peter and Andrew had met Jesus before. Although they were admirers of Him after their first meeting, still they'd returned home to resume their lives as fishermen. I believe Jesus went to Capernaum specifically to find and call these 2 brothers as His disciples. Beloved, there is a big difference between those who admire Jesus while still clinging to their past and those who forsake their old, sinful ways to follow Jesus. Which of these are you? Jesus may not be calling you to leave your job or abandon your family, but He is calling you to put Him first and to become a fisher of men!

In our upcoming message, we will consider 2 more miracles that Jesus performed while in Capernaum. In the meantime, don't forget to fish. There are many lost people who need to hear the good news of Jesus Christ and be caught in the nets of His glorious salvation!

A Demon-Possessed Man and Peter's Mother-in-Law

Originally Preached on 5/25/2025

You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. - James 2:19

Hello friends. This morning we will resume our series on “The Miracles of Jesus”. In our last message, we discussed the calling of Peter, Andrew, James, and John. After they had been fishing all night long on the Sea of Galilee and had caught nothing, Jesus told them to cast their nets once more. When they obeyed, their nets were filled with so many fish that they began to break. Then Jesus called them to follow Him and become “fishers of men”. All 4 men immediately left everything behind to become Jesus’ apostles.

In this morning’s sermon we will highlight Jesus’ 5th and 6th miracles. Both of them took place in Capernaum, where Jesus’ ministry was headquartered. I have titled the message “A Demon-Possessed Man and Peter's Mother-in-Law”. Though both of these stories are recorded in multiple gospels, we will use Mark 1:21-31 as our primary text and supplement it with any additional details from the other accounts.

I. AN ENCOUNTER IN THE SYNAGOGUE (Mark 1:21-24; Luke 4:31-34)

Jesus and His apostles left the shoreline of Lake Gennesaret and entered the city of Capernaum. On the Sabbath day, He went into the Jewish synagogue and began teaching. This was something that Jesus did on a regular basis (Luke 4:16; John 18:20). The people of Capernaum were astonished by His teaching. Jesus spoke as one with authority, unlike the scribes who typically addressed them. A demon-possessed man in the audience cried out, “What do we have to do with You, Jesus the Nazarene? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!”

Notice that Jesus was at the synagogue on the Sabbath day. This was His custom. He would often use these occasions to speak, teach, and/or read the Scriptures. As Christians, we honor the principle of the Sabbath by attending church each Sunday. Now, if Jesus made it a priority to be in church each week, shouldn’t we?

Also, I am struck by the fact that there was a demon-possessed man in the synagogue listening to Jesus’ teaching. It makes me wonder how many demon-possessed people are present in our churches today. Perhaps someone here this morning? Just kidding, maybe. My point is that God’s house is not immune to the presence of wickedness and evil. Sadly, many vile and sinful things take place in the church, and most are committed by those who attend regularly.

The demon, or unclean spirit, referred to Jesus as “the Holy One of God”. Beloved, Satan and his minions know exactly who Jesus is and are terribly afraid of Him. They understand that all of the forces of darkness are powerless against Him. Their sway over humanity is only effective when we battle against them in our own feeble strength. But if we as Christians combat them in

the name of Jesus, adorned in the armor of God, and armed with the Scriptures and prayer, the demonic forces don't stand a chance (James 4:7)!

II. JESUS CASTS OUT A DEMON (Mark 1:25-28; Luke 4:35-37)

There in the synagogue, before the entire gathering, Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" The demon threw the man into convulsions, cried out in a loud voice, and then came out of him. The man was left unharmed and the crowd was utterly amazed that even the demons submitted to the command of Jesus. The news of what had happened and of Jesus' authority spread quickly throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Why did Jesus commit this miracle? His command to "Be quiet" suggests that He wanted to silence the demon from publicly declaring that He was the Son of God. As we will see several times throughout this series, Jesus did not want His fame to spread too quickly. He knew the excessive attention would bring about the angst of the chief priests, Pharisees, and elders. He didn't want people to focus on His miracles either, but rather on His message. The bottom line... He was trying to slow down His rise in popularity for the sake of His mission. Personal fame is often a deterrent to God-honoring ministry.

This was the first occasion explicitly described in the Bible when Jesus cast out a demon. This miracle is categorized as an exorcism, or spiritual miracle. Jesus performed this miracle by simply speaking a word of rebuke to the unclean spirit. When confronted with Jesus' power and authority, the demon was forced to obey. Beloved, demon-possession is a reality that still exists today. But we can be certain that Jesus is mighty and able to cast out demons and free those who are possessed by them.

III. JESUS HEALS PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW (Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39; Matthew 8:14-15)

Jesus and his apostles left the synagogue and went to Peter and Andrew's house, along with James and John. They told Jesus that Peter's mother-in-law was lying in bed sick with a high fever and asked Him to help her. Jesus came and stood over her, spoke a rebuke against the illness, and then took her by the hand and raised her up. Immediately the fever left her and she began to wait on them.

This is another example of a healing miracle. In this case, Jesus spoke and the woman's fever immediately went away. It seems that Jesus performed this miracle simply because Peter and the other apostles asked Him to. This scene took place in a private residence with only a few eyewitnesses. Once again, it is abundantly clear that Jesus wasn't trying to garner attention or make a big display. He was revealing His deity to those closest to Him that they might grow even deeper in their faith.

Peter was an imperfect man. He often stuck his foot in his mouth, acted impulsively, and even denied Christ 3 times. Later in life, Peter was called out for his hypocrisy concerning the Gentiles. Nevertheless, despite his flaws, this short story confirms without a doubt that Peter

was a man of utmost character. Let's be honest... How many men would be concerned about the well-being of their mother-in-law? Sorry, that was my lame attempt at a joke.

No, seriously, it is worth pointing out that as soon as she was healed Peter's mother-in-law began waiting on Jesus and His apostles. Beloved, this is a great model for us to follow. When Jesus frees us from our sin and condemnation, when He delivers us from our trials and tribulations, and when He heals us of our afflictions and sufferings the appropriate response is to serve Him wholeheartedly. Don't just say "thank you", but also demonstrate thankfulness through faithful obedience and service.

CONCLUSION

The miracles we discussed today highlight Jesus' authority over God's spiritual creation and His physical creation. Never forget - Satan and his demons are created beings, just like we are, and Jesus has dominion over all of creation. There is nothing in heaven, on earth, or even below the earth that isn't subject to Him (Philippians 2:10-11). Jesus can cast out demons in the spiritual realm and heal the sick in the physical realm because He is the divine Son of God.

I hope you are enjoying this new series so far! I am having a lot of fun preaching it. More importantly, I hope we are all learning more about the true nature and purpose of Jesus' miracles. Please make plans to join us next Sunday as we continue this exciting study. May the LORD bless you.

Healings in the Evening and a Leper in Galilee

Originally Preached on 6/1/2025

But the cloud withdrew from over the tent, and behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow. And Aaron turned toward Miriam, and behold, she was leprous. - Numbers 12:10

In the message last week, Jesus came to the city of Capernaum. On the Sabbath day, while He was teaching in the local synagogue, He silenced an unclean spirit and cast it out of a demon-possessed man. After leaving the synagogue, Jesus went to Peter and Andrew's house. There He healed Peter's mother-in-law who was suffering from a high fever.

In today's sermon, we will add 2 more chapters to "The Miracles of Jesus" series. Both scenes are recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. We will use Mark's gospel as our primary text, as we did last week. The pair of stories we'll discuss today are considered Jesus' 7th and 8th miracle(s). I've titled this message "Healings in the Evening and a Leper in Galilee". We will begin right where we left off last Sunday - in Capernaum, on the Sabbath day, at Peter's house, in the late afternoon...

I. MANY SICK PEOPLE COME TO JESUS (Mark 1:32-34; Matthew 8:16-17; Luke 4:40-41)

That same evening, while the sun was setting, many people brought their sick friends, relatives, and others to Jesus. It was as though the entire city had gathered at Peter's door. Jesus came out of the house, laid His hands on them, and healed them. Besides these, Jesus also cast out many demons from those who were possessed. As He did so, He forbade the demons to speak because they knew He was the Christ.

In Matthew's gospel, this occasion is regarded as the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy (Isaiah 53:4a). In the Old Testament, Isaiah spoke of a coming Messiah, a Suffering Servant, who would bear our "griefs" and carry our "sorrows". The Hebrew words used by Isaiah can also be translated as "sicknesses" and "infirmities". So, while Isaiah 53 most directly refers to Christ's atoning of mankind's sin, in this particular instance Matthew applies it to the removal or healing of physical diseases.

It is uncertain how many miracles Jesus performed that evening. However, we can categorize most if not all of them as either healing miracles and exorcisms. The exact manner He used to perform each of these miracles is unknown, but many were done by a spoken command. As for the purpose of these miracles, surely Jesus was showing compassion and care for the people. But beyond this, as Matthew pointed out, He was again displaying His divinity and showing Himself to be the long-awaited Messiah.

The next morning, Jesus and His disciples left Capernaum to go visit other cities in Galilee. At each new location He preached in the synagogue and cast out demons (Mark 1:39). Jesus was also healing all sorts of diseases, and His fame spread rapidly. People were coming from Syria

and the surrounding regions to be healed. Soon large crowds of people from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan were following Him (Matthew 4:23-25).

II. A LEPER IS CLEANSED (Mark 1:40-42; Luke 5:12-13; Matthew 8:1-3)

During Jesus' travels in and around Galilee, a man with leprosy approached Him. The man fell on his knees and pleaded with Jesus, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." Jesus was moved with compassion, reached out and touched the man, and said, "I am willing. Be cleansed!" Immediately the leprosy left him and the man was healed.

A quick word about the setting of this story. Luke states that this meeting took place "in" a city, but it most likely occurred "by" or "near" a city - in the countryside - as lepers weren't allowed in the cities. This is simply a matter of translation. In fact, Matthew writes that it happened at the foot of a mountain, when Jesus came down after delivering His famous Sermon on the Mount.

Notice that the leper was quite confident in Jesus' power to heal him. He had heard of Jesus' many miraculous deeds and was convinced of His supernatural abilities. Still, rather than demanding to be healed, the leper humbly asked Jesus to act if He was willing. Jesus seemed moved by the humility of the request and stated that He was willing. This passage reminds us that Jesus always answers our petitions in accordance with God's will (1 John 5:14-15).

My favorite part of this story is when Jesus touched the man. Remember, he had leprosy... which is highly contagious. In Biblical times, lepers were forced to live in the countryside and avoid healthy people, so as not to spread the disease (Leviticus 13:46). Furthermore, no one was permitted to touch them lest they also become unclean. Though He didn't need to, Jesus purposely touched the leper showing Himself to be greater than the Jewish purity laws. This was probably shocking to any who may have been watching!

III. INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN AND DISOBEYED (Mark 1:43-45; Luke 5:14-16; Matthew 8:4)

Jesus then sternly warned the man not to tell anyone what had happened, but rather to go immediately to the temple and be declared clean by the priest in accordance with the Mosaic Law. Instead, the man went out and told everyone, and excitement over Jesus' miracles spread to the point that He was no longer able to publicly enter the cities. Therefore, Jesus began staying in desolate areas and the people came to Him.

It is widely believed that, by this point in His ministry, Jesus had already selected all 12 of His apostles. Along with them, a large crowd of spectators was following Jesus virtually everywhere He went. Thus, it is reasonable to think that there were many witnesses who saw the leper being cleansed. Even still, Jesus wasn't eager for more fame and attention. He told the man to keep the miracle to himself. Jesus also instructed the healed leper to obey the steps laid out in the Law of Moses for proper cleansing (Leviticus 14). It is clear that Jesus didn't ignore or disregard the Law. On the contrary, He urged people to follow it.

As you've probably already guessed, this story describes a healing miracle. Jesus performed this miracle by saying, "Be cleansed". We noted earlier that He also touched the leper, but it appears that His spoken word was what healed him. Jesus acted out of compassion for the leprous man, but beyond this He was revealing His identity so that those watching might believe. Unfortunately, in the aftermath of this miracle, the hysteria surrounding Him had grown so great that Jesus decided it was no longer a good idea for Him to "publicly" enter the populous cities.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude today's sermon with an observation. As we've seen today, the ever-increasing number of people following Jesus was beginning to be a problem. Not only was it making His ministry more difficult, but His growing popularity was also not sitting well with the religious elites. Sadly, most of those who came to Jesus were much more interested in His miracles than His message. They wanted Jesus to answer their requests, but often didn't honor or comply with His. This same sort of imbalanced behavior exists today.

Finally, let me offer this invitation. If you have never trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then you are infected with the spiritual leprosy of sin. You are unclean, impure, and have been expelled from the presence of our Holy God. However, if you will turn to Christ, repent of your sin, believe upon Him as the risen Son of God, and trust Him for salvation, He will cleanse you of all your iniquities, declare you righteous, and give you new and eternal life.

Next week we will read about a group of men that brought their friend to Jesus. Perhaps we could all do likewise and each bring a friend to church this coming Sunday. It promises to be a great message. Until then, have a blessed week.

A Paralytic on a Pallet

Originally Preached on 6/8/2025

In Him [Jesus] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our transgressions, according to the riches of His grace... - Ephesians 1:7

Today's sermon is titled "A Paralytic on a Pallet". This miraculous story is recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. We will use Luke 5:17-26 as our primary text (you can go ahead and turn there in your Bibles), but I encourage you to look at Matthew 9:1-8 and Mark 2:1-12 also. All 3 of these are parallel passages that describe the same event. I will combine details from each of these accounts to give a more complete presentation of today's story.

For those keeping track, this is the 6th message of our series on "The Miracles of Jesus". Thus far we have covered 8 distinct occasions during which Jesus performed a miracle or miracles. Last week we talked about Him healing several people in the evening and then cleansing a man who had leprosy. This morning we will examine a familiar passage that some of you have likely heard before.

I. FAITHFUL FRIENDS (Luke 5:17-20a; Mark 2:1-5a; Matthew 9:1-2a)

After traveling to various locations throughout Galilee, Jesus and His disciples returned to Capernaum. News quickly spread around town that Jesus was back, presumably residing at Peter's house. A large crowd of people converged upon the house and went inside to listen to Jesus teach. It wasn't long until the house was completely full and excess people were standing outside. There were several scribes and Pharisees present among the gathering.

Knowing that Jesus had returned, a group of 4 men carried their paralytic friend on a pallet to Jesus, hoping that the Lord would heal him. However, when they arrived the crowd was already so large and dense they couldn't get through it. Therefore, they climbed up onto the roof of the house, removed some tile and dug a hole through it, and then carefully lowered their paralyzed friend down into the room right in front of Jesus as He was teaching.

These 4 men took remarkable strides to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus. They could have easily given up and gone home after realizing that they couldn't get through the thick crowd. But instead, these determined men found another way. When they lowered the paralytic through the opening in the roof, Jesus saw their incredible faith. My prayer is that all of us would have friends like these who would love us enough not to give up on us and that each of us would be a friend like this to others.

II. ANGRY ACCUSERS (Luke 5:20b-23; Mark 2:5b-9; Matthew 2:b-5)

Jesus turned His attention to the paralyzed man who was lying on a pallet suspended in the crowded room. He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." The scribes and Pharisees began reasoning to themselves that since only God has the authority to forgive sins, Jesus must be

speaking blasphemy. But Jesus knew their thoughts, turned to them, and asked why they were thinking such things. He then asked, "Which is easier? To say 'Your sins are forgiven' or to say 'Get up and walk?'"

Jesus' had the supernatural ability to read minds and/or know things He hadn't personally seen or heard, such as knowing the thoughts of these scribes and Pharisees. A few other examples of this wondrous ability include knowing that Nathaniel was standing under a fig tree though He Himself hadn't witnessed it (John 1:43-51) and knowing that the woman at the well had several previous husbands though they'd just met (John 4:15-18). Jesus had and sometimes exercised the divine characteristic of omniscience, and though we are not including these instances in our series of miracles, they are quite miraculous nonetheless.

Can you imagine the scribes' and Pharisees' surprise when Jesus began addressing their secret thoughts? He knew they were accusing Him of blasphemy in their hearts and minds, even though they hadn't said it out loud. May this be a lesson to us - the Lord knows what we're thinking. Then He asked them a thought provoking question. Is it easier to say "Your sins are forgiven" or to say "Get up and walk"? Obviously, it is easier to say "Your sins are forgiven", because there is no observable way to prove if the statement is true or not. Forgiveness isn't something we can see, smell, hear, taste, or touch.

III. ASTONISHED WITNESSES (Luke 5:24-26; Mark 2:10-12; Matthew 2:6-8)

So, as evidence of His power to forgive sins, Jesus told the paralytic to get up, take his stretcher with him, and go home. And immediately, as the bustling crowd watched and his dear friends looked down from the roof top above, the man stood up, gathered his pallet, and went home glorifying God. His paralysis vanished! The crowd was completely astonished by what they'd just seen and they too began praising and glorifying the LORD.

Beloved, in my meager opinion, this story may be the best illustration in the entire Bible of why Jesus performed earthly miracles. In this instance Jesus clearly stated that He healed this man's paralysis to prove that He'd truly forgiven his sins. In other words, the physical miracle was done to reveal Jesus' identity as the Son of God and to confirm His authority to forgive sin. The physical miracle that followed was secondary and subsidiary to the first and greater miracle - the forgiveness of the man's sin.

What type of physical miracle was this? It was another healing miracle. Thus far we have read about the healings of those with fever, various sicknesses, leprosy, and now paralysis. How did Jesus perform this healing miracle? With a spoken command. He simply said the words and it was done. Why did Jesus heal this paralyzed man? In His own words... to prove that He was God, and that as God, He had the authority to forgive sin.

CONCLUSION

Have you ever heard the saying, "The days are long, but the years are short." This statement expresses the idea that while some days seem to drag on forever (can I get a witness?), the years seemingly fly right by. For most, this sentiment feels especially true as you get older. It seems like just a few days ago my children were being born, and suddenly they've all turned into adults with their own jobs, families, and lives. Where did the time go?

Friends, take a moment to reflect upon eternity. It never ends. Even if someone were to live to 100 years in this life, their days would be a tiny, insignificantly measurable blip in time compared to eternity, a fraction ever decreasing with each passing day. I am convinced that until a person grasps the magnitude of eternal life, they cannot truly appreciate the miracle of salvation. It is forever! Jesus is able to forgive sin, redeem lost souls, and give believers eternal life. This is, without any doubt, the greatest miracle of all - far exceeding any temporal miracle. So, have you turned to Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins?

Well it's June my friends, the kids are out of school, summer has begun, and it's getting hotter out there. It seems like a good time to go to the pool. With that in mind, in next week's sermon Jesus will travel to Jerusalem where He'll encounter a man at the Pool of Bethesda. I hope to see you then and may God bless you.

An Invalid at the Pool of Bethesda

Originally Preached on 6/22/2025

And Jesus was saying to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Consequently the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." - Mark 2:27-28

This week we will return to the gospel of John, chapter 5, verses 1-17, as we continue our series on "The Miracles of Jesus". We will be discussing "An Invalid at the Pool of Bethesda". This story is only found in John, and is the 3rd of the "signs" recorded in his book. Overall, it is the 10th miracle in our series thus far. Alright, let's get started...

I. THE SETTING (John 5:1-5)

Jesus departed from Galilee and returned to Jerusalem in order to celebrate an annual Jewish feast. The Bible doesn't specify which feast it was, but many scholars believe it was either the Feast of Tabernacles or Purim. Near the Sheep Gate, outside of the city at that time, there was a pool called Bethesda that had 5 porticoes, or sheltered porches/colonnades, where a multitude of sick, blind, lame, and otherwise disabled people gathered. According to superstition, whenever an angel of the LORD stirred the waters the first person to get in would be healed. Among those waiting there was a man who'd been lame for 38 years.

The waters in the Pool of Bethesda were believed to have medicinal or healing powers. They were certainly soothing and comforting to those who bathed there, providing some temporary relief, but beyond this there is no evidence that they permanently cured anyone of their illnesses or disabilities. Nevertheless, desperate people gathered there in hopes that this urban legend would prove true. Clearly, the invalid in this story hoped that these waters could heal him.

The Hebrew word Bethesda means "House of Mercy" or "House of Grace". There are many hospitals around the world today that have the word "Bethesda" in their name. In Biblical times, many sick, injured, or impaired people would go to this pool in hopes of healing, just as today they go to hospitals or clinics. Of course, modern hospitals are a bit more effective than pools...

II. THE SIGN (John 5:6-9a)

While in Jerusalem, Jesus went to the Pool of Bethesda where He met this lame man. Jesus knew that the man had been disabled for many years. Jesus asked him if he wished to be healed. The frustrated man answered that he could never get into the water quick enough to be first, but that someone always beat him to it. Jesus then told him to get up, pick up his mat, and walk. Immediately, the lame man became well and did just as Jesus had commanded.

Does it seem strange that Jesus would ask the invalid if he wanted to be healed? The answer seems obvious. Yet, Jesus' question illustrates an important point. We must want to be healed, not just physically but spiritually. Sadly, there are many who don't want to be healed, but would rather live in darkness gratifying their sinful desire. Others, like this man, want to be healed but

offer excuses why they can't be. Some believe that they are beyond forgiveness and that God's grace doesn't apply to them. The truth is, Jesus can heal and restore anyone who seeks Him.

There were numerous sick and disabled people at the Pool of Bethesda, yet the Bible doesn't record that Jesus healed any of them other than this lame man... and he didn't even know who Jesus was. Although it can be hard to accept, experience clearly shows that God doesn't choose to heal everyone. He acts in accordance with His will, and we must trust that His ways are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8-9) and that He knows best. That said, the Bible teaches that God has chosen to spiritually heal any and everyone who will turn to Christ for salvation.

III. THE SABBATH (John 5:9b-13)

As it turns out, Jesus had performed this miracle on the Sabbath day. So when the healed man picked up his pallet and walked home, some of the pious Jews confronted him and charged him with violating the law. The man answered that he was simply doing what he'd been told to do by the one who'd healed him. The Jews asked, "Who was it that healed you?" but the man didn't know. By this time, Jesus had already slipped away in the crowd.

It is amazing to me that these Jews were more concerned about their extreme, pharisaical interpretation of the law than the fact that this man, who had been lame for 38 years, was completely healed and walking around. They didn't seem happy or excited at all. On the contrary, they were angry and upset. May we be careful not to display this same type of hypocrisy. We should learn to rejoice with people when good things happen to them, rather than be critical and ungrateful.

IV. THE SAVIOR (John 5:14-17)

A little while later Jesus found the healed man in the temple and warned him not to sin anymore lest something worse happen to him. Apparently Jesus identified Himself because the man hurried and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. They were furious and began slandering and disparaging Jesus for healing on the Sabbath day. Jesus answered them by teaching that the work of the Father (which He was doing) doesn't stop just because it's the Sabbath, subtly referring to Himself as God.

I tend to think that the healed man went to the temple to express his praise and thanksgiving to the LORD. Furthermore, I believe that Jesus intentionally went and found him there, introduced Himself, and then challenged the man to turn from his sins lest he spend eternity in Hell ("something far worse"). This man needed more than mere physical healing... much more importantly, he needed spiritual healing. My prayer is that he trusted in the Lord for salvation and that we will meet in Heaven someday.

CONCLUSION

What happened that day at the Pool of Bethesda was a healing miracle. Jesus performed it simply by speaking. In so doing, Jesus showed Himself to be greater than superstitions or legends, and again revealed Himself to be the divine Son of God. The physical healing was followed by an invitation for spiritual healing, which is far greater. Perhaps this lame man became a believer and a follower of Christ... I sure hope so.

We have touched on several lessons and applications in today's sermon. Before I close, let's review a few of them:

Desperate people will do desperate things, like trusting in superstitions to cure them.
People must want to be healed and offer no excuses for why they can't be.
It isn't God's will to heal everyone physically, but He will forgive anyone who turns to Christ.
We need to rejoice with people when good things happen, rather than criticize and condemn.
God's work doesn't take a break on the Sabbath day.
Physical miracles are signs that point to Jesus and the salvation He offers.

We should be more concerned about walking in relationship with the Lord than walking on our legs and feet. That said, please plan to join us again next Sunday as we tackle 2 more occasions during which Jesus performed miracles. See you then.

A Man's Withered Hand and Followers in a Crowd

Originally Preached on 6/29/2025

And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, - Mark 9:43

Welcome back! This morning's message is the 8th installment of our sermon series on "The Miracles of Jesus". In today's sermon we will cover 2 stories so I've titled it, "A Man's Withered Hand and Followers in a Crowd". The account of the man with the withered hand is recorded in all 3 synoptic gospels, while the account of the followers in a crowd is only found in 2 of them. For the sake of this morning's discussion, we will use Matthew 12:9-21 as our primary text.

I. IS IT LAWFUL? (Matthew 12:9-12; Mark 3:1-4; Luke 6:6-9)

Jesus left Jerusalem and returned to Galilee (perhaps to Capernaum, though not stated) where He was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath day. Among those listening was a man with a withered hand. Also in the audience were some Pharisees who were seeking a reason to accuse Jesus. So they asked Him if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath. Jesus posed a question to them, "If your sheep fell into a pit on the Sabbath day wouldn't you rescue it?" The answer - of course they would. Then He stated, "A person is more valuable than a sheep. Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

It is uncertain what was wrong with the man's withered hand. Perhaps it was shrunken, deformed, injured, paralyzed, or misshapen in some other way. Nevertheless, there is no indication that he approached Jesus to seek healing. On the contrary, it appears he had come to the synagogue simply to hear Jesus preach. This is an important distinction. While there were many people coming to Jesus primarily to either receive or witness a miracle, there were others - like this man - who came to hear His teaching.

Like last week's message, this story takes place on the Sabbath day. In Luke and Mark's rendition, Jesus doesn't ask about a sheep falling into a pit but rather asks His accusers whether it is lawful to do good or evil on the Sabbath, to save a life or kill it? In essence, this is the same question. If you see someone or something in peril you must act - regardless of what day it is. By doing nothing you are tacitly doing evil by neglecting to help. God's people should not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in their power to do so, even on the Sabbath day (Proverbs 3:27).

II. STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND (Matthew 12:13-14; Mark 3:5-6; Luke 6:10-11)

Jesus knew that His adversaries were looking for a reason to accuse Him. He was grieved by the hardness of their hearts. Nevertheless, he asked the man with the withered hand to step forward and said, "Stretch out your hand!" Immediately it was restored to normal like the other and he stretched it out. The Pharisees and Herodians present were furious and went out to counsel together against Jesus, discussing how they might destroy Him.

This passage provides another example of Jesus' omniscience. As we've already discussed in this series, He knows what we are thinking. Also notice that He didn't feel anger toward the Pharisees, but rather sorrow over their hard-heartedness. Beloved, Jesus isn't mad at you because of your sin. Rather, He is saddened by it and longs for you to repent and receive forgiveness. Jesus loved these Pharisees and He loves you too, no matter who you are or what you've done.

This can be categorized as another healing miracle. Jesus spoke and the man's hand was restored, allowing him to stretch it out. In this instance, the man didn't ask Jesus to be healed. Rather, Jesus healed him to enhance His teaching and answer His own question about doing good on the Sabbath day. In so doing, He demonstrated His compassion for people while revealing His identity as the divine Son of God.

III. DO NOT TELL (Matthew 12:15-21; Mark 3:7-12)

Jesus left the synagogue and withdrew to the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd made up of people from Galilee and several surrounding regions followed Him. Among them were several Gentiles. Jesus had the disciples prepare a boat in the event He needed to escape the pressing crowd. He healed many people and cast out several demons, warning them all to remain silent and not make His identity known.

In Matthew's gospel, this occasion is cited as a fulfillment of prophecy. Isaiah 42:1-4 speaks of the Suffering Servant who would show compassion, humility, and meekness while also bringing justice to the Gentiles. Matthew uses this instance to show that Jesus is, in fact, this Suffering Servant - the long-awaited Messiah.

This episode describes several miracles which include both healings and exorcisms. Although the Scriptures say (in Mark's account) that the people were clamoring to touch Him, it remains uncertain exactly what method(s) Jesus used to heal them. Were they healed just by touching Him? The text doesn't say. Jesus did urge those He healed to keep quiet and warned the demons He cast out to remain silent, so He clearly wasn't seeking attention. His ultimate goal was that the people might recognize Him as the Son of God and believe Him for the forgiveness of their sins.

CONCLUSION

Jesus' enemies frequently tried to paint Him as a law breaker, particularly when it came to violating the Sabbath. Jesus performed at least 7 miracles on the Sabbath day, including the aforementioned restoration of a man's withered hand. Jesus kept the Sabbath as the LORD intended it, but did not submit to the perverted excesses of the Law added by the Pharisees. God's work continues even on the Sabbath day and it is not a sin to do good on the Sabbath.

This is a lesser point, but it jumps out to me... so indulge me if you would. Jesus emphatically declared that "a man is more valuable than a sheep." Friends, human life and human interests take precedent over animals. The animals were created for mankind's use and benefit. I am not saying that people should be cruel to animals or mistreat them. In fact, all of God's creation should be cared for and respected. But, if it comes down to choosing between the well being of people or animals, people win. Men and women are the crowning piece of God's creation and are more precious in His sight than anything else.

I find it refreshing to read about someone coming to Jesus who is not seeking a miracle or something for himself, but instead just wants to hear Jesus preach the gospel. Beloved, there is nothing wrong with asking Jesus to do a miracle in your life, but when that's all you seek Him for something is very wrong. Jesus is asking something of us - a lifetime of wholehearted love, devotion, obedience, and service. Following Jesus is costly, but it is so worth it! Will you commit your life to Him today?

Looking ahead, next Sunday we will cover 2 more miraculous stories on our lengthy list of "The Miracles of Jesus". We'll discuss several healings before a sermon in Galilee and the healing of a centurion's slave. I hope you will join us then for this exciting message. May God bless you!

Many Before a Sermon and a Centurion's Servant

Originally Preached on 7/6/2025

Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the people and prayed to God continually. - Acts 10:1-2

Good morning. We are about a quarter of the way through this year's sermon series on "The Miracles of Jesus". By the time we're done, we'll have covered 45 distinct occurrences recorded in the Gospels during which Jesus performed a miracle or miracles. So far we've discussed 12 of them. Here is a quick review:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Changing Water in Wine | 7. Many in the Evening |
| 2. Miracles (Signs) During Passover | 8. A Leper in Galilee |
| 3. A Royal Official's Son | 9. A Paralytic on a Pallet |
| 4. Catching A Large Number of Fish | 10. An Invalid at the Pool of Bethesda |
| 5. A Demon-Possessed Man | 11. A Man's Withered Hand |
| 6. Peter's Mother-in-Law | 12. Followers in a Crowd |

This morning we will add 2 more entries to the list. The first is found only in Luke, while the second is documented in both Luke and Matthew. We'll use Luke as our primary text. I've titled today's message "Many Before a Sermon and a Centurion's Servant".

I. MIRACLES ON THE PLAIN (Luke 6:17-19)

Jesus had just come down from a mountain in Galilee where He'd spent the entire night praying. That morning He had officially appointed the 12 apostles from among His many disciples. They were all gathered on a flat plain along with many others from various places who had come to be healed of diseases, to have demons cast out, and to hear the Lord speak. The clamoring crowd was trying to touch Jesus because healing power was emanating out of Him.

After healing many people, Jesus preached a message to the crowd that included many of the same points that are found in "The Sermon on the Mount". This message was delivered on a different occasion and is referred to by theologians as "The Sermon on the Plain". Jesus likely taught these same lessons in similar sermons on several occasions to many audiences in differing places over the course of His ministry.

The Scriptures state that Jesus performed healing miracles and exorcisms during this particular event. Apparently some, if not all, of the miracles occurred simply by touching His body without any words being spoken. This scene clearly revealed the remarkable power of Jesus as God's beloved Son and it set the stage for His sermon that followed.

II. AN EARNEST PLEA (Luke 7:1-6a; Matthew 8:5-7)

After preaching His message, Jesus went to Capernaum. He was approached by some Jewish elders who had been sent by a Roman centurion to seek help from Him. The centurion's slave, whom he held in high regard, was gravely sick and near death. The elders commended this centurion for being upright and friendly toward the Jews, even helping them build their synagogue, and stated that he was worthy of the Lord's assistance. So Jesus joined them and they began making their way to the centurion's house.

In Matthew's version of this story, the centurion comes to Jesus in person. He tells Jesus that his servant is paralyzed and being fearfully tormented. He then asks Jesus to heal his servant and He agrees to do so. Whether the centurion sent messengers or came to Jesus himself is immaterial. What matters is that Jesus agreed to go and heal the centurion's slave. The discrepancy between the 2 accounts of this story should not be considered a contradiction or error in the Bible, as it doesn't change the truth of what happened.

III. AMAZING HUMILITY AND FAITH (Luke 7:6b-8; Matthew 8:8-9)

As Jesus was drawing near to the centurion's house, some of the centurion's friends intercepted Him. They had been sent by the centurion to ask Jesus not to enter the house because he didn't feel worthy of the Lord's presence. Rather, per the centurion's request, they asked Jesus just to say the word from where He was and the slave would be healed. The centurion understood what it meant to be a man of authority and He trusted in Jesus' authority to heal from anywhere.

In Matthew's rendition of this story the centurion asks Jesus to simply say the word rather than coming to His house. Whether in person or by proxy, the centurion's humility is clearly seen. He, being a Gentile, didn't feel worthy of the Lord's presence. The truth is, none of us are worthy, yet Jesus loves us in spite of our weakness.

This episode reminds me of the royal official's son which we discussed several weeks ago. Like the royal official who sought Jesus out to heal his son, this centurion sought Jesus out to heal his servant. Neither the royal official nor the centurion asked Jesus to come to their house, but instead encouraged Him to simply say the word and the healing would be done. These 2 stories exemplify the importance of asking Jesus to heal our sick family members and friends.

IV. JESUS MARVELS (Luke 7:9-10; Matthew 8:10-13)

Jesus marveled when He heard of the centurion's faith. He turned to the Jewish crowd that was following Him and said, "I've not found such great faith even in Israel!" He then added that, like this centurion, scores of people from the Gentile nations would come and recline at the table in the kingdom of God, while the unbelieving Jews would be cast out into utter darkness. When the centurion's friends (or the centurion himself according to Matthew) returned home the servant was completely healed.

As we touched on last Sunday, though Jesus was a Jew, His ministry was located in Israel, and His primary audience was the Jewish people, His compassion and work extended to the

Gentiles as well. In fact, the Jews by and large rejected Him while the Gentiles joyfully accepted Him as the Son of God. This had been foretold by the Old Testament prophets.

This was another of Jesus' many healing miracles. Jesus spoke (Matthew 8:13) and the slave, who was some distance away, was healed instantaneously. Jesus performed this miracle to affirm the centurion's faith in Him as the authoritative Son of God. He also used this occasion to chastise the doubting Jews and commend the believing Gentiles.

CONCLUSION

Although God selected the nation of Israel to be His chosen people, His plan of salvation was never limited exclusively to them. They were afforded the honor and privilege of being His representatives on the earth throughout the Old Testament era, called to model and declare His goodness to all of the world so that anyone might believe upon Him as the LORD. Today this task falls to the Christian church. Jesus came to redeem everyone - both Jew and Gentile - who will trust Him as their Lord and Savior.

When this series began, I told you that we'd place Jesus' miracles into 1 of 4 categories. Most of them are healing miracles where Jesus performs some type of physical healing. Some are exorcisms where Jesus casts out a demon or demons. Still others are natural miracles where Jesus causes some natural phenomenon to occur. We have seen some examples of these 3 categories already in this series. Next week we will read a story about the 4th type of miracle that Jesus performed - raising a person from the dead. I can't wait!

The Widow of Nain's Son

Originally Preached on 7/13/2025

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.
- Romans 8:11

Good morning! I am delighted that you've joined us this Sunday as we continue our sermon series on the "Miracles of Jesus". To date, we have covered 14 miraculous occasions during which Jesus performed various healings, exorcisms, and/or other natural miracles. In today's message, the 10th of the series, we are going to read about something even more remarkable.

A few years ago I preached a 5 sermon mini-series during the Easter season called "Risen From the Dead" that featured 12 instances of physical resurrections mentioned in the Bible. The miracle we'll discuss this morning was included in that series which is available on our church's website if you'd like to read it. Anyway, this morning's message is called "The Widow of Nain's Son" and the account is only recorded in Luke's gospel.

I. COMING AND GOING (Luke 7:11-12)

While traveling from place to place throughout Galilee, Jesus approached the small town of Nain. As usual, His disciples and a large crowd of spectators were following Him. As they drew near to the entrance of the city, they were met by a funeral procession that was coming out. The deceased was a young man, the only son of his widowed mother, whose body was being carried on a bier, or pallet, to the burial site. The grieving widow was accompanied by a large crowd of mourners.

The village of Nain was a small, relatively insignificant location. It was about 25 miles southwest of Capernaum, situated just 4 miles south of Mount Tabor. The Hebrew word "Nain" means beautiful or pleasant. This quaint little town sat on a hill and featured spectacular views of the surrounding countryside, perhaps earning its name. What Jesus did there that day was something even more beautiful than nature. Nain was never a walled city, so the use of the word "gate" (in verse 12) is perhaps better understood as the main entryway of town.

The woman whose son had died was a widow. What's more, the dead child was her only son. Thus, this widow was now left with no male caretakers in her immediate family. In Biblical times, this was a perilous situation to be in. The culture was dominated by male influence and widows were oftentimes overlooked and/or forgotten. Ideally sons were to provide for their widowed mothers, and the Law instructed the Israelites to take care of widows who had no sons, but this didn't always happen. All of that being said, this widow was not only grieving the loss of her son but also the prospect of an uncertain future.

The Bible teaches that pure and undefiled religion looks out for and takes care of widows and orphans (James 1:27). In fact, this was the reason why the first deacons were chosen, in order

to minister to a group of widows (Acts 6:1-7). We see the desperation and vulnerability of widows in the story of Naomi and Ruth. The plight of widows is a repeated theme that runs throughout Scripture.

II. THE SON RISES (Luke 7:13-15)

Jesus walked up to the despairing mother and told her not to cry. He was moved with compassion for her. Then He reached up and touched the coffin and the bearers came to a halt. Jesus said, "Young man, I say to you, arise!" Immediately the dead man sat up and began to speak. He climbed out of the coffin and then Jesus gave him back to his mother.

According to Jewish tradition, dead bodies were typically buried within 24 hours if possible. This was out of respect for the body, to prevent it from beginning to decay or decompose. It was also believed to quicken the soul's release from the body. The Jews did not embalm corpses like the Egyptians did, but rather buried their dead quickly. Other reasons for this practice were to expedite the grieving process and to minimize the spread of disease.

In Biblical times, a lifeless body might be wrapped in a gravecloth without being placed in a coffin. When they were used, coffins were often left open or simply covered with a linen shroud while being carried. This would seem to be the case in this passage, as the young man sat up in his coffin after being resurrected. Can you imagine the scene? A dead man being carried to his grave suddenly sat up and began talking! Under the circumstances, I wonder what he said.

III. THE PEOPLE RESPOND (Luke 7:16-17)

All of those watching, including both those who were following Jesus and those who were in the funeral procession were overcome with fear and began glorifying God. They shouted, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has visited His people!" The news of what Jesus had done quickly spread throughout Judea and the surrounding districts.

While the people were right to acknowledge and praise God for His miraculous intervention, they still failed to recognize Jesus as more than "a great prophet". Jesus is far greater than any prophet, like Elijah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, or others (Matthew 16:13-14). Beloved, He is the Christ, the divine Son of God. Though some were beginning to understand, sadly most of the people missed it... and they still do to this very day.

Notice that the people were overcome with fear. They witnessed the almighty power of God demonstrated by the 2nd Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ. The LORD has power over death and the grave. Fearing God means ascribing to Him an appropriate level of reverence and respect. It doesn't mean that believers should be afraid of God. However, unbelievers most certainly should be wary, as apart from salvation in Christ they will someday face His furious wrath in unending judgment.

CONCLUSION

The miracle we've talked about this morning is categorized as a physical resurrection. This is the 1st of 3 different occasions recorded in the Bible when Jesus brought a dead person back to life. As for the manner of this miracle, Jesus simply spoke and the dead man arose. He performed this miracle out of compassion for the grieving mother, but also to demonstrate His authority over death and the grave. Those who witnessed this event were in awe.

As we had seen in some of the previous miracles we've discussed, neither the widow or her son (for obvious reasons) asked Jesus to do anything. He took action solely based on his Own initiative, which was prompted, but not compelled, by His compassion for her grief. Jesus loves and has sympathy for everyone who suffers the loss of their loved one, but He doesn't resurrect them all. Jesus acts in accordance with God's will. That's it. While our feelings and/or faith are certainly important factors, they are not the deciding factor(s).

Someday we will all know what it's like to be physically resurrected. When Jesus returns, the dead in Christ will rise and those who are alive will be caught up to meet Him in the air. All believers will be fitted with glorified bodies made to dwell with Jesus forever (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Oh my friends, what a wonderful day that will be!

John's Disciples Visit and A Demon-Possessed Man

Originally Preached on 7/20/2025

And your [David's] house and your kingdom shall endure before Me [the LORD] forever; your throne shall be established forever. - 2 Samuel 7:16

This morning we will cover the next 2 stories on our list of "The Miracles of Jesus Christ". The first takes place when a pair of John the Baptist's disciples come to visit Him. It is found in both Matthew and Luke. The second occurs when a demon-possessed man is brought to Jesus. It's only found in Matthew, though there are a few other similar occurrences recorded in the gospels. Let's begin in Luke 7:18-23 and then move on to Matthew 12:22-29.

I. ARE YOU THE ONE? (Luke 7:18-23; Matthew 11:2-6)

It seems likely that John the Baptist was arrested only a few months after He baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. John was imprisoned in Machaerus, a hilltop fortress and palace of Herod Antipas which was located on the eastern side of the Dead Sea. Unable to witness it firsthand, John was forced to learn about Jesus' ministry through whatever reports he received while in confinement. Although John had recognized Jesus as the Lamb of God and had heard the Father call Him His Son during His baptism, perhaps several months in prison had shaken his confidence. John sent a pair of his disciples to find Jesus and ask Him directly if He was, in fact, the long-awaited Messiah.

When they found Jesus, they introduced themselves as John the Baptist's disciples and asked Him if He was the One to come as foretold in the Old Testament. Rather than answering their question explicitly, Jesus turned his attention to the people around Him and miraculously cured many of them and cast out several evil spirits as John's disciples watched. This detail is not stated in Matthew's account of this story, but it is made clear in Luke's. Then Jesus instructed them to return and tell John what they had seen and heard.

Jesus quoted from various verses in Isaiah which prophecy that the coming Messiah would give sight to the blind, make the lame walk, cleanse the lepers, restore hearing to the deaf, raise the dead, and preach good news to the poor. Jesus was doing all of these things, and John's disciples had just personally witnessed a sampling of it. Rather than just claiming to be the Messiah, Jesus showed Himself to be the fulfillment of these ancient messianic prophecies. Actions speak louder than words. Amazed, John's disciples departed to go tell him that Jesus was indeed the One to come. After they left, Jesus spoke highly of John the Baptist to the listening crowd.

In this passage, Jesus performed both healing miracles and exorcisms. The method(s) He used are not specified. He performed these miracles before John's disciples as irrefutable evidence that He was "the One to come" whom the prophets spoke of.

II. CAN HE BE THE SON OF DAVID? (Matthew 12:22-24)

A demon-possessed man who was also blind and mute was brought to Jesus. The Lord cast out the demon and healed the man enabling Him to speak and see. The crowds were astounded and asked, "Could this man really be the Son of David?" Hearing this, the Pharisees replied, "Jesus casts out demons by the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."

On this occasion, Jesus both healed the man and exorcised an unclean spirit from him. Were these 2 separate actions or was the man healed as a result of the demon being cast out? I'm not sure, but either way we will categorize this miracle as both a physical healing and an exorcism. These verses do not say what approach Jesus used to perform this miracle. Nevertheless, the people were amazed and many were beginning to question if perhaps Jesus was the Son of David, the long-awaited Messiah who would come to rescue God's people.

III. A DIVIDED KINGDOM CANNOT STAND (Matthew 12:25-29)

Jesus knew that the Pharisees were thinking evil thoughts about Him. He declared, "A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand." Jesus asked in effect, "If I was empowered by Satan (referred to by His accusers as Beelzebul), why would I be casting out demons? Is Satan at war with himself?" The accusation doesn't make any sense.

Furthermore, if this was the case it calls into question how the Pharisees and their associates were casting out demons. Apparently they practiced exorcisms also, or at least claimed to. Were they also empowered by Satan? If however, Jesus was casting out demons by the Spirit of God it would be powerful evidence that the kingdom of God was among them. Jesus compared the LORD's almighty power to someone binding a strong man (Satan) and plundering his house (casting out demons).

Jesus regularly used His miraculous deeds as teaching opportunities. In this instance, He taught about God's authority and power over Satan. He pointed out the lunacy of attributing His work to the Devil and, once again, made the Pharisees look foolish. Of course, this aggravated and angered them all the more.

There are a few other passages in the gospels that tell a similar story. Mark 3:20-27 describes another occasion during which Jesus was accused of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul. He didn't perform any miracles on that occasion, but He did address the accusation using the same reasoning we just discussed. Later in this series, we will read of yet another occasion when Jesus rebuked this ludicrous line of attack.

CONCLUSION

Before we draw today's message to a close, let's take a quick look at Luke 8:1-3. Besides the apostles, there were also several women following Jesus who were contributing to His ministry. Somewhere along the way Jesus had healed them of various sicknesses and evil spirits. Among them were Joanna, Susanna, and Mary Magdalene. Jesus had cast 7 demons from Mary

Magdalene. The Bible doesn't say when or where these miracles occurred, so they are not formally included on the list of 45 miracles we'll cover in this series. But they did happen, and I wanted to at least acknowledge them.

The 2 passages we discussed today share a similar question. John the Baptist wondered if Jesus was the One who was foretold by the prophets. The crowds wondered if Jesus was the Son of David who would restore Israel. Both of them were questioning if Jesus was, in fact, the promised Messiah, sent by God to save His people.

Maybe someone listening to this sermon today is asking themselves the same question. Perhaps they feel lost, alone, and unloved. Perhaps they are depressed, discouraged, and bound up by their own foolish choices. But, could it be that Jesus is the answer they so desperately need? Could it be that He actually is God's beloved Son who was sent to set people free from the bondage of sin and death? Could it be that He made salvation available to everyone who would believe in Him by paying the price for mankind's sin on the cross? Is He, could he be, the One? My friend, let me say without any doubt or reservation, "Yes! He absolutely is! He can change your life. Would you trust Him today as your Lord and Savior?"

Next week, we'll take a boat ride across the Sea of Galilee. Just so you know in advance, no sleeping will be allowed during the sermon. Well, there will be 1 exception... Until then, may you shine the light of Jesus and share His love with others.

Calming the Stormy Sea

Originally Preached on 7/27/2025

He [The LORD] caused the storm to stand still, so that its waves were hushed. - Psalm 107:29

Hello friends. I am so glad to see each of you this morning. Your presence here encourages my soul and testifies to the priority God has in your life. I pray that He will speak to each of us today, as He does every week, through the faithful proclamation of His Word.

This is the 12th message in our current sermon series on “The Miracles of Jesus” and is the 18th entry on our list of the Lord’s miracles. The miracle we’ll cover today is recorded in all 3 synoptic gospels, but we will use Mark’s account as our main text. I’ve titled the sermon, “Calming the Stormy Sea”.

I. A STORM ARISES (Mark 4:35-37; Matthew 8:23-24a; Luke 8:22-23)

Jesus had been teaching the crowds along the sea shore throughout the afternoon. When evening came, He asked the disciples to go with Him “to the other side”. So they got into their boats and started out across the Sea of Galilee. As they were crossing a terrible windstorm arose. High waves were crashing into the boats and filling them with water.

This is now the 3rd occasion we’ve encountered in this series where Jesus was preaching to the crowds at the sea shore. Apparently this was a somewhat common practice for Him. Perhaps He used this location so that the people wouldn’t surround Him. He could use a boat as a floating platform to face and better address His audience. I would imagine the acoustics would be good in such a setting as well.

It seems likely that these boats belonged to Peter, Andrew, James, and John - the fishermen whom Jesus had called to follow Him as His disciples. If so, we can reasonably assume that they set sail from Capernaum, and that Jesus was aboard 1 of the boats. Neither Matthew or Luke even mention the other boats in their tellings of this story, choosing to concentrate only on the boat that Jesus was on.

The Sea of Galilee is actually a large freshwater lake. It is about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide at its farthest points. The Jordan River flows through the sea from north to south. It is approximately 700 feet below sea level making it the 2nd lowest body of water in the world (after the Dead Sea). The surrounding landscapes rise high above it, especially the mountains on the eastern and northern sides. Colder air from these higher elevations spills down and collides with warmer air over the surface of the water generating storms. The sea is also relatively shallow which allows waves to be stirred up more easily. These conditions make it notorious for sudden and violent windstorms, as described in today’s story.

II. JESUS SPEAKS (Mark 4:38-39; Matthew 8:24b-26; Luke 8:24)

As the windstorm raged, Jesus was asleep in the stern of the boat. The terrified disciples woke Him up and urged Him to save them from perishing. They feared that they were about to sink in the turbulent sea. Having been awakened, Jesus got up and rebuked the wind and the waves. They immediately became still and calm.

Picture the scene. The boat is tossing up and down, rocking side to side, and the howling winds and crashing waves are deafening. The disciples are frantic, probably shouting cries of desperation and despair to one another. And in the midst of all this chaos and turmoil, Jesus is sound asleep. Amazing! Now I am a heavy sleeper, and I often sleep through thunderstorms, sirens, and other loud noises, but this takes the cake!

This is the only instance in the gospels where it specifically says that Jesus was asleep. Of course He slept at other times, just like all people do, but in this particular passage it is an important part of the story. While everyone else was panicking and afraid, Jesus was sleeping. The lesson? Jesus doesn't fear storms, He calms them.

III. THE DISCIPLES MARVEL (Mark 4:40-41; Matthew 8:27; Luke 8:25)

After stilling the winds and the sea, Jesus turned to the apostles (those who were on His boat at least) and asked, "Why are you so cowardly? Where is your faith?" They had been completely overcome by fear. The disciples marveled over Jesus' power to quell the terrible windstorm and quiet the troubled waters.

The Bible includes several embarrassing stories, in both the Old and New Testaments, about God's people. Their presence supports the truthfulness of God's Word, for who would include such stories about themselves if they were making them up? This is such a passage. Let me explain...

The people on the boat(s) with Jesus were not merely spectators in a crowd or casual followers. They were the 12 apostles who walked with Jesus everyday, heard His teachings, and witnessed the many miracles He performed. They should have had the strongest faith of all, yet they were easily shaken by the mighty windstorm. In the same way, though we as Christians have faith in Jesus Christ, we still succumb to fear all too often.

The Bible teaches that God's children should not fear the things of this world (Isaiah 41:10). God is in control. We can trust in Him to care for us, to deliver us, and to help us either endure or overcome all of the persecutions, storms, obstacles, and difficulties of this life.

CONCLUSION

Jesus' calming of the sea, which we covered in today's sermon, is categorized as a natural miracle. It is the 3rd such miracle in our series thus far. The first was when Jesus turned water into wine. The second was when Peter, Andrew, James, and John caught nets full of fish. These

and a few other miracles we've yet to discuss show Jesus' power over nature, the weather, and creation.

Jesus performed this miracle by speaking. He rebuked the winds and waves and they became still and calm. Jesus performed this miracle to reveal His power as the Son of God that His disciples might believe in Him. As is quite obvious by their reaction, they were still struggling with fear and doubt.

Friend, as I close the message this morning, I can't help but wonder what storms you might be going through in your life right now. We all encounter storms from time to time. Rather than cowering in fear and living a life filled with stress and worry, why not turn to Jesus? He is just a prayer away. Jesus can rescue you out of the violent waves and still the stormy seas of life.

In next week's message, Jesus and the apostles will complete their journey across the Sea of Galilee and reach the opposite shore. Upon their arrival, they will have an encounter that involves crazed men, demons, pigs, and much more. Until then, may God richly bless you!

The Demoniac of Gerasene

Originally Preached on 8/3/2025

Nevertheless, you shall not eat of these, among those which chew the cud or among those which divide the hoof... and the pig, for though it divides the hoof, thus making a split hoof, it does not chew cud; it is unclean to you. - Leviticus 11:4a & 7

In last Sunday's message, Jesus and His apostles were caught in a severe windstorm while crossing the Sea of Galilee. As you may recall, Jesus was sleeping in the stern of the boat when the storm arose. The fearful disciples woke Him up, He rebuked the wind and the waves, and they became still. Then the group completed their journey across the peaceful sea.

This morning we will discuss what happened when they reached the opposite shore. I have titled today's message, "The Demoniac of Gerasene". This incident is described in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Like last week, we will use Mark as our main text. Let's begin...

I. A CRAZED MAN (Mark 5:1-7; Matthew 8:28-29; Luke 8:26-28)

After crossing the Sea of Galilee, Jesus and the apostles arrived in the region of the Gerasenes. As soon as Jesus got out of the boat, a demon-possessed man who dwelt among the tombs met Him. This man could not be bound because of his abnormal strength. He had frequently broken loose from shackles and chains that were used to hold him. He had therefore been banished to live among the tombs, where he cried out night and day, and gashed himself with stones. Seeing Jesus, this crazed man ran up to Him and implored Jesus not to torment him.

In Matthew's rendition of this event, the encounter takes place in the region of the Gadarenes, not the Gerasenes. The cities of Gerasa (Mark and Luke) and Gadara (Matthew) were both located in the area known as the Decapolis, which was located to the east and southeast of the Sea of Galilee. The Decapolis was a league of 10 Greek cities which allied together to form their own distinct, subject to the Roman governor in Syria. Thus, both settings refer to the same general "region", that is the Decapolis. Neither is incorrect, though Gadara was likely closer because it was situated near the seashore.

Also, while Mark and Luke speak of just 1 man, Matthew's gospel states there were actually 2 demon-possessed men present. Neither Mark nor Luke claim there was only 1 man. Perhaps 1 of them was more prominent than the other, so they just wrote about him. Whatever the case, since we are using Mark's text this morning, we'll refer to just 1 man.

As in previous instances of demon-possession we've already covered in this series, the unclean spirits residing within this man immediately recognized Jesus as the Son of God. They knew exactly who He was and what He was capable of (James 2:19). As such, they implored Him not to torment them.

II. A LEGION OF DEMONS (Mark 5:8-13; Matthew 8:30-32; Luke 8:29-33)

Jesus asked the demon what his name was and he replied, "Legion; for we are many." Then the demons pleaded with Jesus not to cast them out of the region. Seeing a herd of pigs nearby, they asked Him if they might be sent into them. Jesus permitted their request and cast them out of the demon-possessed man into the swine. The herd, made up of about 2,000 pigs, became frenzied and rushed down the steep bank, fell into the sea, and drowned.

This story illustrates that multiple demons can possess the same person. This man was possessed by an entire legion of demons. This is reminiscent of Mary Magdalene, who was possessed by 7 demons (Luke 8:2). Being possessed by a single demon sounds pretty bad, but can you imagine being possessed by several demons all at once? This story also suggests that demons are territorial and don't like being disembodied. They chose to possess pigs rather than not possess anyone. I wonder where they went when the pigs died...

III. A MIXED REACTION (Mark 5:14-20; Matthew 8:33-34; Luke 8:34-39)

The herdsmen who were watching the pigs ran into the city and throughout the surrounding countryside reporting what had happened. Many people came out to where Jesus was and saw the formally demon-possessed man sitting down, clothed, and in his right mind. They were terrified and pleaded with Jesus to leave their region. On the contrary, the man who had been healed wanted to go with Jesus, but the Lord told him to stay and share his story with others. So the man went away and began preaching in the Decapolis about the amazing things Jesus had done for him.

What strikes me about this miracle is the people's reaction. When they saw what Jesus had done and realized His power over demons, they were afraid. They didn't seem too happy for the man who had been delivered from demonic possession. Rather than welcoming Jesus, they urged Him to leave them alone. There are some people who acknowledge Jesus' power, but they are still disinterested in and even disturbed by His presence. In other words, Jesus makes some people uncomfortable.

Jesus told the man who had been set free from the demons to go be a witness for Him in the Decapolis, the place where he was from. The Decapolis was a predominantly Greek area, as evidenced by the herd of pigs. Jews didn't raise pigs, as they were considered unclean animals. Thus, Jesus called this man to be a witness to the Gentiles, clearly indicating that His message and mission was not limited to the Jews only.

CONCLUSION

The miracle we've discussed this morning was an exorcism. It is the 7th occasion during which Jesus performed an exorcism or exorcisms in our series thus far. This was another spoken miracle. By casting these unclean spirits out of the man and into the pigs, Jesus demonstrated His power over demons. The man was healed and became a passionate witness for Christ.

Jesus' stay in the Decapolis didn't last long. As soon as he healed the demoniac, the frightened people urged Him to leave. So He and the apostles got back in their boats and returned to Galilee. However, Jesus left behind an eager witness whose life had been radically transformed. The former demoniac obediently went about telling others of his miraculous healing. His preaching seemed to be effective because when Jesus returned to the Decapolis, as we'll discover in a few weeks, He received a much warmer reception.

I never like seeing good bacon go to waste, but in this case it was certainly worth it. A man's life was saved, and, though it didn't seem like it, the stage was being set for a much more fruitful return to the Decapolis. Perhaps a lesson for us is not to let rejection get you down. Jesus made a difference, even if just for 1 man, and He'd be back...

Next week we will discuss 2 more miracles as our series rolls on. I hope you'll join us for that. Until then, may the goodness of God shower you each and every moment.

A Woman with a Hemorrhage and Jairus' Daughter

Originally Preached on 8/10/2025

And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it." - Acts 13:15

It's good to see you all again this morning. Today's message is titled "A Woman with a Hemorrhage and Jairus' Daughter." This is the 14th sermon of our series on "The Miracles of Jesus". The 2 miracles we'll discuss this morning are numbers 20 and 21 on our list. Both of them are recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. As always, I encourage you to read all 3 of these accounts in your private Bible study time to gain a fuller perspective. For the sake of our discussion this morning, we will use Luke's version as our primary text.

I. AN URGENT PLEA (Luke 8:40-42; Mark 5:21-24 Matthew 9:18-19)

Jesus and the apostles departed from the region of the Gerasenes, sailed back across the sea, and arrived in Galilee (presumably in or near Capernaum) where He was welcomed by a large crowd of people who'd been waiting for His return. Among them was a synagogue official named Jairus whose 12 year old daughter was fatally ill. He came up to Jesus, fell at His feet, and began pleading with Him to come to his house and heal the child. As they were going to Jairus' house the bustling crowds were pressing against Jesus.

Take a moment to consider the past 24 hours or so of Jesus' life. He had spent all or most of the previous day teaching crowds by the sea shore. At evening time, He and the apostles crossed the Sea of Galilee, which probably took 3 or 4 hours, but He wasn't able to get much rest because they encountered a windstorm. Upon reaching the other side during the night or early morning, Jesus met a demon-possessed. He healed the man, but the people living in the area urged Him to leave. Jesus and the apostles got back in their boats, returned across the sea again, and landed in Galilee perhaps around midday. Crowds were already there waiting for Him when He arrived. Sometimes I think my life is hectic, but Jesus stayed busy almost all the time! He modeled a life of selfless service.

II. WHO TOUCHED ME? (Luke 8:43-48; Mark 5:25-34; Matthew 9:20-22)

Among those in the rambunctious crowd was a woman who had suffered with a hemorrhage for 12 years. She came up behind Jesus anonymously and touched the fringe of His garment. She had seen many physicians, spent all of her money, and none of them had been able to help her. Nevertheless, she believed that Jesus could heal her. Sure enough, the moment she touched Jesus her bleeding ceased and the hemorrhage dried up. Jesus knew that power had gone out of Him and He turned and asked, "Who touched me?" The disciples stated that many people were touching Jesus, but the woman knew He was referring to her. She came forward, fell before Jesus, and told Him what she'd done and how she'd been healed. Jesus answered, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

I find this miracle fascinating in that Jesus did not “intentionally” heal this woman, nor did she ask Him to. However, she believed He could so she touched Him and was healed. Jesus could have simply let it go and kept walking, but He stopped to find out who touched Him (I’m sure He already knew the answer). By doing so, Jesus made this miracle known to the entire crowd, not just to He and the woman. He used this opportunity to applaud her faith and teach everyone about its importance.

According to the Jewish Law, a woman with an issue of blood was unclean. What’s more, anything and anyone she touched became unclean also (Leviticus 15:25-27). She would have been forbidden from entering the temple. This likely added to her desperation. But when she touched Jesus, He didn’t become unclean. On the contrary, she became clean! Amazing. This is similar to when Jesus purposely touched and healed the leper, which we discussed earlier in this series. Our sinfulness doesn’t defile Him, but His righteousness cleanses us. His grace is greater than our sin.

This was a healing miracle. It was performed simply by touch, in this case when the woman touched Jesus. Jesus made the miracle known to the entire crowd so that others might believe in Him as she did. God is more likely to act when we exhibit sincere faith. He is not compelled to do so, as our faith does not override His will, but our faith does have some influence on His will. As the Bible teaches, it “availeth much” (James 5:16).

III. SHE IS ASLEEP (Luke 8:49-56; Mark 5:35-43; Matthew 9:23-26)

As Jesus was speaking, someone came from Jairus’ house reporting that his daughter had died and he no longer needed to trouble the Teacher. But Jesus answered. “Do not be afraid, only believe, and she will be saved.” When they arrived at the house, He told everyone to stop weeping because she wasn’t dead, just asleep. They all knew she was dead, so they laughed at Jesus’ seemingly naive comment. He took only the girl’s parents, Peter, James, and John with Him into her room. He held her hand and called out, “Child, arise!” She immediately came back to life and He ordered that she be given something to eat. Her parents were amazed, but Jesus directed them to keep silent about what had happened.

Did you notice that the messengers called Jesus “the Teacher”? They, like the majority of others, still didn’t recognize Jesus as the Messiah who had come to redeem God’s children. Though Jesus had performed numerous miracles by this point as overwhelming evidence of His divinity, the masses still didn’t get it. No matter how many miracles He performed, they would never be sufficient for some to believe in Him as the Son of God.

Something that stands out to me in this story is the concept of “troubling” Jesus with our requests. There are some who think He is not interested in our concerns, that they are a burden to Him, that He is unable to help, and/or that we shouldn’t trouble Him with our prayers and petitions unless it is absolutely necessary. Friend, nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus wants us to pray in every circumstance, no matter how big (like the death of a child) or small (Philippians 4:6). Your earnest prayers never trouble the Lord. He wants to hear them.

This was the 2nd time that Jesus resurrected a person from the dead. Earlier Jesus had raised the widow of Nain's son and in this passage He raised Jairus' daughter. These resurrections display Jesus' heart for children. Though He took her hand, she rose when He spoke, meaning this was another spoken miracle. Jesus performed this miracle in the child's room, with only a few witnesses present. Still, I am sure many people found out what had happened. It was another demonstration of His power and divinity.

CONCLUSION

Peter, James, and John were Jesus' closest apostles. He allowed them to accompany Him on several occasions to places where the other 9 were not asked to go. For example, they went up with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration. They went with Him deeper into the Garden of Gethsemane, but unfortunately went to sleep. And in this morning's message, these 3 were permitted to enter the girl's room and see her resurrection firsthand. Peter, James, and John are sometimes referred to as Jesus' "inner circle".

In today's message, Jesus healed a woman and resurrected a little girl. He can do miracles in your life. But there is something far more important than physical healing. Jesus has the power to forgive your sin, to reconcile you to God, and to give you the assurance of eternal life. This is the reason He came, to seek and save the lost. Would you trust in Him today to be your Lord and Savior?

A Pair of Blind Men and a Demon-Possessed Mute

Originally Preached on 8/17/2025

"The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. - Psalm 146:8

This morning we will cover 2 more miraculous occurrences during the ministry of Jesus Christ. Both are recorded in Matthew chapter 9. Both are relatively short and straightforward. As such, we should get through them pretty quickly. Afterward, we will spend some time looking back over what we've learned in this series so far.

I. HAVE MERCY ON US (Matthew 9:27-31)

As Jesus went on from there (perhaps after leaving Jairus' house), a pair of blind men followed Him crying out, "Have mercy on us Son of David!" When they entered "the house" (perhaps referring to Peter's house in Capernaum where Jesus and the apostles lived), these 2 men came up to Jesus. He asked them if they believed He was able to heal them and they said, "Yes!" Jesus touched their eyes and said, "It shall be done to you according to your faith." Immediately their eyes were opened and Jesus sternly warned them not to tell anyone about how they had been healed, but they did.

Did you know that Jesus was the first person in the Bible to cure blindness? There is not a single instance recorded in the Old Testament of someone supernaturally restoring the sight of a blind person. The great prophets Elijah and Elisha performed many amazing miracles, including cleansing leprosy and even raising the dead, but healing the blind was something uniquely reserved for the coming Messiah. Isaiah prophesied that the coming Christ would have this miraculous ability (Isaiah 35:5). In the same way, only Jesus can open the eyes of the spiritually blind, and enable them to see the light and truth of the gospel.

The restoration of sight for these 2 men was a healing miracle. Jesus performed it by touching their eyes and speaking simultaneously. The healing of blindness was a specific and convincing sign that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

II. A SIMILAR STORY (Matthew 9:32-34; Luke 11:14-23)

Sometime later, somewhere in Galilee (perhaps still in Capernaum), a mute demon-possessed man was brought to Jesus. The Lord cast the demon out of him and the man was able to speak. The people were amazed, saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel!" However, the Pharisees charged Jesus with casting out demons "by the ruler of the demons".

This incident is very reminiscent of another miracle we discussed earlier in this series in Matthew 12:22-29. In that instance the demon-possessed man was both blind and mute, whereas in this case he was only mute. Though quite similar, these appear to be 2 different occasions, as they are both recorded by Matthew and are separated by about 3 chapters. It

seems highly unlikely that Matthew would tell the exact same story twice. In both accounts, Jesus was accused of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.

I am citing Luke 11:14-23 as a parallel account because it tells the story of a demon-possessed mute man, just as Matthew 9:32-34 does. In both cases, Jesus is confronted with the same accusation of casting out demons using demonic power. Though some distinguish these as 2 separate events, in order to minimize repetition, I am referring to them as the same.

Our lives are full of repetition. We often encounter the same things over and over again. It's no surprise that Jesus would have had similar experiences from time to time during His ministry. These 2 stories also indicate that He regularly faced the same lines of attack by His accusers. Jesus was repeatedly charged with violating the Law by healing on the Sabbath. His character was repeatedly slandered with accusations that He associated with tax collectors and sinners. Apparently His enemies also repeated the claim that His power over demons came from Satan.

This miracle is classified as an exorcism. The exorcism of the unclean spirit enabled the mute man to speak, again revealing that demonic possession can impair the physical body. Scripture doesn't explicitly say how Jesus cast the demon out, so we will label the method of this miracle "unspecified". As on similar occasions, Jesus cast out demons to silence them and/or to demonstrate His power over the Devil and his evil forces.

III. THROUGH CITIES AND VILLAGES (Matthew 9:35)

As Jesus was traveling through the villages and cities of Galilee, He taught in their synagogues. He boldly preached the gospel to many people. Along the way He also healed every kind of disease and sickness.

This verse does not refer to a specific event, so it isn't included on our list of miracles. But it, and several others like it, indicate that Jesus performed many miracles besides those specifically described in the Bible (John 20:30-31). In fact, He almost certainly did more that we don't know about than those we do know about!

CONCLUSION

Well, brothers and sisters, we have reached the mid-point of our series on "The Miracles of Jesus". We have covered 23 distinct occasions during which Jesus performed a miracle or miracles. I thought it would be fun to mark the halfway point with a review of some things we've learned so far. So, here we go...

1. What type of miracle did Jesus perform the most? (healings, exorcisms, natural miracles, or resurrections)
2. What manner did Jesus use to perform most of His miracles? (speaking, touching, or through obedience to His instructions)

3. In which of these miracles did Jesus heal a sick boy without ever going to see him? (The Widow of Nain's Son, A Centurion's Servant, or A Royal Official's Son)
4. Which of these miracles did Jesus perform on the Sabbath day? (A Leper in Galilee, A Man with a Withered Hand, or A Pair of Blind Men)
5. In which of these miracles did Jesus say, "Your sins are forgiven."? (A Paralytic on a Pallet, A Demon Possessed Man in the Synagogue, or Jairus' Daughter)
6. Which of these miracles did Jesus perform right after being woken up from His sleep? (A Demon-Possessed Mute Man, Calming the Stormy Sea, or Peter's Mother-in-Law)
7. Which of these miracles involved a herd of 2,000 pigs? (A Demoniac in Gerasene, An Invalid at the Pool of Bethesda, or Turning Water Into Wine)
8. Which of these miracles was accompanied with a call to become "fishers of men"? (A Woman with a Hemorrhage, A Demon-Possessed Blind and Mute Man, or Catching Nets Full of Fish)

So, how did you do? Did you answer all 8 questions correctly? Were you able to remember some details about each of the answer choices that were listed? I sure hope so.

Alright. Well next week we will start the 2nd half of our series with a sermon contrasting "few" and "many". Are you intrigued? Join us this coming Sunday to find out exactly what I'm talking about. May the Lord bless you.

Few in Nazareth but Many in Bethsaida

Originally Preached on 8/24/2025

Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life, and there are few who find it. - Matthew 7:13-14

This morning we begin the 2nd half of our series on “The Miracles of Jesus Christ”. In this sermon we are going to discuss 2 different occasions during which Jesus performed miracles. The first was Jesus’ visit to Nazareth, which is recorded in Matthew 13:53-58 and Mark 6:1-6. The second was His visit to Bethsaida (actually the nearby countryside), which is recorded in Matthew 14:13-14 and Luke 9:10-11. Since Matthew documents both stories we’ll use his gospel as our primary text today. As we will discover, this pair of events contrast sharply with one another.

I. LIMITED MIRACLES AT HOME (Matthew 13:53-58, Mark 6:1-6)

Once again, Jesus made His way through Galilee teaching about the kingdom of God and performing various miracles. He came to Nazareth, the town where He was raised and lived prior to launching His earthly ministry. As was His usual practice, Jesus went to the local synagogue and addressed the people there. They were astonished by His teaching and works, and couldn’t believe that He was the same man they’d watched grow up. They were offended by Him, to which Jesus replied, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household.” Thus He only did a few mighty works there, marveling at their unbelief, and moved on to preach in other more inviting places.

Nazareth was a small, relatively obscure Jewish village during the time of the New Testament. It was located in the lower hills of Galilee. It sat about 22 miles southwest of Capernaum, where Jesus’ ministry was headquartered. After His birth in Bethlehem, Jesus spent a few years in Egypt before He and His parents returned to Nazareth. The Bible tells us very little about His childhood and upbringing in Nazareth.

It can be very difficult to change someone’s perceptions and preconceived notions. The citizens of Nazareth had watched Jesus grow up from an early age. They knew His family - His father Joseph, His mother Mary, and His brothers and sisters, many of whom still lived there. They remembered Jesus as a child and young man, and were simply unable to accept Him as the divine Son of God. How could Jesus, the boy from down the street, be the Messiah? Now, lest we be too harsh on them, it is also hard to change someone’s opinion about others today. But, their focus on the past caused them to miss something wonderful. Friends... if we only see people for who they were, we might miss who they’ve come to be.

I have heard some misuse this story to state that Jesus was unable to perform any miracles in Nazareth because of the people’s lack of faith. This is patently false. Jesus did perform a few miracles there, despite their rejection. His ability to do miraculous things is not dictated by our

faith or lack thereof. The Lord can do whatever He wants to do. That said, He was not inclined to do many miracles in Nazareth because of their doubt. This suggests that our faith does have an influence on Jesus' willingness to act.

Mark's account of this story says that Jesus laid hands on a few sick people and healed them. Based on that statement, we will classify these limited works as healing miracles that were performed by touch. By performing these miracles Jesus showed Himself to be the Christ, and my hope is that at least a few of the people in Nazareth believed.

II. THE APOSTLES DO MIRACLES (Matthew 10:1ff, Mark 6:7-13, Luke 9:1-6)

It was around this time that Jesus sent the 12 apostles out in pairs to preach in the various cities and villages of Israel. He was preparing them for the work of ministry after His departure. Jesus granted these men supernatural power to heal every type of sickness and disease and to cast out demons. So the apostles went out proclaiming the kingdom of God and performed many miracles in Jesus' name as they encountered those in need. When they returned, they reported to Him all they had done.

The miracles performed by the apostles on this (and all other) occasions are not considered to be miracles of Jesus, although His divine power and authority made them possible. As we've discussed in previous messages, Jesus gave healing power to the apostles during the first century in order to give them credibility and establish the New Testament church. It is my firm belief, and the traditionally held position of Southern Baptists, that this was temporary and that Christians are not gifted or empowered to perform miracles at their own discretion today. That said, God may choose to perform wonders through an individual on occasion in accordance with His divine will.

III. MANY MIRACLES IN DESOLATION (Matthew 14:13-14, Luke 9:10-11)

Jesus received news that John the Baptist had been executed. He went away by boat and came to a desolate place near the town of Bethsaida. However, when the people found out where He was going, they followed Him on foot. When Jesus came ashore a large crowd was waiting for Him. Feeling compassion for them, He began healing many who were sick and preaching the gospel to them.

This is yet another example of Jesus' immense popularity. It was almost impossible for Him to get away from the multitudes to rest or be alone. Private time was scarce, as Jesus was always in demand. Virtually everywhere He went, people followed and/or were waiting for Him when He arrived. Perhaps this is a reason why Jesus cherished His private, quiet moments alone with the Father. They were hard to come by. Maybe we should learn to cherish them as He did.

Bethsaida was a small town on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, near where the Jordan River emptied into it. Jesus performed several miracles there. It was the birthplace of Peter,

Andrew, and Phillip. It was only about 6 miles northeast of Capernaum and could be reached by land or sea.

Unlike those at Nazareth, the people at Bethsaida were warm and welcoming to Jesus. They were excited and eager to hear Him speak. As a result, Jesus was more inclined to perform miracles there. He spent the entire day teaching the gospel and healing those who were ill.

The miracles Jesus performed on this occasion were healing miracles. Scripture doesn't say what methods He used to do them. Jesus worked these miracles out of compassion for the people, but more importantly so they might believe in Him and accept His message of salvation.

CONCLUSION

Next Sunday we are going to study 1 of Jesus' most well-known miracles. It is a story you've probably all heard many times before, but it never grows old. It amazes me every time I read it. Until then, ask yourself this question... Do you tend to be a doubting skeptic like those in Nazareth or an eager follower like those who chased Jesus to Bethsaida? While I passionately oppose the unbiblical concept of "faith healing", I do concede that perhaps we miss God's best and most in our lives because of our disbelief.

Feeding the 5,000

Originally Preached on 8/31/2025

Abraham called the name of that place The Lord Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the Lord it will be provided." - Genesis 22:14

Last Sunday we read that Jesus and His apostles retreated by boat to a desolated area near Bethsaida on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee. However, the multitudes followed on foot, with many coming from surrounding towns, and met them when they came ashore. Seeing the crowds, Jesus was moved with compassion and spent the rest of day preaching the gospel to them and healing many of their various afflictions.

Today's sermon is set at the end of that same day, in the remote countryside near Bethsaida. It was on this occasion that Jesus performed what may be His most well-known miracle - the feeding of the 5,000. This is the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all 4 gospels. As always, I encourage you to read and study each account, but for the sake of time, we will center our discussion on John 6:1-14. Turn there in your Bibles and let's begin...

I. 200 DENARII (John 6:1-7; Matthew 14:15-16; Mark 6:33-37; Luke 9:12)

When evening came, Jesus and the disciples were sitting on the mountain. He looked out over the crowds of hungry people and asked Philip where they might buy enough bread for all these people to eat. Jesus was testing Philip with this question, as He already knew what He was about to do. Philip answered that 200 denarii worth of bread would not be enough to feed them all sufficiently.

Based on Philip's response, it would seem that Jesus and His disciples were carrying about 200 denarii with them in their money bags. Basically, Philip was saying that even if they spent all their money to buy bread, it wouldn't be enough to feed everyone. In Matthew's, Mark's, and Luke's rendition of this story, the disciples ask Jesus to dismiss the crowd so they can go into town and get themselves something to eat. However, Jesus doesn't send the people away, but instead challenges the disciples to give them something to eat.

Jesus' request seemed impossible. The disciples simply didn't have the resources necessary to meet the need. Even if they spent all the money they had, it wouldn't have been sufficient. Why didn't Jesus just let the crowds go find supper for themselves? It would have been easy for Him to just send them away, but He didn't. Why? Jesus was about to teach the disciples an important lesson about God's provision.

Before moving on, let me quickly point out John's statement that Passover was near. This would have been the Passover 1 year before Jesus' arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection. This detail gives us a definite time stamp, and reveals that Jesus was about to enter the final year of His earthly ministry... and what a year it would be!

II. 5 LOAVES AND 2 FISH (John 6:8-11; Matthew 14:17-19; Mark 6:38-41; Luke 9:13-16)

Having been instructed by Jesus to feed the crowd themselves, the disciples surveyed the people to see what food they might be able to gather. Andrew reported that there was a boy who had 5 barley loaves and 2 fish, but questioned how that would be enough to feed everyone. Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down on the grass. Then He blessed the bread (and fish), broke it, and began to distribute it. As He did so, it continued to multiply until everyone ate and was filled.

There were about 5,000 men in the crowd. This number doesn't include women and children. So, even though we refer to this miracle as "the feeding of the 5,000", there were likely many more in total. Jesus took a tiny amount of food and multiplied it to feed everyone. He provided for them all. We may worry sometimes that we don't have enough to meet the need before us, and the truth is often we don't. But in the Lord's hand and with His blessing, He can take our little and make much of it. Trust in Him, and even when it seems impossible, He will come through. I've personally experienced His provision in my own life in a myriad of different ways time and time again.

We categorize this as a natural miracle. How did Jesus do it? The blessing was spoken, but it seems that the bread and fish actually multiplied as they were distributed, not all at once. This would suggest that the miracle occurred progressively as the disciples distributed the food. Therefore, I am going to categorize this as a miracle done "through obedience".

III. 12 BASKETS (John 6:12-14; Matthew 14:20-21; Mark 6:42-44; Luke 9:17)

After the multitudes had eaten, Jesus instructed the disciples to gather the leftovers so that none would be lost. They filled 12 baskets full of bread and fish that were leftover. The people saw this miraculous sign and said, "This is truly the Prophet who has come into the world."

Not only did Jesus meet the need, but He went above and beyond. In fact, there was more food leftover than what they started with! Think about that for a minute. Amazing! There was a basket of leftovers for each of the 12 apostles. This illustrates the abundance of God's blessings. It makes me think of Psalm 23 when David declares, "My cup overflows!". God doesn't just give us enough, but He blesses us with more than enough... certainly much more than we deserve. God is so good!

Although the entire crowd was amazed by this miracle, Jesus seemed particularly interested in developing the faith of His disciples. He purposefully involved them in each phase of the process. He challenged them to feed the crowd, He had them distribute the food as He divided it, and He had them gather the leftovers afterwards. I think Jesus used this occasion to stretch and grow His disciples.

CONCLUSION

The feeding of the 5,000 beautifully and powerfully demonstrates Jesus' supernatural ability to meet our needs. He is God in the flesh, the only begotten Son of Jehovah-Jireh, which means in Hebrew "the God who provides". Whether it be financial shortfalls, emotional support, strength to get through the day, or whatever your need, trust in the LORD. Give Him what you have and allow Him to supply the increase.

While this story focuses on God's provision, there is another lesson that I want to touch on before we close. It really jumped out at me as I prepared this message. Again I ask, as I did earlier, why did Jesus insist that His apostles feed the crowds rather than simply releasing them to go get food elsewhere? I believe He was trying to teach them to take responsibility for the people. Beloved, in Christ we have the Bread of Life, which is sufficient to satisfy any and all who will receive it. If we will simply distribute the bread, He will multiply it. We dare not send people into the world to find their nourishment. As His disciples and His church, we must take our calling to feed the masses seriously. It is our commission, not anyone else's.

Well, that brings us to the end of another sermon. Next Sunday Jesus and the disciples are going to travel across the Sea of Galilee again. Of course, that means they will need boats to ride in... or will they? Join us next week and we'll find out together. God bless you.

Walking on the Water

Originally Preached on 9/7/2025

[It is God] Who alone stretches out the heavens and tramples down [treads upon] the waves of the sea; - Job 9:8

Good morning, friends! In our sermon 2 weeks ago, we read that Jesus and His apostles traveled to the desolate countryside near Bethsaida where, to their surprise, they found a large crowd waiting for them. So Jesus spent the day teaching them about the kingdom of God and healing all sorts of their diseases and ailments. Last week we read that that same evening, around supper time, Jesus fed the 5,000 plus people that were there with just 5 barley loaves and 2 fish. What a spectacular day that must have been! But we're not done yet...

In this morning's message we will continue this story right where we left off last Sunday. That remarkable day was about to be followed with an equally amazing night! This sermon is titled "Walking on the Water" and is the 18th message of our current sermon series. The story is recorded in 3 of the gospels - Matthew, Mark, and John. Each of these writers provide unique details that, when placed together, give us a complete picture of what happened that night. So, rather than reading from just 1 passage as we've typically done in this study, for this week's message we are going to read from all 3.

I. JESUS STAYS BEHIND (Mark 6:45-48a; Matthew 14:22-24; John 6:15-18)

After the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus perceived that the excited multitudes were going to take Him by force and make Him king. Therefore, He preemptively sent the crowds away. He also instructed His disciples to go on before Him across the sea, so they got in their boats and departed. Having been left behind, Jesus was finally alone and went up on the mountain to pray. Later that night, well after dark and a few miles out to sea, the disciples got caught up in a wind storm. Though He was not physically with them, Jesus knew what was going on.

As you may recall, Jesus had withdrawn to the desolate area near Bethsaida to be alone, or at least be alone with His disciples. That didn't happen at first, but finally, after a full and wonderful day of ministry and miracles, Jesus got a few hours of private time to pray. However, His solitude would be cut short because while He was praying, He saw that the disciples were in trouble. Jesus' knowledge of their peril, though they were 3 or more miles away, is yet another example of His omniscience.

II. JESUS CATCHES UP (Mark 6:48b-50; Matthew 14:25-27; John 6:19-20)

Jesus ended His prayer time and departed to find His disciples. He did not take a boat, but instead walked on the water across the Sea of Galilee in the middle of the night. He finally caught up with them and came near their boats during the fourth watch, sometime between 3am-6am. Jesus intended to pass by them, but when the terrified disciples saw Him, they

mistook Him for a ghost and cried out in fear. Jesus turned to them and said, "Take courage. It is I! Do not be afraid."

Think of it! Jesus walked on the water for several miles, some of which on turbulent waves during the middle of a violent wind storm. This is truly remarkable. His intention wasn't to ignore the apostles by passing them by, but rather to reveal Himself and His magnificent glory just as God had done when He passed by Moses on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 33:18-19). Jesus was wanting to encourage them with a clear display of His deity, but they didn't recognize Him... at least not at first.

III. JESUS BECKONS PETER (Matthew 14:28-31)

When the apostles realized that it was Jesus, Peter asked if He might come to Jesus on the water. Jesus told him to come, so Peter climbed out of the boat and began walking on the water toward Him. However, he was distracted by the stormy winds and, becoming frightened, began to sink. Peter cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus stretched out His hand, took hold of Peter, and said to him, "You of little faith. Why did you doubt?" The pair walked together on the water back to the boat.

Let's be very clear... Peter wasn't able to walk on the water because of his great faith. In fact, his faith proved to be pretty weak (at this point in his life). Rather, he was able to walk on the water because Jesus allowed him to. Peter asked and Jesus granted Him permission. Beloved, though not always, sometimes when we ask for a miracle the Lord answers, "Yes!". This should motivate us to continually and persistently pray and ask. But again I repeat, the determining factor is not the strength of our faith, but rather if it's the Lord's will.

That said, it often takes a degree of faith and courage to do that which the Lord has willed. Even though Jesus had invited him to come, Peter still had to get out of the boat. This episode also highlights the importance of remaining focused on Christ and not becoming dismayed by the various storms of life raging around us. We must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus! If we allow fear and doubt to overtake us, we will surely begin to sink. Fortunately, even when we falter, Jesus is there to deliver us if we cry out to Him.

IV. JESUS GETS IN (Mark 6:51-52; Matthew 14:32-33; John 6:21)

When Jesus (and Peter) got into the boat, immediately the winds stopped and the seas stilled. The disciples were amazed and worshiped Jesus as the Son of God, but they still had a lot to learn from Him. At that very moment, their boat or boats were instantly transported to the place where they were going (likely either Capernaum or Genesareth).

Though we include this story as a single entry on our list of Jesus' miracles, in truth there were actually 4 separate miracles that took place. First, Jesus walked on the water. Second, with Jesus' permission, Peter walked on the water. Third, Jesus calmed the stormy seas. Fourth, the

Lord translated the boat or boats from the middle of the sea immediately to their destination. All of these are natural miracles that defy the laws of nature and physics.

As for the manner of these miracles, Jesus just did them without saying anything in particular or making any type of specific gestures. He simply used His divine power to walk on the water, calm the seas, and relocate the boats. As for Peter walking on the water, Jesus verbally invited him to "Come!" and upheld him as he did so. For this reason I will collectively categorize these miracles as "willed and obeyed".

And finally, why did Jesus walk on water across the Sea of Galilee and perform these other miracles? Well, let me ask you this, why did the chicken cross the road? To get to the other side! Joking aside, this was a sign of His deity and a display of His magnificent glory. Jesus was revealing Himself to His apostles, that they might continue to grow stronger in their faith.

CONCLUSION

Next week we will be conducting our 13th annual Calvary Baptist Church Fall Revival. Our guest speaker will be preaching from the Psalms. We'll resume our series on "The Miracles of Jesus" in 2 weeks. This week I encourage you to be in prayer for our upcoming revival, that God would move among us in a powerful way to strengthen and renew us as we strive to do what He has called us to do!

Many in Gennesaret and a Demon Possessed Girl

Originally Preached on 9/21/2025

Then Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father, for Hiram had always been one who loved David. - 1 Kings 5:1

Welcome! It is so good to be with you all this morning as we worship the Lord Jesus Christ together. Last week we took a break from our series on “The Miracles of Jesus” to observe our annual fall revival. It was such a wonderful event, and my spirit was greatly encouraged and refreshed. I trust that those who were able to attend were blessed as well.

Today we will continue our series where we left off 2 weeks ago. Jesus and His apostles have just come back across the Sea of Galilee. In fact, Jesus walked on the water across much of the sea and enabled Peter to walk on the water briefly. Jesus also calmed the windstorm and instantly transported the disciples’ boat(s) to shore.

This morning we will discuss 2 more occasions during which Jesus performed miracles. They are recorded in both Matthew and Mark. We will use Mark’s version as our primary text. I’ve titled this message “Many in Gennesaret and a Demon Possessed Girl” and these are the 28th and 29th miracles on our list,

I. TOUCHING HIS GARMENT (Mark 6:53-56; Matthew 14:34-36)

Jesus and the disciples came ashore at Gennesaret. They tied their boats off and got out. The people immediately recognized Jesus and began spreading word throughout the region that He had come. As people found out, they brought those who were sick to Him so that they would be healed. Whether in the towns, villages, or countryside, the afflicted were being carried to Jesus for healing. If they merely touched the fringe of His garment they would be cured.

Gennesaret was the name of both a town and a small, fertile plain. The town was located about 3 miles south of Capernaum along the edge of the Sea of Galilee. The town of Gennesaret was located on the plain of Gennesaret, which was situated on the northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee spanning from Capernaum to Magdala. In fact, another name for the Sea of Galilee is the Lake of Gennesaret. The name Gennesaret means “garden of the prince”. Jesus performed many miracles in the town of Gennesaret and throughout the beautiful region (or plain) of Gennesaret.

The miracles Jesus performed on this occasion were healing miracles. Scripture says that they were accomplished by touch, as those who were sick touched Jesus’ clothes. These miracles took place publicly with many witnesses. Jesus performed them as yet another display of His deity and revelation of His identity as the Son the God.

II. A MOTHER’S PLEA (Mark 7:24-26; Matthew 15:21-23)

Jesus and the apostles traveled to the land of Phoenicia, just to the northeast of Galilee, and came into the ancient city of Tyre on the Mediterranean coast. He quietly entered a house, hoping to escape notice, but a local woman heard that He was in town. She came and found Him, and then began to plead with Him to heal her little daughter who was demon possessed. This woman was a Gentile - she was a Greek of Syrophoenician descent. Matthew's gospel adds that Jesus' disciples urged Him to send her away because she was shouting at them.

Jesus had gone to the land of Phoenicia in hopes of finding some rest and escaping the multitudes. However, His reputation as a healer and miracle worker had made its way there also. When it became known that He was present, this desperate mother sought Jesus out. As for Tyre, it was a fortified city that had been in existence for centuries, since before the Hebrew children arrived in the Promised Land during the days of Joshua (Joshua 19:29). It was an important port city. Today Tyre and most of Phoenicia is located in the country of Lebanon.

The Phoenicians were predominantly Gentiles. Jesus didn't go there often, as it was outside the borders of Israel. However, He did refer to its cities when addressing the Jews. He strongly rebuked certain cities in Israel for demonstrating less faith than the people of Tyre and Sidon, which were both prominent cities in Phoenicia (Matthew 11:21-22; Luke 10:13-14).

III. THE LORD'S COMPASSION (Mark 7:27-30; Matthew 15:24-28)

Jesus spoke to the pleading mother saying, "It is not good to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She replied, "Yes Lord, but even the dogs eat from the crumbs of the children's food which fall on the floor." Amazed by her faithful answer, Jesus cast the demon out of the woman's young daughter and told her to go home. When she arrived, she found her little girl lying on her bed completely healed.

The conversation between Jesus and this Gentile woman seems a bit strange. What do children's food and dogs have to do with anything? As most of you know, my wife and I are currently raising our 16 month old twin grandsons. Everyday we feed them 3 meals - breakfast, lunch, and dinner. We also have 2 indoor dogs. Whenever we put the boys in their high chairs, the dogs come and stand close beside. They gobble up anything the boys drop on the floor, whether accidentally or on purpose! Sometimes, if the boys aren't hungry or don't like what we are serving, the dogs get a pretty nice meal.

We must understand that Jesus was speaking metaphorically. He was saying that He had been sent to proclaim the gospel and perform miracles for the children of God, namely the nation of Israel, not for the dogs, referring to other Gentile nations. Hearing this, the woman answered with a metaphor stating that even the dogs (the non-Jews) could benefit by eating the crumbs (hearing the message and receiving the miracles) that fell from the children's table (the Jews). In essence she was saying that while they were not Jesus' primary audience, she and the Gentiles could still be blessed by His ministry. Jesus was impressed by her humility and faith.

This miracle was an exorcism. Jesus did not actually go visit the little girl. He simply willed the demon to be cast out of her and told her mother to go home. When she did, she found her daughter demon-free. We will classify the method of this miracle as “willed and obeyed”. Jesus performed this miracle out of compassion for the Syrophenician mother and her daughter and to affirm her faith.

CONCLUSION

I find it interesting that the disciples encouraged Jesus to send the Gentile woman away, but made no objection to Him healing crowds of Jews in Israel. It would seem that they did not yet understand the full scope of Jesus’ mission. While it is true that He came to the Jews, He came for everyone. Jesus was sent to redeem any and all who would believe upon Him, regardless of their ethnicity, social status, or any other such factor (John 3:16).

As we will see in the coming weeks, Jesus’ visit to Phoenicia would be followed by a return trip to the Decapolis. This is yet another Gentile region adjacent to Galilee. As you may recall from earlier in this series, the last time Jesus set foot in the Decapolis He cast a legion of demons out of a crazed man and into a herd of swine. Seeing this, the local citizens urged Him to leave. Let’s hope that His return to the Decapolis is a bit more welcoming. Join us next Sunday and we will find out together.

A Deaf Mute and Large Crowds in the Decapolis

Originally Preached on 9/28/2025

"I will also give You as a light of the nations [Gentiles] so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth." - Isaiah 49:6b

A week ago we began a span of 3 sermons that cover miracles Jesus performed outside the borders of Israel. In that message Jesus went to Phoenicia, where He cast a demon out of a little girl. In today's and in next week's sermons Jesus will be in another Gentile region adjacent to Galilee. As I stated a week ago, while Jesus primarily stayed in Israel and interacted with the Jewish people during His earthly ministry, His mission and atoning work was for everyone - including the Gentiles.

This morning's message is titled "A Deaf Mute and Large Crowds in the Decapolis". It is the 20th sermon in this year's series on "The Miracles of Jesus". Both of the miraculous events we'll discuss in this sermon are recorded exclusively in a single gospel account. The first is found only in Mark and the second only in Matthew. Alright... here we go!

I. A SECOND VISIT (Mark 7:31)

After departing from Tyre, where He had healed a demon-possessed girl, Jesus passed through Sidon, another prominent city in Phoenicia, before returning eastward back across northern Israel and coming to the Sea of Galilee. From there He crossed over into the Decapolis. This was His second trip to the Decapolis. He had made a brief visit there previously during which He'd cast a legion of demons out of a crazed man (or possibly pair of men) into a herd of swine.

Like Phoenicia, the Decapolis was an area of confederated city-states that bordered Galilee. It was located, for the most part, on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee and Jordan River. As we've discussed before, it was predominantly inhabited by Gentiles. It would appear that Jesus traveled to the region by boat, seeing that He departed by boat when He left (Matthew 15:39).

II. A PECULIAR APPROACH (Mark 7:32-35)

Upon His arrival somewhere within the region of the Decapolis, the people brought a man to Jesus who was deaf and had difficulty speaking. They pleaded with Jesus to lay hands on him and heal him. Jesus took the man aside by himself, put His fingers into the man's ears, spit, touched His tongue, looked towards heaven with a sigh, and said "Ephphatha!", which means "Be opened!" Immediately the man could both hear and speak plainly.

I am fascinated by the manner in which Jesus healed this man. First he took Him aside privately. Then He touched the man's ears and tongue, gesturing that He was about to heal the man's hearing and speech. Remember that the man was deaf, so He couldn't hear what Jesus was saying just yet. Then he did something that seemed a bit strange... He spat. This is 1 of 3 miracles recorded in the gospels when Jesus spat. Why?

In Biblical times it was believed that saliva had medicinal properties. That said, they didn't believe it was potent enough to immediately cure blindness, deafness, or so on. Rather, it was used as a treatment over time intended to improve unhealthy conditions or impairments. By spitting, Jesus communicated His intention to heal in a very recognizable way. By its immediate effects, Jesus revealed His divine power to be much greater and effectual than any human medicines or treatments.

III. AN ASTONISHED RESPONSE (Mark 7:36-37)

Jesus told the crowd of witnesses not to tell anyone what had happened, but the more He urged them to keep silent, the more they made it known. They were utterly astonished by what they had seen. The crowds were saying, "He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Although Jesus took this man aside, clearly the people either watched and heard from a distance or saw the results of the miracle afterward. They knew that Jesus had supernaturally healed him. Jesus, as we've seen on a few similar occasions, asked them not to tell anyone what they'd seen, but they did. By this point everyone knew who Jesus was, so asking the people to keep quiet in order to slow His rise to fame seems pointless. Perhaps Jesus was trying to squelch the shortsighted notion that He was simply a miracle worker seeking notoriety.

This particular story describes a healing miracle. Jesus performed it using both touch and a spoken command. He also spat as a way of illustrating His divine power over that of traditional medicine. He performed this miracle in the presence of many people to reveal His identity and declare His glory that they might believe.

IV. MANY ON THE MOUNTAIN (Matthew 15:29-31)

While in the Decapolis, near the Sea of Galilee, Jesus went up onto a mountain and sat down. Large crowds were bringing the lame, crippled, blind, mute, and others to Jesus in order to be healed. They marveled as they watched Him heal these many afflicted people and they glorified the God of Israel.

While uncertain, it is possible that the miraculous healing of the mute man with a speech impediment which we discussed earlier in this sermon occurred during Jesus' healing of many people on the mountain. That man may have been among those who were brought to Jesus in order to be healed that day. I suppose it doesn't really matter, but I do find it interesting to think about. If so, his story is the only 1 specifically described among the many that are generally referred to as being healed on this miraculous occasion.

The miracles that took place on the mountain were healing miracles. The Bible doesn't specifically state how Jesus performed them. It does say that the crowds marveled and glorified the God of Israel, suggesting that some believed or at least acknowledged the LORD's power.

CONCLUSION

In last week's message, the apostles (who were all Jewish) seemed somewhat averse to Jesus healing a Gentile woman's daughter. As you might recall, they urged Him to send her away. Nevertheless, He healed the girl anyway despite their complaints. This week Jesus took them to the Decapolis where He proceeded to heal many more Gentiles, including a deaf mute. It seems to me that, at least in part, Jesus was intentionally showing them that His ministry and message were not limited exclusively to the Jews. I'm not sure they grasped this truth just yet.

In fact, even after Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension into Heaven there was still debate among the disciples whether or not the Gentiles could be saved, and if so how? This issue even resulted in friction between Peter (who was inclined toward the Jews) and Paul (who was inclined toward the Gentiles). I believe that Jesus' visits to Gentile areas, though few, are compelling evidence that His compassion and atoning work was (and is) for everyone.

Next week we will wrap up our discussion of Jesus' brief visit to the Decapolis with a story that is strikingly similar to another we've already covered. Do you remember Jesus feeding the multitudes with just a few loaves of bread and a couple of small fish? Could He do something like that again? Hmm. See you next Sunday.

Feeding the 4,000

Originally Preached on 10/5/2025

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst." - John 6:35

Hello everyone! 2 weeks ago we began a trio of messages that detail some of Jesus' travels outside the borders of Israel. First, He went to Phoenicia where He healed a demon possessed girl. Next, He moved on to the Decapolis where He healed many afflicted people including a deaf man with a speech impediment. In both places, Jesus was interacting with and performing miracles upon and among the Gentiles.

In today's sermon, Jesus is still somewhere in the Decapolis. He has gone up on a mountain with the disciples and large crowds have come to Him. As we are about to discover, Jesus is going to perform a miracle very similar to another that we studied about a month ago. This story is recorded in both Matthew and Mark, but for the sake of time we will use Matthew's rendition as our focal text.

I. 3 DAYS (Matthew 15:32; Mark 8:1-3)

Jesus had been teaching and healing the crowd for 3 days. They had remained with Him continuously and had not eaten. Jesus wanted to conclude His teaching and dismiss them, but He was concerned that they might faint on their way home. Thus said to His disciples, "I feel compassion for these people and don't want to send them away hungry."

While uncertain, it is possible that this crowd was the same group that we studied last Sunday who were bringing the blind, lame, deaf, and others to Jesus to be healed. Whether it was the same occasion or not really doesn't matter. What stands out is that they were interested in hearing what Jesus had to say. They had been with Him, listening intently, for 3 straight days. This was clearly a much warmer reception than Jesus received during His first visit to the Decapolis. These Gentiles seemed genuinely intrigued by His message.

II. 7 LOAVES (Matthew 15:33-34; Mark 8:4-5)

Hearing that Jesus wanted to feed the large crowd, the disciples asked where they could get enough bread for everyone in such a desolate place. Jesus then asked how many loaves they had. The disciples and, "We have 7 loaves and a few small fish."

Is any of this sounding familiar? Earlier Jesus had used 5 barley loaves to feed over 5,000 people in the countryside near Bethsaida. A few months later, He now had 7 loaves of bread to feed the hungry crowds in the Decapolis. That's 2 more loaves than before, but still not nearly enough. No problem... Jesus can handle it.

When Jesus fed the 5,000, a young boy donated his bread and fish to the disciples. In this instance, the Bible doesn't tell us where the 7 loaves and few fish came from. I guess if you're curious, you can ask when you get to heaven!

III. 4000 MEN (Matthew 15:35-37a, 38; Mark 8:6-8a, 9)

Jesus directed the people to sit down. Then He blessed the bread and the fish and began breaking them. He kept giving pieces to the disciples who then distributed them to the people seated on the ground. The food kept multiplying until everyone had eaten to their satisfaction. Those who ate were 4,000 men, besides women and children.

This miracle again demonstrates the amazing provision of God. Even though we may have very little, in God's hands it always is more than enough. He can take our meager resources and supernaturally multiply them to meet our needs. I have experienced this personally in my life on countless occasions. Trust God will what little you have, give it to Him, be thankful, and watch as He provides the increase.

IV. 7 BASKETS (Matthew 15:37b, 39; Mark 8:8b, 10)

After everyone had eaten and was full, the disciples gathered up the leftovers. They collected 7 baskets full of scraps and broken pieces. Then Jesus sent the crowds away. He and His disciples got in their boat and returned to Galilee, coming ashore in the region of Magadan (also known as Dalmanutha).

Let's compare. After the feeding of the 5,000, which took place in Galilee, the disciples collected 12 baskets of leftovers. After the feeding of the 4,000, which took place in the Decapolis, the disciples collected 7 baskets of leftovers. Some commentators have suggested that the 12 baskets represent the 12 tribes of Israel, that is the Jews, while the 7 baskets represent the 7 Canaanite nations that were driven out of the Promised Land, that is the Gentiles (Deuteronomy 7:1).

In Biblical numerology, the number 7 represents completeness, perfection, and sufficiency. We see this illustrated in God's creative work. He created the heavens, the earth, and everything in them and then rested on the 7th day when His work was complete. As it pertains to this miracle, ultimately Jesus is the bread of life, who satisfies our hungering souls. His atoning sacrifice on the cross is complete, it is perfect, and it is sufficient for the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The salvation He has attained is available to everyone.

When Jesus departed, He crossed back over the Sea of Galilee and arrived in Magadan, presumably the area around the city of Magdala, on the western coastline. This region is also referred to as Dalmanutha. He and the apostles were now back in Galilee again.

CONCLUSION

The miracle we highlighted this morning was a natural miracle. Jesus multiplied a small amount of food until it was sufficient to feed the multitude. As for the manner of this miracle, although Jesus gave thanks before distributing the bread, His spoken words do not seem to be the catalyst for this supernatural occurrence. The bread multiplied progressively as it was passed out, so I am going to categorize this approach as “willed and obeyed”. Jesus simply willed this to occur as the disciples carried out His instructions.

This miracle was performed on behalf of over 4,000 gathered Gentiles. Jesus demonstrated His power over nature and showed Himself to be the Son of God. Although these people were not awaiting the Messiah as foretold by the Jewish prophets of old, nevertheless Jesus revealed His divine identity to them as the Savior of the world. I trust that some of them believed.

Next Sunday we will read about another remarkable encounter Jesus had with a blind man. It is an interesting story that is somewhat unique among the miracles of Jesus. It is 1 of my personal favorites. I'll look forward to seeing you then. Have a blessed week.

A Blind Man in Bethsaida

Originally Preached on 10/12/2025

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; - 1 Peter 2:9

We are $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way through this year's sermon series on "The Miracles of Jesus". This morning's message is the 22nd of this series and covers the 33rd occasion recorded in the gospels during which Jesus performed an earthy miracle. Up to this point, we have discussed 14 instances of healing miracles, 5 of exorcisms, 4 of both healings and exorcisms, 6 of natural miracles, 2 of physical resurrections, and 1 instance in which the types of signs performed were not specified. This morning we will add another to our list...

After returning to Galilee from the Decapolis, Jesus and His apostles made their way northward to Bethsaida, where the events we'll discuss in today's sermon took place. As you might remember, Jesus healed many people and fed the 5,000 in the countryside near Bethsaida. The story we'll read today is only found in Mark, so there are no parallel passages for us to consider. It is also short, just 5 verses, yet it is quite profound. Let's begin.

I. DARK (Mark 8:22)

Jesus and the disciples came to Bethsaida. While He was there, the local citizens brought a blind man to Him. They pleaded with Jesus to touch the man and heal him of his blindness.

It seems plausible that many of the residents of Bethsaida had been among the multitudes that Jesus fed with just 5 barley loaves and 2 fish. They had experienced His miraculous work firsthand. Is it any surprise that when He returned to their city, they immediately brought Him someone to heal? They were keenly aware of Jesus' supernatural power.

This man was blind. He couldn't see anything. His world was dark. And what's worse, there was absolutely nothing that he could do to remedy his condition. His only hope was divine intervention. Beloved, physical blindness is symbolic of spiritual blindness. The Bible teaches that all of us have sinned and are therefore separated from God. We are lost, unable to see the LORD, groping about aimlessly in spiritual darkness, helpless to save ourselves, and in desperate need of a miracle (2 Corinthians 4:4). Our only hope is Jesus!

II. BLURRY (Mark 8:23-24)

Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. Then He spat on the man's eyes, laid His hands on him, and asked, "Do you see anything?" The blind man answered that he could see men walking around, but they looked like trees.

We have seen Jesus take people aside from the crowds before. Clearly He was not trying to create a spectacle or win any personal acclaim. His manner was much more personal and intimate. Jesus truly cared about this man, and the many others that He healed, and wasn't merely seeking fame and/or adoration.

This is now the second time that Jesus used spit during the process of performing a miracle. As we discussed on the previous occasion, in those days spit was believed to have medicinal properties. By spitting on the man's eyes, Jesus indicated His intention to heal.

Unlike any of the other healing miracles we've discussed, this 1 is unique in that it occurred in 2 stages. After Jesus spat on and then touched the blind man's eyes, he was able to see somewhat, but his vision was still unclear and blurry. He could make out people moving around nearby, but they were out of focus, distorted, and appeared to him as trees. He could see well enough to recognize someone was there, but not enough to identify them.

As I have taught in the past, my belief is that this story illustrates Holy Spirit conviction. When the Holy Spirit convicts a lost person of their sin, God graciously affords them an opportunity to see something that they otherwise could not. To be specific, they become aware of their sinfulness and recognize their need for forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Their spiritual vision, though limited and blurred, is sufficient for them to come to salvation. A person can only be truly saved during moments of Holy Spirit conviction, which cannot be manufactured, but are afforded solely by God's grace and at His discretion. This is why a person who is under conviction should surrender their lives to Christ immediately because they may never get another chance.

III. CLEAR (Mark 8:25-26)

Jesus placed His hands on the man's eyes again. Then the man stared intently and his blurry vision was restored. He could now see everything clearly. Jesus directed the man to go straight home, not even to enter the village.

After the 1st stage of this miracle the man was no longer completely blind, but his vision was still severely impaired. He could perceive light and make out blurred objects, but nothing was clear. When Jesus touched his eyes the 2nd time, and he looked again, everything came into focus. His healing was complete!

A sinner who is under Holy Spirit conviction has a choice to make. Will they accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior or will they reject Him? I believe this story depicts someone who accepts Jesus. If a lost person, while being convicted by the Holy Spirit, places their faith in Christ, He will forgive them of their sin, reconcile them to God, and grant them salvation. Metaphorically speaking, He will restore their eyesight completely. They will no longer walk in darkness, but rather in the light of the Lord (Ephesians 5:8). However, those who reject Jesus will slip back into total blindness, unable to see anything at all.

This is yet another example of Jesus instructing someone He's healed not to make a big production of it. He told the man, who He'd led out of town to a more private place, not to go back into the village and tell everyone what had happened. Rather, he was to go straight home. Again, Jesus was not interested in garnering attention or public praise. His demeanor was quite different from the alleged "faith healers" of our day.

CONCLUSION

Some theologians have pointed out that this miracle divides the book of Mark into 2 halves. In the 8 chapters leading up to it, the disciples' vision (that is, their understanding of Jesus' identity) is fuzzy and uncertain. However, in the passage that immediately follows this miracle, Peter states for the first time that Jesus is the Christ. This is a major turning point for the disciples and a key moment in their spiritual development. Thus, in the final 8 chapters of Mark the disciples' vision (that is, their understanding of Jesus' identity) is clear and certain.

Let's close by answering the 3 questions we've asked in each sermon of this series. What type of miracle was this? It was a healing miracle. What method did Jesus use to do it? He touched the man's eyes, twice. Why did He perform this miracle? Clearly not to win any public acclaim, but rather out of compassion for this man and to reveal His glory so that he might believe.

Those who are spiritually blind aren't aware of their need for Jesus. In fact, they think all this Jesus talk is foolishness. Perhaps this describes you before you walked into church this morning and heard this message. But friend, if Jesus has begun to open your eyes to the truth and you sense the Holy Spirit convicting you to receive Him today and your Lord and Savior, I urge you to say yes. Don't miss the opportunity to be healed and made new!

A Convulsing Boy

Originally Preached on 10/19/2025

But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." - Acts 19:13

Good morning. In last week's sermon, Jesus restored the sight of a blind man in Bethsaida. After healing the man, Jesus and His disciples traveled to Caesarea Philippi where Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ. From there they went to a mountain, likely either Mt. Tabor or Mt. Hermon (the exact location is unknown). Jesus went up on the mountain and was transfigured there as Peter, James, and John looked on. It was around this time that Jesus began teaching the disciples about His upcoming arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection.

Today's sermon takes place as Jesus comes down off the mountain, immediately after His transfiguration. The story is told in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. However, Mark includes the fullest, most detailed account of what happened. For that reason, we will read from Mark's gospel this morning. Today's message is titled, "A Convulsing Boy". Let's begin.

I. A FATHER'S REQUEST (Mark 9:14-19; Matthew 17:14-17; Luke 9:37-41)

Jesus, Peter, James, and John came down from the mountain of transfiguration and found the remaining disciples surrounded by a crowd of people and arguing with some scribes. When the crowds saw Jesus they were amazed, ran up to Him, and greeted Him. Jesus asked what they were arguing about. A father explained that he'd brought his demon-possessed son to the disciples in hopes that they could cast the demon out, but they couldn't. Jesus rebuked the crowd for their unbelief and told the man to bring the child to Him.

Scripture states that the unclean spirit caused the boy to be mute, unable to speak. In addition, whenever it seized the boy he would fall to the ground, convulse violently, begin foaming at the mouth, grind his teeth, and then become rigid. This is what happens when someone has a grand mal seizure. When I was younger, I had several of these myself. Now my daughter suffers from seizures. I can tell you from experience, they are quite traumatizing.

Earlier in His ministry Jesus had sent His disciples out in pairs to proclaim the kingdom of God throughout Israel (Matthew 10:1-15; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6). For this mission, He'd empowered them to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons... which they did. However, when the exercise was over, after they'd returned, it appears that their supernatural abilities ceased. Their inability to cast the demon out of this little boy suggests that the power Jesus had granted them previously was only temporary, and certainly shouldn't be considered normative for Christians today.

Jesus chastised the people for their unbelief. Apparently, when they saw that Jesus' disciples were unable to cure the boy, they reasoned that He might be unable to do so as well. Their

doubt in Jesus was unwarranted. As the divine Son of God, Jesus can perform any miracle that He chooses, but His followers can't. We shouldn't project the limitations and/or failures of God's people upon Him. Christians are not "little gods" as some heretical teachers claim.

II. A FATHER'S ANGUISH (Mark 9:20-24)

The people brought the demon possessed boy to Jesus. When he saw Jesus, the demon threw the child into convulsions, he fell to the ground, rolled around, and foamed at the mouth. Jesus asked his father how long he'd suffered from this condition, and the father answered, "Since childhood." Then the man asked Jesus to help them if He could. Recognizing the man's doubt, Jesus stated that all things are possible to him who believes. The father replied, "I believe; help my belief."

We've stated this multiple times throughout this series, but it bears repeating - evil spirits know exactly who Jesus is and the great power He possesses. As such, they are terrified of Him. When this demon saw Jesus, he threw the poor boy he inhabited into wild convulsions. The demon probably anticipated that Jesus was about to cast him out.

There are different types of faith described in the Bible. Saving faith is that which is necessary for salvation. A sinner who trusts in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins exhibits saving faith. Personal faith (my term) is an individual's confidence in God's power, presence, and promises. It can be either strong and certain, weak and unsure, or somewhere in between. Unlike saving faith which is all or nothing (you either have it or you don't), personal faith falls somewhere on a scale. It can change from day to day, even from moment to moment, depending on the circumstances. Some people have more of it than others. Some receive strong personal faith as a spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 12:9). As a Christian matures, their personal faith in the LORD should grow and become more sure.

It is quite obvious that this father did not have a strong, unwavering "personal" faith in Christ's ability to heal his son. He questioned "if" Jesus could do anything to help them and after Jesus responded, the man frankly admitted that he still had his doubts. I think if we're being honest, we can all relate to his struggle. Fortunately, Jesus' ability and willingness to heal wasn't hindered by this man's shaky faith.

III. A SON'S RESTORATION (Mark 9:25-29; Matthew 17:18-21; Luke 9:42-43)

Jesus noticed that a large crowd was gathering so He went ahead and commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the little boy and not to reenter. The demon threw the boy into terrible convulsions for a final time, then came out. The boy laid on the ground so still that those watching thought he was dead. Then Jesus took him by the hand and helped him stand up. The boy was healed. Sometime later, in the house where they were staying (I suspect they had returned to Capernaum by this point), the disciples asked Jesus why they couldn't cast out the demon. He explained that it could only be exorcised through prayer.

Based to a degree on this passage, some theologians have suggested that there are different types of demons - some which can be cast out by a single command and others that are more entrenched and must be removed through intensive prayer. Perhaps they are correct. Yet Jesus was able to cast the demon out with a single command, though the disciples couldn't. That said, I believe that when confronting demons the proper approach for Christians today is always prayer (not commands or declarations). We should appeal to the Lord in His Name, by faith, and ask Him, if He is willing, to cast them out. This may happen immediately or it may take some time and persistence. Like these disciples, we cannot do such miraculous works in our own strength, but only as enabled by Christ.

CONCLUSION

The miracle serves as an example of an exorcism. When the demon was cast out, the boy was healed of his various afflictions. Jesus performed this miracle using a spoken command. He rebuked the unclean spirit and it came out. Jesus sought to minimize the number of witnesses of this miracle by casting out the demon before the crowd grew any larger than it already was. He wasn't concerned with making a big production of it. That said, to those present who saw what happened He revealed His glory and His authority over evil spirits.

In next Sunday's message, Jesus and the disciples will be back in Capernaum. While there, Peter will be approached by a representative from the Internal Revenue Service seeking to collect taxes... Well, not exactly. Nevertheless, it's a great story that I'm sure you'll enjoy. See you then.

A Coin in a Fish's Mouth

Originally Preached on 10/26/2025

Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us which was hostile to us, He also has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. - Colossians 2:14

In this morning's sermon, we are going to discuss a miracle involving taxes and a fish. But before we get to that, I want to mention 2 other passages that describe miracles which took place around this time in the gospel narrative. Neither of these was performed directly by Jesus, but of course both were made possible by His supernatural power.

As He had done earlier in His ministry with the 12 apostles, Jesus commissioned 70 of His disciples to go out in pairs to various places preaching the kingdom of God. He empowered them for the duration of this brief mission to heal the sick, cast out demons, and perform miracles (Luke 10:1-20). Knowing that His departure was soon, Jesus was training and preparing them to carry the gospel message to the entire world after His ascension.

Also, while they were in Capernaum, the apostles saw someone casting out demons in Jesus' name who was not a part of their group, and they tried to hinder him from doing so. Jesus told them to leave this man alone and permit him to continue his ministry. Jesus taught that, "He who is not against us is for us." (Mark 9:38-41).

As for the miracles Jesus personally performed, today we will examine the 35th miracle on our list. The passage we're about to consider holds a special fondness for me, as it was the topic of 1 of the first sermons I ever preached. This story is only found in the gospel of Matthew. I've titled this message, "A Coin in a Fish's Mouth".

I. A DEBT IS OWED (Matthew 17:24-25a)

Jesus and the apostles returned to Capernaum. While they were there, some men, likely religious officials, approached Peter to collect the 2 drachma tax. They asked him if Jesus paid this tax and Peter replied that He did.

The 2 drachma tax mentioned in this passage refers to the temple tax that was levied annually upon all Jewish males aged 20 and up. This tax was used for the upkeep and maintenance of the tabernacle, and later the temple in Jerusalem (Exodus 30:13-16). According to the Law, the amount of this tax in Hebrew currency was a half-shekel, which equaled about 2 days' wages. In Jesus' day, 2 drachma (a type of Greek silver coin) was roughly this same amount.

Although these religious leaders approached and spoke to Peter, they were concerned about Jesus. It makes me wonder why they didn't ask Him directly. Perhaps they couldn't find Jesus or didn't know where He was, but that seems unlikely. I tend to think that they were hoping to find some reason to accuse and slander Jesus' name, but they were afraid to confront Him. If they

were to find that He didn't pay the tax, they could charge Him with breaking the law and showing disregard for the temple. However, Peter answered that Jesus did, in fact, pay the tax.

The unpaid tax represents a debt that is owed. It depicts the debt of sin. The Bible teaches that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). As unrighteous sinners, we are all debtors enslaved by our sin and subject to God's judgment.

II. JESUS IS EXEMPT (Matthew 17:25b-26)

Peter returned to the house where Jesus was staying to tell Him that the 2 drachma tax was due. Before he could speak, Jesus asked, "Peter, do kings collect taxes from sons or strangers?" Peter answered, "From strangers," to which Jesus replied, "Then sons are exempt."

This is yet another instance when the omniscience of Jesus was evident. He already knew what Peter was going to say before he said it. Imagine Peter's surprise when Jesus began addressing the topic before he even brought it up.

Jesus explained that kings took taxes from their subjects (ie, strangers), not from members of their own royal family. Specifically, he highlighted that "sons are exempt." The symbolism here is that Jesus, the Son of God, who the Father crowned as King of kings, did not owe the tax. As stated a moment ago, the tax represented man's debt of sin. Scripture teaches that Jesus was perfect, blameless, and did not commit any sin (2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:22). He, therefore, was not a debtor to sin like we are. He was "exempt from the tax".

III. HE PAID IT FOR US (Matthew 17:27)

Jesus instructed Peter to go and cast a hook into the sea. He told Peter that he would catch a fish and that it would have a coin in its mouth. Peter was to take the coin (a stater) and use it to pay the temple tax for both he and Jesus.

Rather than simply taking the funds from their money box to pay the tax, Jesus saw a teaching opportunity and so He sent Peter fishing. He caused Peter to catch a fish that had a coin in its mouth valued at 4 drachma, enough to pay the tax for both of them. Some skeptics have argued that catching a fish with a coin in its mouth is bizarre, but not miraculous. It has happened before and can be explained by natural causes. That said, the miracle is that Jesus made it happen on demand at a specific time. As in the case of Jonah, the fish in this miracle symbolized the grave and Jesus, the coin that paid our debt, came up out of it (Matthew 12:39).

Although Jesus was exempt from the tax, He voluntarily paid it anyway. Not only did He pay it for Himself, but for Peter also. The imagery here is clear. Peter represents sinful humanity. Jesus paid the debt for us - for lost sinners!. He died on the cross to redeem sinners once for all, and thereby cancel mankind's debt to sin.

CONCLUSION

This was a natural miracle. We will categorize its method as “willed and obeyed”. Jesus told Peter what to do, and when he obeyed, the miracle occurred just as the Lord willed. The text doesn’t indicate that anyone else knew about this miracle, other than Peter and Jesus. Perhaps Peter shared it with others later on. It seems to me that Jesus performed it in order to teach Peter a lesson about salvation.

Every time I read this story, it reminds me of a song I used to sing several years ago when I was younger. The song is called, “He Paid a Debt”. I want to conclude this morning’s message by singing it together. Would you sing with me?

“He paid a debt He did not owe,
I owed a debt I could not pay.
I needed someone to wash my sins away.
And now I sing a brand new song.
Amazing Grace (all day long).
Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay.”

A Man Born Blind

Originally Preached on 11/2/2025

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. - Psalm 51:5

Today's sermon is set in Jerusalem. Jesus and the disciples have journeyed there to observe the Feast of Booths, sometimes called the Feast of Tabernacles. This was 1 of the 3 annual pilgrimage feasts that took place in Israel. It began on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, and lasted for 8 days. On our modern calendars, this feast occurs in late September or early October. Therefore, these events took place about 6 or 7 months before Jesus' crucifixion.

Jesus sent His disciples ahead of Him and came to the feast by Himself, secretly. However, He soon made His presence known to all when He began teaching publicly in the temple. His claim to be the "I AM" infuriated the Pharisees so much that they intended to stone Him, but Jesus slipped out of the temple untouched (John 7-8).

The miracle or "sign" we'll discuss in this morning's message took place after Jesus left the temple. I've titled it "A Man Born Blind". It is the 25th sermon of our series on "The Miracles of Jesus Christ". This story is only recorded in the book of John. For the sake of this series, I am going to focus primarily on the miracle itself, but will briefly summarize the extended account of what happens immediately thereafter.

I. THE DISCIPLES' QUESTION (John 9:1-5)

Having departed the temple, Jesus passed by a man who'd been blind since birth. The apostles asked Jesus whose sin had caused him to be born blind - his or his parents? Jesus answered that it was neither of them, but rather so that the works of God might be manifested in him. Jesus then said, "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

The disciples knew that this man had been blind since birth, which suggests that he was speaking openly about it. They asked Jesus whose sin had caused this to happen. In ancient times, it was a common belief that people's suffering, sickness, and misfortune was a direct result of their own sin or that of their parents. This was the belief of Job's friends in the Old Testament, who reasoned that Job must have sinned to cause such tragedy to befall him. But the truth is, it's not that simple.

We live in a fallen world. Sin has tainted every aspect of it. When a person sins, the effects are far reaching and can last for generations. The sin of a single person can be harmful to thousands or even millions of people. While it is true that our own sinful choices or those of our parents can bring about negative consequences in our life, much of the suffering we face comes from sin in general - the fact that we live in a broken, corrupt, sin-sick world.

Jesus explained that this man's condition afforded an opportunity for God's work to be manifested in him. In this case, Jesus intended to heal this man that he and others might see the power of God on display and believe. In all cases of suffering, we can find the manifest work of God. Whether He chooses to physically heal or not, it is in His strength and by His presence that we endure and preserve. The brokenness of this world should point us to Jesus and our desperate need for Him rather than pulling us away.

Then Jesus expressed a sense of urgency to do the works of God "during the day" while there was still time left in his earthly ministry. He knew that His departure was only a few months away. He also communicated that we as His people need to reach the lost with urgency, because "the night is coming" when we'll not be able to do so anymore.

II. THE MAN'S HEALING (John 9:6-7)

Jesus spit on the ground, made clay with the dirt and saliva, and rubbed it on the man's eyes. He told the man to go wash his eyes in the Pool of Siloam and sent him away. The man went, washed, and returned now able to see clearly.

This is the 3rd miracle in which Jesus used spit, which was believed by many to have medicinal properties. Jesus sent the blind man to wash at the Pool of Siloam, which was a spring-fed pool within the city of Jerusalem. The word Siloam means "sent", and this story teaches that Jesus had been sent by God to make a way for the blind (sinners) to see (be redeemed).

III. THE NEIGHBOR'S REACTION (John 9:8-12)

When the beggar returned from the Pool of Siloam, his neighbors were divided over whether he was the same man who'd been blind since birth or not. They asked him how he'd been healed and he recounted to them what Jesus had done. They were amazed and asked him where Jesus had gone, but he didn't know.

This was a healing miracle. Jesus touched the man by rubbing clay on his eyes, but also gave him instructions to follow before being healed. As such, we will consider the method of this miracle to be both "touched" and "willed & obeyed". Jesus performed it so that the people might believe, as made clear in the controversy that followed.

IV. THE CONTROVERSY THAT FOLLOWED (John 9:13-41)

In the aftermath of this miracle, the crowds took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. They asked him what had happened. He explained what Jesus had done and they accused Jesus of being sinful because He had healed this man on the Sabbath day. The formerly blind man told them that he believed Jesus was a prophet.

Doubting the man's story, the Jews went and found his parents. They asked his parents to confirm that this man was, in fact, their son. His parents assured them that he was their son, but

stated that they didn't know how he'd been cured of his blindness. They told the Jews to ask him directly. They feared the Jews, because it had already been agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus as the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.

The Jews then questioned the man who'd been blind a 2nd time. They accused Jesus of being a sinner, to which the man answered, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." The formerly blind man argued that Jesus must be of God, otherwise He wouldn't be able to perform such miracles. In response, the angry Jews and Pharisees banned him from the synagogue.

When Jesus heard what had happened, he went and found the man who had been born blind. Jesus identified Himself as the Son of Man, the Christ, and the man believed in Him and worshiped Him. Jesus taught that He had come into the world for judgment so that those who were blind may see and those who could see would become blind. He was contrasting those who recognized their need for Him, like this man, and those who did not, like the Pharisees.

CONCLUSION

Unlike many of the others we've discussed thus far, this story clearly indicates that the man who was healed of his blindness became a believer. As such, he was healed not only of his physical blindness but also his spiritual blindness. His sins were forgiven and he became a born again child of God. Salvation is a far greater miracle than simply being able to see physically.

A Disabled Woman and a Man with Dropsy

Originally Preached on 11/9/2025

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. - Exodus 20:8

After celebrating the Feasts of Booths in Jerusalem, it seems that Jesus made a tour through various towns and villages in Judea teaching and healing the people He encountered. He may have even briefly crossed the Jordan during this time (Matthew 19:2). The 2 miracles we will discuss this morning likely took place during these travels, just 5-6 months before Jesus' crucifixion. The exact location of each remains unknown.

The title of this message is "A Disabled Woman and a Man with Dropsy". Both of these miracles are only recorded in the gospel of Luke. Also, both of them occurred on the Sabbath day, which as always, drew harsh criticism. For those keeping track, these are the 37th and 38th miracles on our list of 45. Open your Bibles and let's begin.

I. FREED FROM SICKNESS (Luke 13:10-13)

Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath day. There was a woman there who was bent over and could not straighten up. She had suffered from this condition for 18 years. When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said, "Woman, you are freed from your sickness." He laid His hands on her and immediately she stood erect and began glorifying God.

As we've stated before in this series, it was common practice for Jesus to be teaching in a synagogue somewhere on the Sabbath day. I am sure by now that He drew large audiences. In this case, we don't know the name of the town He was in. Nevertheless, He noticed a crippled lady while He was speaking and called her to come up to the front, which she courageously did. The woman had been physically disabled by the work of an evil spirit, although there is no indication that she was demon-possessed. Jesus healed her publicly in sight of those who were gathered there.

This was a healing miracle. Jesus performed it by both speaking and laying His hands on (or touching) her. In so doing, Jesus displayed His power to heal and revealed His glory, as evidenced by the woman immediately glorifying Him. He would also use this as an opportunity to teach about healing on the Sabbath.

II. RELEASED ON THE SABBATH (Luke 13:14-17)

The synagogue official was indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. He said, "Work should be done during the other 6 days of the week, not on the Sabbath." Jesus called them hypocrites and answered, "Each of you unties your ox or donkey to water on the Sabbath. Why shouldn't this woman be healed?" His opponents were humiliated and the crowds rejoiced.

Jesus pointed out the double-standard that the synagogue official was employing. He, as well as the other Jewish priests, Pharisees, and religious leaders, did work on the Sabbath by tending to their animals (among other things). If they worked on the Sabbath, why would Jesus be forbidden from doing something far more important - healing a crippled woman? Everyone recognized the truth of Jesus' words and the hypocrisy of His opponents. Jesus put them in their place and they were humiliated, as they should have been.

III. LAWFUL TO HEAL (Luke 14:1-6)

Jesus went into the house of a leading Pharisee, likely a member of the Sanhedrin, on the Sabbath day. He was being watched closely. There was a man with dropsy seated at the table right in front of Jesus. He asked the Pharisees and scholars if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day, but they declined to answer. Then Jesus healed the man and sent him away. He asked, "If your son or ox fell into a well on the Sabbath day, wouldn't you immediately pull it out?" Again, they had no reply.

Dropsy is the ancient term for generalized edema. Edema is the swelling of the body's tissue which results from an abnormal build-up of fluids (water in the system). In Biblical times, dropsy was quite common, especially among the rich. It was actually used as a metaphor by Greek philosophers for greed and wealth. This flows naturally into the parables that Jesus taught in the remainder of the chapter.

The details of this story seem to suggest that this may have been a set-up. Notice that the Pharisees were "watching Jesus closely". Why would a man with dropsy be placed in a seat right in front of Him? Perhaps as a test to see what, if anything, He would do? Perhaps this Pharisee's invitation to dine with him was a trap meant to entice Jesus into violating the Sabbath, so that they might make accusations against Him at the banquet? If so, it reveals the Pharisees' sinister motivations. That said, Jesus outsmarted them all (again).

Jesus used this same argument against the Pharisees earlier in His ministry when He healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath day (Matthew 12:9-14). If you would save an animal on the Sabbath, why wouldn't you heal a person? If the Pharisees had refuted Jesus' words they would've looked ridiculous, which is why they kept their mouths shut.

Like the disabled woman we discussed earlier in this sermon, this too was a healing miracle. The Bible says that Jesus "took hold of" the man with dropsy, but it doesn't explicitly say how He healed him. Therefore, we will categorize this miracle's method as "unspecified". Jesus used this occasion to teach about healing on the Sabbath and rebuke the practice of legalism.

CONCLUSION

Neither the disabled woman nor the man with dropsy asked Jesus to heal them. I am not suggesting that we shouldn't ask Jesus for healing. The Bible clearly teaches us to ask, not only for ourselves, but for others as well. We are to pray persistently and with faithful expectation.

That said, I am simply pointing out that Jesus can heal anyone He chooses, whether they ask or not. As I have emphasized throughout this series, the determining factor is God's will, not our petitions and/or how fervently they are made. This is why we must learn to pray in accordance with God's will in order to be effective (1 John 5:14-15).

These are the final 2 miracles of Jesus recorded in the Bible that took place on the Sabbath day. That said, let's summarize His teachings on this issue 1 last time. First, Jesus made a habit of being in the synagogue on the Sabbath, honoring God's command to keep the day holy and set it aside for worship. He taught that, while people were to rest and not work their regular jobs on the Sabbath, this was not an exclusion from doing anything at all on that day. In fact, He did good works on the Sabbath and encouraged others to do likewise. Finally, He emphasized that the Sabbath was established to be a blessing for mankind, not a burden.

I want to close this morning by calling our attention to Jesus' courage. Can you imagine a guest speaker at church calling out the lead pastor in front of his own congregation from his own pulpit? That's pretty gutsy. Or a guest in the elegant home of a prominent religious leader challenging his theology in front of everyone present? That's quite bold. And in both cases, Jesus was not confronting the secular, nonreligious crowd, but rather those who professed to be the most righteous of all. True, Bible-believing Christians need to exhibit this same type of courage as they confront and refute the false teachings of wolves in sheep's clothing present in our churches today.

In our upcoming message, we will discuss a miracle that most of us have probably heard about before. It involves 3 of Jesus' dearest friends. When their situation gets desperate, they will send for Jesus to come quickly to intervene. Will He make it there on time, or will He be too late to help? We'll find out together next Sunday. God bless you.

Resurrecting Lazarus

Originally Preached on 11/16/2025

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. - Revelation 20:6

Last Sunday we read about 2 miracles that Jesus performed, both on the Sabbath day, while He was traveling through the villages, towns, and countryside of Israel. It is possible that He and His disciples returned to Capernaum afterwards, but uncertain. Their exact location doesn't really matter, but wherever they were, they were about to receive an urgent message.

This morning's sermon is titled "Resurrecting Lazarus". It is the 27th message of this series. After today there are just 4 messages left in this collection. This miracle is only recorded in the gospel of John. The full story takes up most of chapter 11, but for the sake of time, we are going to summarize verses 1-37 and focus on the miracle itself in verses 38-46.

I. THE BACKSTORY (John 11:1-37)

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were 3 of Jesus' dear friends. They were siblings who lived in Bethany, about 2 miles outside of Jerusalem. Jesus visited them regularly when He was in Judea, especially during the Jewish feasts. Sadly, Lazarus came down with a terrible sickness, and it became so bad that his sisters sent an urgent message asking Jesus to come. When the messengers found Jesus and shared the desperate request, He didn't respond immediately but instead waited for 2 days before departing for Bethany.

The disciples were concerned for Jesus' safety. Only a few months earlier, when they were in Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths, the Pharisees tried to stone Him in the temple. Jesus, however, fearlessly told the disciples that they needed to go and stated that Lazarus had died. Thomas, along with the others, thought that Jesus Himself might be killed if the Pharisees caught Him, but they agreed to go even if it meant they'd die with Him.

When Jesus arrived, Lazarus had already been dead and buried for 4 days. Martha went out to meet Him and proceeded to scold Him for being late. She lamented that Jesus' tardiness had led to Lazarus' death. Jesus asked her if she believed that Lazarus would be resurrected, and she did - but she was speaking of the last day when Jesus came again.

Then Mary, along with many mourners who had come to comfort her, came out to meet Jesus. Mary also blamed Him for her brother's death. Jesus was moved with compassion and began to weep. Those who were present wondered if Jesus, who they knew had healed the blind man in Jerusalem just a couple of months earlier during the feast, could have cured Lazarus too, had He made it in time. Jesus asked them to take Him to the place where Lazarus was buried.

II. REMOVE THE STONE (John 11:38-41a)

Jesus was escorted to Lazarus' tomb. He had been buried in a cave and a large stone had been rolled in front of the entrance. Jesus directed a few of those present to remove the stone, but Martha initially objected. She said that her brother had been dead for 4 days and feared that his decomposing body would smell terribly. Jesus asked her to believe in Him and behold the glory of God, so she consented and they removed the stone.

Even if Jesus would have departed for Bethany on the same day He got the message, Lazarus would have still been dead for 2 days. But Jesus waited, so that when He arrived his friend would have been dead for 4 days. Why? The cultural belief of the Jews was that the soul of a deceased person lingered for 3 days before departing from the body. Because 4 days had passed, it was undeniable and indisputable that Lazarus was truly dead. Jesus wanted the miracle He was about to perform to be irrefutable.

III. COME FORTH (John 11:41b-44)

With the opened tomb before Him, Jesus raised His eyes to Heaven and began to pray. He thanked the Father for always hearing Him, but for the sake of those listening, He prayed aloud that they too might hear and believe. Then Jesus cried loudly, "Lazarus, come forth!" Still wrapped head to toe in his grave clothes, Lazarus stood up and came walking slowly out of the tomb. Jesus instructed the onlookers to unwrap him and let him go.

I have heard many preachers say that, had Jesus not specifically called Lazarus by name, all of the tombs would have been opened. While I certainly agree that Jesus has the power to resurrect everyone at once, and look forward to the resurrection of the saints in the last days, I simply don't believe this declaration is true. Jesus didn't specifically call the name of those He healed from various other afflictions, yet not everyone was healed. This claim may sound good in a sermon, but I think it is misleading. My 2 cents...

This miracle was a physical resurrection. It was the 3rd instance upon which Jesus raised someone from the dead - the Widow of Nain's son, Jairus' daughter, and now Lazarus. Jesus performed this miracle with a spoken command. He did it as undeniable proof of His divine power over death, so that everyone might believe in Him and glorify God.

IV. A MURDEROUS PLOT (John 11:45-46)

Many of the Jews who had come to comfort and console Mary and Martha, some from nearby Jerusalem, saw what happened and believed. Others went and told the Pharisees what Jesus had done. In the wake of this amazing resurrection, the religious leaders convened a meeting of the Sanhedrin and determined that Jesus must be killed.

Unlike the previous resurrections that Jesus performed in Galilee, this occurred just a couple of miles from Jerusalem in Judea. News traveled quickly throughout the capital city. Because Lazarus had been dead for 4 days, there was no way for Jesus' adversaries to explain this

miracle away as a resuscitation of a living person. Jesus had done something only God could do, and the scribes and Pharisees knew it. They felt more threatened than ever by Jesus and this rapidly growing movement of believers. They decided it was time to put an end to it. Better that Jesus be killed than the entire nation be led astray. Little did they know that their evil plans were exactly what God intended and would ultimately lead to the most glorious resurrection of all.

CONCLUSION

It is easy to see how the resurrection of Lazarus foreshadows the resurrection of Jesus. Though their stories are not the same, they share a few similarities. Both of them were wrapped in grave clothes and laid in a tomb. Both were dead for multiple days. Both tombs were closed with a stone that had been rolled in front of the opening. In both cases, this stone was rolled away and they came forth from the grave alive!

The resurrection of Lazarus occurred just a few months before Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. It stirred up great wonder and excitement among the people of Jerusalem, which was still boiling over when Jesus came soon thereafter for the Passover at an event known as the Triumphal Entry. The city was in a frenzy and belief in Jesus was increasing rapidly. Everything was building toward a dramatic, God ordained, climax.

The 10 Lepers

Originally Preached on 11/23/2025

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. - Psalm 100:4

After the resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus and the disciples retreated to a Samaritan town near the wilderness called Ephraim to escape those Jews who had determined to kill Him (John 11:54). Following the proposed chronology we've been using as the structure for this series, while in this region He met a group of leprous men. This morning's sermon is called "The 10 Lepers" and is recorded exclusively in the gospel of Luke.

Before we get into the message, I just want to make an observation. This Thursday we celebrate Thanksgiving, my favorite holiday of the year. Isn't it interesting that today's passage about the 10 lepers is about being thankful? When I was planning this series, I didn't have the wisdom or foresight to lay it out this way. Coincidence? I don't think so. Little things like this, which happen all the time if you pay attention, make me believe in God all the more.

I. AN ENCOUNTER (Luke 17:11-13)

On His way to Jerusalem, Jesus passed through Samaria and Galilee. As He approached the entrance of a village, 10 leprous men stood at a distance to meet Him. They cried out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

Jesus was returning to Jerusalem to observe for the upcoming Passover celebration which was now just a few weeks away. He foreknew that He'd be arrested, tried, and crucified while He was there. Along the way, He encountered 10 leprous men who were standing just outside a village because they were not permitted to enter. I suspect these men were friends with each other, seeing that they weren't allowed to associate with others, much like the 4 lepers who are mentioned in 2 Kings 7.

The lepers recognized Jesus and called Him by name. They knew who He was, at least in His humanity. They referred to Him as Master, acknowledging His authority and power over physical sicknesses and disease. They believed that He could cure them of their leprosy.

II. A MIRACLE (Luke 17:14)

Seeing them, Jesus instructed the 10 lepers to go show themselves to the priests. They obeyed Jesus's command and departed. As they were going, the lepers were cleansed of their disease.

According to the Law of Moses, a person with leprosy had to be declared clean by the priest before they could rejoin society (Leviticus 13-14). This requirement was to prevent the spread of the condition throughout the community. Jesus had not yet healed these lepers, yet He instructed them to act as if He had. By way of application, the Bible commands Christians to be

holy and righteous, yet our fallen nature makes this impossible to achieve (outside of Christ). Stated another way, we are to live as we will be, not as we currently are.

By faith, the 10 lepers acted in obedience to the Lord's command. As they went to see the priests they were healed. This story reminds me of Namaan, who Elisha commanded to go wash in the Jordan River in order to be healed of his leprosy (2 Kings 5). What would have happened if these 10 lepers (or Namaan) wouldn't have gone? Would they have been healed anyway? If we want to receive the blessings God has for us, we need to obey His commands.

This was a healing miracle. Jesus simply willed the leprosy to be cleansed as the lepers acted in obedience. It was yet another demonstration of His divine identity as the Son of God.

III. AN EXPRESSION OF THANKS (Luke 17:15-19)

When the lepers saw that they'd been healed, 1 of them turned around, glorifying God, and rushed back to Jesus. He fell at the Lord's feet and gave Him thanks. This healed leper was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Where are the other 9 men who were healed? Has only this 1 foreigner returned to give glory and thanksgiving to God?" Then Jesus told the Samaritan, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."

The Samaritans were a mixed-race group that descended from the surviving Jews of the Northern Kingdom and foreigners who were resettled there by the Assyrians after its fall. After generations of intermarriage, they became a distinct people group. The Samaritans were despised and shunned by the "pure" Jews of Judea, which had formerly been the Southern Kingdom. The Jews went out of their way to avoid the Samaritans, and would even go around the region of Samaria rather than traveling through it.

Jesus met and spoke with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (John 4:1-26). He told a parable about the Good Samaritan who helped a man who'd been beaten and robbed (Luke 10:25-37). I am sure these encounters and stories did not sit well with the Pharisees and Jewish elites. That said, the fact that a Samaritan was the only person who returned to thank Jesus was a further indictment against the Jews.

To be fair, I am sure that all 10 lepers were thankful to be cured of their leprosy. I mean, how could you not be? Yet, only 1 of them actually returned to say thank you. Jesus was clearly disappointed by this. The lesson is that we should express our thankfulness to the Lord. We should not remain silent, lest we appear ungrateful. Praise and glorify Him openly, with thanksgiving, for the wonderful things He has done in your life and the many blessings He has given you. He is worthy!

CONCLUSION

As we close this morning, let us pay attention to the last thing Jesus said to this Samaritan. "Your faith has saved you." Although all 10 lepers had been physically healed, Jesus' words

imply that the man who returned to give thanks was spiritually healed as well. He was washed not only of his leprosy, but also of his sin. He was declared spiritually clean by the Highest Priest of them all, Jesus Christ.

Beloved, the Bible makes it plain that repentant sinners are not saved by faith exclusively. They are saved by God's grace, as a result of their faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). That is the picture we see in this story. When the Samaritan expressed His faith, Jesus saved His soul.

There is no greater blessing than salvation. God sent His Son, who was without sin, to take and bear the sin of mankind upon Himself and die on the cross as our substitute. In so doing, He bore the full punishment due to sinners and endured the wrath of Almighty God on their behalf. He paid the price for sin and ransomed mankind from its consequence... death. If you have trusted in Jesus for forgiveness and have been born again, be thankful. Proclaim your thankfulness. Shout it in the streets. Announce it to family, friends, and even strangers. You are a child of God!

In our upcoming message, we will read about another encounter that Jesus had on His way to Jerusalem for the Passover. It will take place in Jericho, the ancient city whose walls fell down flat before the children of Israel in the days of Joshua (Joshua 5). Have a blessed Thanksgiving this week and I will see you next Sunday.

Blind Bartimaeus

Originally Preached on 11/30/2025

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. - Matthew 16:24

Jesus and His disciples were on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover. Jesus foreknew that He would be arrested, tried, and crucified while He was there. He had already warned His apostles that these things were going to happen, and they were a bit uneasy about it. Before reaching the City of David they passed through Jericho, which is where today's sermon is set.

The message this morning is titled "Blind Bartimaeus". It is the 5th specific occasion in the Bible of Jesus healing a blind person (or persons). We have studied about Jesus healing a demon-possessed blind mute, a pair of blind men, a blind man in Bethsaida, and a man who was born blind in Jerusalem. Besides these, there are several general accounts of Jesus healing the blind. This miracle is recorded in all 3 synoptic gospels, and I encourage you to read and compare each account. That said, we will use Mark as our primary text this morning.

I. A BEGGAR'S CRY (Mark 10:46-48; Matthew 20:29-31; Luke 18:35-39)

As Jesus, His disciples, and many followers left Jericho, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus who was sitting beside the road cried out loudly. He pleaded for Jesus to have mercy on him, but the crowd sternly warned him to keep quiet. Ignoring them, Bartimaeus cried out all the more.

According to Matthew and Mark, Bartimaeus met Jesus as He was leaving Jericho. On the contrary, Luke records that Jesus was approaching, or entering Jericho, when He encountered Bartimaeus. So which was it? Is this an error in the Bible? No, it isn't. Historians and archeologists have confirmed that there were actually 2 "Jerichos" located side-by-side - the old city and ruins, which we read about in the Old Testament, and the new city which was built by King Herod just before the beginning of the New Testament, which Jesus would have been familiar with. Therefore, it is possible that Jesus met Bartimaeus while passing between the 2 cities, having just left old Jericho and approaching new Jericho. This would explain the apparent contradiction.

Mark and Luke only mention 1 blind beggar, but Matthew states there were actually 2. This apparent discrepancy can also be easily reconciled. Perhaps Bartimaeus was more well known and outspoken, while his companion was quieter and more anonymous, leading to his omission. We saw this same description in the story of the demoniac of Geresene, which we studied earlier in this series. Mark and Luke only mentioned 1 man while Matthew wrote that there were 2 demon-possessed men. It should be noted that Matthew was actually there in person when these events happened, while Mark and Luke wrote based on the testimony of others.

II. A BEGGAR'S EXCITEMENT (Mark 10:49-50; Matthew 20:32a; Luke 18:40)

Jesus stopped when He heard Bartimaeus calling out for Him. He asked the people to bring him near. They told Bartimaeus to take courage, get up, and go. He was so excited that he threw off his outer garment (or cloak), jumped up, and hurried to Jesus.

When I picture this scene in my mind, I like to imagine the hopeful excitement that Bartimaeus must have felt. He was thrilled to meet with Jesus. Even when the crowds tried to silence him, he wouldn't hush. Bartimaeus is a great example for Christians today. We shouldn't allow the culture to prevent us from seeking and praising Jesus. Furthermore, when we do approach Jesus, we should be filled with joyful and eager anticipation.

Some commentators have suggested that the cloak Bartimaeus threw off represented his old way of life. He took it off and cast it away, and notably never went back to pick it up. He trusted that Jesus was about to make him new. He didn't need it anymore. When a lost sinner trusts Christ for salvation, they leave their old self behind and become a new creation in Him (2 Corinthians 5:17).

III. A BEGGAR'S HEALING (Mark 10:51-52; Matthew 20:32b-34; Luke 18:41-43)

Jesus asked Bartimaeus what he wanted Jesus to do for him. He answered, "I want to regain my sight!" According to Matthew's gospel, Jesus reached out and touched his (their) eyes. Immediately Bartimaeus could see. Jesus said, "Go. Your faith has saved you." Bartimaeus began following Him down the road, glorifying God as he went.

I sometimes wonder how far Bartimaeus followed Jesus. Did he go with Him all the way to Jerusalem? Was he somewhere in the procession as Jesus entered the city riding on a donkey? Did Bartimaeus follow Jesus to the temple to hear Him preach and see Him drive out the money changers? Did he follow Jesus to the cross? I don't know, but I will say this. When you meet Jesus, don't walk away. Be like Bartimaeus... follow Him.

This is another example of a healing miracle. Although Jesus spoke, it seems to me that He actually healed Bartimaeus by touching his eyes. Many of those present, mostly notably Bartimaeus himself, began glorifying God. Jesus had again revealed His identity as the Christ and many believed.

CONCLUSION

We will conclude today's sermon with a brief quiz to review the miracles we've discussed over the past few months. Don't worry. It's not that hard, and even if you don't do well on it you can still come back next Sunday. Are you ready?

1. How many men did Jesus feed with just a few loaves and fish? (5,000, 4,000, or both)
2. Which of these miracles took place in Jerusalem? (A Demon-Possessed Girl, A Deaf Mute, A Man Born Blind)

3. Which of these was a natural miracle? (A Coin in a Fish's Mouth, A Man with Dropsy, The 10 Lepers)
4. Which of these miracles involved Jesus' close friend? (A Blind Man in Bethsaida, Lazarus, A Disabled Woman)
5. In which of these did Jesus allow Peter to do something miraculous? (Blind Bartimaeus, A Convulsing Boy, Walking on the Water)

Alright. How did you do? Beloved, there are only 2 sermons left in this series. Next Sunday we will discuss several miracles that Jesus performed during the "Passion Week", just a few days before His arrest and crucifixion. I hope you will join us. Until then, let me encourage you to follow Jesus.

Miracles in the Temple and the Withered Fig Tree

Originally Preached on 12/7/2025

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?'" - Luke 13:6-7

Jesus and the disciples passed through Jericho and continued toward Jerusalem. They stopped briefly at Bethphage, just outside of the city, and took a donkey for Him to ride on. Then they entered Jerusalem to great fanfare, with the people waving palm branches and shouting "Hosanna, blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!" The priests and Pharisees were furious.

In this morning's sermon we will discuss 2 miracles Jesus performed while in Jerusalem during the days leading up to Passover. The 1st is found only in the gospel of Matthew, while the 2nd is mentioned in both Matthew and Mark. Because Matthew records both, we will use his gospel as our primary text this morning. I have titled this message "Miracles in the Temple and the Withered Fig Tree".

I. AT THE TEMPLE AGAIN (Matthew 21:12-17)

Jesus went into the temple and drove out those who were buying and selling animals and overturned the tables of the moneychangers. He began teaching the people and healing the blind and lame who came to Him. The children were shouting praise to the "Son of David" which caused the scribes and chief priests to become indignant. Jesus stated that the children's praise was fitting and appropriate, as He was the Son of God (Psalm 8:2). He then left and went to the nearby town of Bethany to spend the night.

This was the 2nd time that Jesus cleansed the temple. At Passover 3 years earlier, near the beginning of His ministry, Jesus had driven the merchants and moneychangers out of the temple with a scourge of cords. On that occasion He performed various signs and wonders leading many to believe. We discussed that event 7 months ago during the 2nd message in this series. Now, 3 years later and just days before His crucifixion, Jesus does essentially the same thing again.

The miracles Jesus performed during this occasion were healing miracles. He healed the lame and blind who came to Him in the temple. The Bible does not say what method or methods He used to heal them, so we will categorize this as "unspecified". Jesus was showing compassion for those who were physically sick and/or impaired, but beyond that He was revealing Himself as the Christ so that people would believe in Him for salvation.

II. JESUS CURSES THE FIG TREE (Matthew 21:18-19; Mark 11:12-14, 20)

The next morning, as Jesus was returning to Jerusalem, He became hungry. He saw a lone fig tree beside the road, but as He approached it He saw that there was no fruit on it. Jesus cursed the fig tree and it immediately withered.

According to Mark's gospel, Jesus cursed the fig tree before cleansing the temple and spending the day there. Then, the next morning as they were passing by, the disciples noticed the fig tree had "withered from the roots". This seems to be an inconsistency between the 2 texts. Did the tree wither immediately as Matthew stated or did it wither the next day as Mark indicated? A reasonable possibility is that the fig tree's leaves withered immediately and visibly when Jesus cursed it, and the next day when they passed by it again it had completely shrivelled up to its roots.

This was a natural miracle. Jesus caused the fig tree to wither and die. He did so with a spoken command. He cursed the fig tree to teach a lesson about faith and to serve as an illustration of His divine judgment (which we will discuss in the following point).

III. THE LESSONS OF THE FIG TREE (Matthew 21:20-22; Mark 11:21-25)

When the disciples saw the fig tree immediately wither, they asked how such a thing was possible. Jesus answered that if they had faith and did not doubt they could say to mountains, "Be taken up and cast into the sea," and it would happen. He challenged them to pray and ask with strong belief.

When Jesus told the disciples that their faith could move mountains, He wasn't talking about literal mountains. Jesus had made this same statement earlier when the disciples were unable to cast a demon out of a demon-possessed boy (Matthew 17:20). On both occasions, the context makes it clear that Jesus is talking about overcoming mountainous obstacles in a person's life. When we have faith in the Lord, even a small amount, we can face any challenge or adversity that stands in our way.

Many Bible scholars have pointed out that the fig tree is symbolic of Israel (Hosea 9:10, 16). When Jesus cursed the barren fig tree it was a picture of God's judgment on the Jews. Under the old covenant the nation of Israel was supposed to prosper and produce spiritual fruit through obedience to the LORD's commands. They were supposed to be a blessing and witness to the other nations of the world. However, they had failed for generations. Despite God's love for and patience with His chosen people Israel, they would be judged for their fruitlessness and their rejection of His Son Jesus. A new covenant would be established between God and all believers, regardless of their nationality or ethnicity.

CONCLUSION

As I've stated before, 1 of my main goals as a preacher and Bible teacher is to cover every single chapter and verse in the Bible before I die. Obviously, some passages are more theologically rich than others and will require more time and in depth study, but I at least want to

read and generally touch on every single word of the Bible if possible. That said, I don't like repeating messages over content that I've preached before because, frankly, I don't know how many Sundays I've got left. However, in order to fully complete this series on "The Miracles of Jesus", I am breaking my rule. These final 4 miracles (the 2 we discussed today and the 2 we'll discuss next week) are included in my earlier sermon series on "The Passion Week" (which I preached in 2020) and on "The Post-Resurrection Appearances of Christ" (which I preached in 2018). For those of you who may have heard and remember those messages, I apologize for the redundancy.

In conclusion, Jesus didn't perform miracles with the expectation that His followers would go about doing likewise. He healed the physical diseases and ailments of people as a demonstration of His power and authority to forgive and cure their spiritual sickness. He calmed the seas, multiplied the bread and fish, and performed other natural miracles to show His power over creation and His supernatural ability to protect and provide. He cast out demons to demonstrate His supremacy of the powers of darkness and He raised the dead to show His victory over the grave. His miracles were intended to reveal His identity and manifest His glory, so that we might believe in Him as the Son of God. To use John's language, they were "signs" pointing us to Jesus. They were not normative behavior that we as Christians should emulate.

Next Sunday morning we will complete this series with a sermon covering the final 2 miracles on our list of 45. I look forward to seeing you then. May you all have a blessed week.

The Severed Ear and Catching Many Fish

Originally Preached on 12/14/2025

But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, - Matthew 5:44

This morning we will complete our sermon series on “The Miracles of Jesus”. Over the past several months we have read passages about and discussed 43 distinct occasions during which Jesus performed a miracle or miracles. In today’s message we will add 2 more, bringing the final total to 45. I have made an intentional effort to balance the primary texts we’ve used each week throughout this study evenly between the 4 gospels.

Today’s sermon is titled “The Severed Ear and Catching Many Fish”. It is the 31st and last message of this series. We will be reading from the books of Luke and John. As for the setting, Jesus and the apostles had just finished eating the Passover meal. It was just a few hours before His arrest. They went out to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. It was late at night and the disciples were having a hard time staying awake and keeping watch.

I. AN ALTERCATION IN THE GARDEN (Luke 22:47-53; Matthew 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-50; John 18:1-11)

While Jesus was speaking with His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, urging them to stay awake, a crowd made up of Roman soldiers, officers from the chief priests, and Pharisees came to arrest Him. They were led by Judas Iscariot who greeted Jesus with a kiss. The disciples initially sought to prevent them from taking Jesus into custody. Peter drew his sword and struck the chief priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. Jesus said, “Stop! No more of this.” Then He touched the servant’s ear and healed him. Jesus questioned the manner and timing of His arrest, but voluntarily and peacefully submitted to the authorities. The disciples fled in fear.

The betrayal and arrest of Jesus is recorded in all 4 gospels. Each of them states that 1 of the disciples cut off the high priest’s servant’s ear. However, only Luke adds that Jesus lovingly healed the servant by replacing his ear. Think of it! Jesus healed 1 of the very men who had come to arrest Him as they were about to take Him away. Amazing. I sometimes wonder if that servant’s perspective about Jesus changed. The truth is, all of us were enemies of God at some point, and yet He still was willing to redeem us (Romans 5:8).

This was a healing miracle. There is no indication that the servant asked to be healed. Rather, Jesus acted out of kindness and compassion. He healed the man by touching him, presumably reattaching his severed ear. This was another demonstration of Jesus’ power, but also a lesson for the disciples that such violence was unnecessary and inappropriate. Jesus didn’t resist being arrested. This was the very reason for which He’d come.

II. APPEARANCES TO THE DISCIPLES (John 20:19-21; 24-28)

After Jesus' trial, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection, the risen Lord appeared to the disciples several times over a period of 40 days before ascending into Heaven. These are known as the post-resurrection appearances of Christ. On at least 2 of these occasions, Jesus appeared suddenly in a locked or closed room without ever entering through the door. This happened the night of Jesus' resurrection in the upper room (with Thomas absent) and again a week later (with Thomas was present).

Without question, these sudden appearances were miraculous. However, I am not going to formally include them on our list of miracles. You may recall, earlier in this series we discussed Jesus' ability to know what people were thinking or particular details about their lives that He shouldn't have known. This, too, was miraculous. Jesus possessed supernatural abilities that were consistent with His divine character. That said, the miracles we are focusing on in this sermon series are those in which Jesus did something on behalf of someone else.

III. BREAKFAST BY THE SEA (John 21:4-11)

Peter, John, James, and 4 of the other apostles went fishing on the Sea of Galilee (also called the Sea of Tiberias). They had already seen and spoken with the risen Lord Jesus a few times by this point. They fished all night long, but caught nothing. In the early morning light, an unknown figure called out from the shore telling them to cast their nets on the right side of the boat. When they did so, their nets were filled with fish. John recognized that it was Jesus, and Peter excitedly dove into the water and swam to the shore. When the other disciples arrived in the boat, they cooked the fish over a fire and had breakfast together with Jesus on the beach.

This must have been a powerful moment for Peter, John, and James (and Andrew, if he was there). Jesus had performed this same type of miracle 3 years earlier when he called these men to be His disciples. On both occasions they caught nets full of fish after having caught nothing the night before. I am sure this experience brought back wonderful memories of that remarkable day.

John wrote that they caught 153 fish that morning. He actually counted them, which isn't surprising for a commercial fisherman to do. He included the exact number in his gospel, perhaps so that his readers could appreciate this abundant miracle as much as he did.

During their breakfast by the sea, Jesus "restored" Peter. The Lord forgave him for betraying Him 3 times on the night of His arrest. Jesus repeatedly challenged Peter to "feed His sheep". He was preparing him, and the other apostles, to continue spreading the gospel after His departure. Not long afterward, Jesus ascended into Heaven. Though He left, His work continued through His followers.

This was a natural miracle. Jesus displayed His power over nature by causing the disciples to catch a great number of fish. He told them what to do and when they obeyed His command, He simply willed the miracle to occur. Jesus performed this miracle as an unmistakable way of revealing His identity to the disciples.

CONCLUSION

Well friends, we have come to the end of another sermon series. Over the past several months we have examined all of the miracles or “signs” recorded in the Bible which Jesus performed during His earthly ministry. He actually performed many more which are not mentioned or described in the gospel narratives besides those we’ve listed. Of those that we have discussed, there have been healing miracles, exorcisms, natural miracles, and physical resurrections. Jesus performed these miracles using a variety of different methods - spoken words or commands, physical touch (sometimes with spit), and/or simply willing them to happen as the result of the recipient’s obedience.

In some instances, Jesus performed a miracle because He was asked to do so. In other instances, He acted on His own initiative without being asked. In some instances, the recipient knew who Jesus was. In others, they did not. Some exhibited a degree of faith, while others didn’t show any. Many were Jewish, but not all of them were. The variations between each story testify to the authenticity of Jesus’ power. The miracles He did were not some type of elaborate hoax or gimmick. Jesus performed real, undeniable, and irrefutable miracles which proved beyond any doubt that He was (and is) the Son of God.

Sinner, what else does Jesus have to do in order to convince you that He is God? Rise from the dead? Uhh, yeah, He did that too. If you are still unwilling to believe in Him in light of all of the miraculous things He’s done, you’re not in doubt... you’re in denial. The evidence is overwhelming. The Christian faith is neither blind nor naive. Quit rejecting the only One who can forgive your sin and pardon your guilt! Repent and receive Jesus today, that you might experience the greatest miracle of them all - the salvation of your soul.

The Miracles of Jesus Chart

Miracle(s)	Setting	Type	Method	Primary Purpose
1. Water Into Wine	Wedding at Cana	Natural	Willed & Obeyed	So The Disciples Would Believe
2. Miracles During Passover	Temple/Jerusalem	Not Specified	Not Specified	So The People Would Believe
3. A Royal Official's Son	Cana & Capernaum	Healing	Spoken	So The Household Would Believe
4. Catching Nets Full of Fish	Sea of Galilee	Natural	Willed & Obeyed	To Enhance His Call
5. A Demon-Possessed Man	Synagogue in Capernaum*	Exorcism	Spoken	To Silence His Identification
6. Peter's Mother-in-Law	Peter's House in Capernaum*	Healing	Spoken	So His Close Friends Would Believe
7. Miracles In the Evening	Peter's House in Capernaum	Healings/Exorcisms	Spoken & Other?	So The People Would Believe
8. A Leper in Galilee	Somewhere in Galilee	Healing	Spoken	So The People Would Believe
9. A Paralytic on a Pallet	Peter's House in Capernaum	Healing	Spoken	To Prove That He Could Forgive Sin
10. An Invalid at Bethesda	Pool of Bethesda/Jerusalem*	Healing	Spoken	So the Healed Man Would Believe
11. A Man's Withered Hand	Synagogue in Galilee*	Healing	Spoken	To Teach about the Sabbath
12. Followers in a Crowd	Shoreline/Sea of Galilee	Healings/Exorcisms	Not Specified	So The People Would Believe
13. Many Before a Sermon	Plain in Galilee	Healings/Exorcisms	Touch & Other?	So The People Would Believe
14. A Centerion's Servant	Capernaum	Healing	Spoken	To Teach about Great Faith
15. Widow of Nain's Son	Nain	Resurrection	Spoken	So The People Would Believe
16. John's Disciples Visit	Not Specified/Likely Galilee	Healings/Exorcisms	Not Specified	To Answer John's Question
17. A Demon-Possessed Man	Not Specified/Likely Galilee	Exorcism	Not Specified	So That People Would Believe
18. Calms the Storm	Sea of Galilee	Natural	Spoken	So the Disciples Would Believe
19. A Demonioc of Gerasene	Decapolis	Exorcism	Spoken	To Show His Power Over Demons
20. A Woman's Hemorrhage	Not Specified/Capernaum?	Healing	Touch	So That People Would Believe
21. Jairus' Daughter	Not Specified/Capernaum?	Resurrection	Spoken	So That People Would Believe
22. A Pair of Blind Men	Not Specified/Capernaum?	Healing	Touch & Spoken	So That They Would Believe
23. A Demon-Possessed Man	Not Specified/Likely Galilee	Exorcism	Not Specified	To Show His Power Over Demons
24. Few in Nazareth	Synagogue in Nazareth*	Healings	Touch	So That People Would Believe
25. Many in Bethsaida	Wilderness Near Bethsaida	Healings	Not Specified	So That People Would Believe
26. Feeding the 5,000	Wilderness Near Bethsaida	Natural	Willed & Obeyed	So the Disciples Would Believe
27. Walking on the Water	Sea of Galilee	Natural	Willed & Obeyed	So the Disciples Would Believe
28. Many In Gennesaret	Gennesaret	Healings	Touch	So That People Would Believe
29. A Demon-Possessed Girl	Tyre, Phoenicia	Exorcism	Willed & Obeyed	To Affirm the Woman's Faith
30. A Deaf Mute	Decapolis	Healing	Touch & Spoken	So That People Would Believe
31. Many in the Decapolis	Decapolis	Healings	Not Specified	So That People Would Believe
32. Feeding the 4,000	Decapolis	Natural	Willed & Obeyed	So That People Would Believe
33. A Blind Man	Bethsaida	Healing	Touch	So The Man Would Believe
34. A Convulsing Boy	At the Foot of a Mountain	Exorcism	Spoken	So That People Would Believe
35. A Coin in a Fish's Mouth	Capernaum	Natural	Willed & Obeyed	To Teacher Peter A Lesson
36. A Man Born Blind	Jerusalem*	Healing	Touched & Obeyed	So the Man Would Believe
37. A Disabled Woman	A Synagogue*	Healing	Touch & Spoken	To Teach about the Sabbath
38. A Man With Dropsy	A Pharisee's Home*	Healing	Unspecified	To Teach about the Sabbath
39. Resurrecting Lazarus	Bethany	Resurrection	Spoken	So That People Would Believe
40. The 10 Lepers	Border of Samaria	Healing	Willed & Obeyed	So The Lepers Would Believe
41. Blind Bartimaeus	Jericho	Healing	Touch & Spoken	So The Man Would Believe
42. Miracles in the Temple	Temple/Jerusalem	Healings	Not Specified	So That People Would Believe
43. The Withered Fig Tree	Outside Jerusalem	Natural	Spoken	To Teach the Disciples
44. The Severed Ear	Garden of Gethsemane	Healing	Touch	To Display His Divine Power
45. Catching 153 Fish	Sea of Galilee	Natural	Willed & Obeyed	To Reveal His Identity

* took place on the Sabbath Day