

Miracles of Jesus 12-05-06a

This is Sunday, the 6th of May, 2012. We are in a very interesting study, to me it is one of the best there is, where we are looking at the recorded miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry. Although He did a countless number of things, not just teaching and not just miracles, but all sorts of things.

John says if you try to write it all down, the earth couldn't contain the books. But there are approximately 36 miracles distinguishable in the Gospel accounts. And so we are looking at these.

As I mentioned, they're not necessarily in a chronological order as we study them. The chronology is different in the different Gospels because the purpose of those accounts is different. And there is sort of an arbitrary order in which we are covering them.

So we'll take a moment to ensure that our hearts are susceptible to the teaching ministry of God's Holy Spirit, and then we will begin. Father, we thank You for granting us this time of fellowship and opportunity to receive the blessing of truth that comes to us through Your Word, the ministry of that truth through Your Holy Spirit. And as the Spirit expresses Himself in each one of us, we thank You for the gifts that You have distributed to us, not only teaching, but the comfort and encouragement that we receive as a ministry as we spend time together.

We thank You for the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in our midst, knowing that where two or three are gathered together, He is present. We thank You for this passage and set of passages that teach us through the actions of the Lord Jesus in His first advent, and the opportunity that we have to make personal application of these things to live in a way that pleases You and that reflects the glory of the Lord Jesus. And we pray that as we study together, each one of us will see the pertinency and applicability of these things to our own lives, that God the Holy Spirit will show us our secret faults, our hidden areas of weakness, strengthen us, encourage us, and rebuke, correct, and instruct us in the way that we should live so that we can redeem the time, although the days are evil.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. In our study of the miracles, we have seen the first three, and now I'm on sort of an odd number cycle in seeking to do them two per Sunday, so this sort of non-pluses me.

I'm not quite sure what to do about that, but perhaps I'm going to get stuck on one miracle on another Sunday, and then we'll be back on an even number. It's going to be bad if I get 34 and 35 done and then have to spend a whole Sunday on 36. Be that as it may, we have seen the first two, which were in Cana of Galilee.

You remember that, the turning of water into wine and the healing of the nobleman's son. Last time, we saw the third miracle, which was the man with the unclean mouth,

which was the man with the unclean spirit in the synagogue in Capernaum. In reviewing, just very briefly, because we do not have much review time, God is up to something in human history, and that miracle reminds us of it.

Here is an unclean spirit. What's interesting is that we have been talking about the demon. What would you say today? If you're going to talk about somebody having a demon, what's the common term for that? It's demon possession, right? He is possessed with a demon.

But in the Scriptures, in Luke especially, Luke says, the man possessed the spirit of an unclean demon. The man possessed the spirit of an unclean demon. You've got daimonion, you've got pneuma, you've got akatharsia there, and you've got echo.

You have to possess, to have a thing. So it doesn't say the demon had him, it said he had the demon. It's a reminder that we bear responsibility for things that happen to us.

But my point here is, Jesus does not come to Israel, he doesn't come to Galilee, he doesn't come to Judea, and destroy the demons. The demon says, if you come to destroy us, and the implicit answer is no, he's not destroyed. Why? God has a purpose in allowing evil.

He has a purpose in allowing Satan and the fallen angels to operate. He controls them, he limits them, but he does not eliminate them. Why? Well, vaccination, among other things.

There is a demonstration of the power of God that is not academic, we see it exercised. I've been, as you know, going through a very detailed biography of George Washington, and one of the things that they had invented by then was the smallpox vaccination. And as General Washington began forming the Continental Army, one of the things he strove manfully to do was to get everyone vaccinated, because he had seen in the French and Indian War the devastating effect of smallpox.

When you get men together and there's unsanitary conditions and difficulty in getting clean water and taking care of waste and so on, smallpox would run rampant and kill far more people than warfare. And both sides tended to lose more troops to disease than they did to bullets. So they would try to vaccinate.

And when Martha Washington came to join General Washington in the early days of the war, she had always had a horror of being vaccinated, but she overcame that at his urging to avoid getting that disease. And she came down with a very mild case, had a few poxes, but not to mar her face or anything, but then she is inured, she is immune, she will no longer get that disease and be subject to death. And this is one of the things that our exposure to evil does in this life.

And this is why God doesn't just take it out. Could Jesus have spoken a word and every

demon in the land of Israel gone into swine and over a cliff or gone into the Mediterranean Sea? Of course he could have. Authority over one is authority over all.

He's got authority over the legion. He could have spoken a word and they would have all disappeared. But they didn't.

Why? There is a time in God's plan for the elimination of problems. And God leaves them in our midst. He leaves them in our lives for a purpose.

There is a time in God's plan. It doesn't always match our desire for time, but there is a time. Jesus demonstrated his authority over the demon and telling him to be quiet and come out.

And he did not allow the demon to keep advertising his identity. And we know that this was the purpose of the demon. In fact, the first word the demon says is, Ea! And you think, well, it's just an exclamation.

But it is the word that means, Allow! Leave me alone. Allow me to do what I am doing. And Jesus doesn't allow him to keep on talking about his knowledge.

He commands him to come out. This renders the man silent on that score. And we know this is the case because if you go on to, for example, Luke 4.41, after he cast out that demon, demons came out of many, crying out and saying, You are the Christ, the Son of God.

And he, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak their knowledge that he was the Christ. He did not allow. And when it says he did not allow them to speak, it's the very same word that the demon speaks.

Allow me. And Jesus says, I'm not allowing you. It's not the time.

There is a time. There is an hour that will come for Jesus to manifest his identity to Israel. But certain things have to come first.

First, there has to be the opportunity to respond to the gospel of the kingdom, to the knowledge that God is in his heaven, that the covenant God of Israel has a plan and purpose. Before making an issue out of Jesus, which for them is going to be subjectivity, eyes on a person, they've got to get right with God. They've got to reconcile themselves and prepare the way of the Lord to make his path straight before they get around to identifying the Messiah.

The Messiah isn't going to do them any good if they're not in tune with the plan of God. This is a lesson for us. Many times before God can resolve our problems, before God can remove an evil in our lives, we are so focused on the evil or we are so focused on other things that we haven't taken care of business.

We haven't looked at our own relationship with God and ensured that that is squared away. When it is, when we are right with God, when we are maintaining our relationship and our fellowship and our prayer life and are allowing God to speak to us on a daily basis through meditation, through our intercession and our prayers, then whether or not the problems are there is up to God. But we are squared away.

We are living as we should. But it is difficult for God to remove our problems in a meaningful way or to use our problems to teach us in a helpful way when we are not right with Him. And even though Jesus casts out all kinds of demons, it doesn't really do these people any good.

Even though God allows this evil in their midst to help them and to show them and to provide a contrast and to create a choice point, a decision point, it doesn't do them any good because they are fundamentally not asking and seeking and knocking. And it doesn't matter if they have the demons or they don't, if they are sick or if they are well, if Jesus is in their midst bodily and physically teaching or not, it doesn't matter. They are not ready.

They can't see it. They can't benefit from it. They can't receive a blessing.

And whose fault is it? It's their fault. So, these demons know Him. You see the same thing in Mark 4.34. I'm sorry, that's Luke 4.34 and Luke 4.41. It says, "...Jesus rebuking them did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ." So, we have seen that there is a principle of authority here.

Jesus rules the demons, which tells us also that whatever they do is by His permission. What's interesting here is that in the Capernaum synagogue, where was the nobleman that had his son healed? Where was he from? What was his hometown? Capernaum, right? Jesus wasn't in Capernaum. The man came to Him when He was still in Cana, but the man was from Capernaum.

So, that healing was already known to people in Capernaum. When He comes to Capernaum and preaches in the synagogue, they already know about this. They have heard of works that He's done down in Jerusalem.

They see Him cast out this demon. But, what happened in our first miracles? When the disciples saw Jesus turn the water into wine, what did it say? They believed. When Jesus spoke into existence the healing of the nobleman's son, what does it say about the nobleman? He believed, right? In this third case, when in front of dozens, and those were sort of private miracles.

They were behind the scenes. We don't really see it happen. Here's a public miracle that everybody sees.

Jesus didn't necessarily choose the time and the place. You get the idea that the demon

brought this on, made an issue of himself, trying to throw the schedule off, throw the timing off. But, Jesus brings him under control by authority and casts him out.

So, does it say, and many in Capernaum believed? What does it say? They asked, what is this authority? What is this teaching? What is this doctrine? It doesn't say anything about them believing, because they're not ready to believe. It doesn't do any good to do miracles when people are not receptive. So, they've seen this authority, but unlike the disciples in Cana, unlike the nobleman from this very town, all they do is ask more questions.

It's not enough. And, by the way, another point of application. Sometimes we are believers, and there may be somebody in our family or in our near periphery that is not a believer, and we pray for them, and we agonize over them, and we worry about them, over their salvation, or even over their walk with the Lord.

Maybe they're just a wayward believer. And then, somebody else, somebody from another church, somebody in another ministry, in another place, in another time, leads them to the Lord or brings them into a place where they suddenly become active in their relationship with God, and we rejoice and we're happy, but we say, well, how come God didn't use me to do that? Why didn't I? I mean, I've been here the whole time. I'm the one that's been praying and trying to shine the light of my witness, and here this third party comes swooping in and gets all the credit, as it were, for bringing this person around.

Well, keep in mind, you remember what Jesus said before He came to this region. A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and among his own people. And in Capernaum, who's from Capernaum? Peter, Andrew, James, John.

And so when they see Jesus, and they see these disciples in the company of them, credibility is reduced. It's not easy sometimes for the witness to come through people that are excessively familiar. Sometimes it's better off to go somewhere else.

And you see this in the context, which we will see this morning. You can take a quick glance down at Mark chapter 1, verse 38. The disciples come to Jesus and say, everyone is looking for you.

And He says, let us go to the next towns that I can preach there, because this is the purpose I've come forth. And He's got to go elsewhere. He's got to get away from the people that are most familiar with His disciples and most familiar with Him before He can find more receptive audiences.

It may take people later on to bring these people around. So don't be discouraged if you see the case where, although you have been concerned and praying for so long, and then somebody finally does come around, it ends up being through someone else. It's

just the way people are.

Sometimes they can't hear it from someone that's too close, someone that's too familiar. There's just too much other subjective baggage in their mind. And just praise God that He has used somebody and realize that if and when the people in Capernaum come around, it's probably not going to be through Jesus and His immediate disciples that are from there.

They just have a problem. Well, it brings us to our fourth miracle this morning. And again, this is a little bit of an arbitrary order.

Depending on which gospel you're reading, there may have been another miracle or two that has intervened. But I'm basically going with the order in Mark. And so if you're in Mark chapter 1, you will see the demon-possessed man that we studied last time in verses 21-28.

And what's interesting here is, as we read this account, it seems like sort of an afterthought, sort of an after the synagogue thing, but it's really not. And it falls in line, particularly in Mark's account, with things that are really important for us to learn. So let's look at this right quick.

It's just a couple of verses here, 29-31. Now, as soon as they had come out of the synagogue where the demon-oppressed man had been healed, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told him about her at once.

So he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her, and she served them. You think, well, isn't that nice? Peter's mother-in-law, a little bit of a headache, so he lifted her up and she was able to get back to making the food. Well, there's an awful lot more going on here than that.

First of all, it's interesting that archaeology has uncovered both the synagogue and Peter's house in Capernaum. And on the break, if you like, I can show you, I've got my biblical archaeology review from November-December of 1982, where they did a whole article on this, and they've got diagrams and maps and things. I went into great detail on that in the past.

But it isn't really pertinent to our study here, except to note that they were relatively close together. This wasn't much of a journey from the synagogue to Peter's house. And this is not the only place that Peter's wife is mentioned.

The Apostle Paul was familiar with this lady, and knew that she was a believer in Jesus. You find this in 1 Corinthians 9, verse 5. One of those things you don't think of until you think of it. But when Paul says, do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas, and Peter? Do we

not have the right to lead about a believing wife like Peter does? Paul knew of this lady.

So another point of observation here is we're going to have to look at three different Gospel accounts to piece this story together. And one of the reasons we have things given by all three Gospels is the perspective and the details that each often bring to us. We're going to see that there are huge marked differences in which details are communicated.

They all harmonize. There are no contradictions. But because of the focus and the emphasis of each Gospel writer, the details are different.

Point of application. Pay attention to details and pay attention to context. You cannot rightly divide the word of truth without noting the context and noting the details.

Superficial browsing and application is fraught with error and has been the cause of all kinds of grief for individual believers and in the church at large. It is important to take time to read, to meditate. When Paul says, I would rather speak five words with my understanding than babble all day long in an unknown tongue, he is arguing for understanding.

And sometimes just a few words can make all the difference. Well, for example, you look here in Mark. We've seen that Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever.

Literally in Greek it says she was lying down, fevering. The word for fever is a participle. She was fevering.

And it says they told her, told him, Jesus, about her immediately. This is euthus. Remember Mark is all the time saying immediately this and immediately that.

Well, immediately when they came in the house, they said, oh Lord, mother-in-law is lying down fevering. Matthew says, if you go to the parallel account in Matthew chapter 8, when Jesus had come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. But the word saw there is from oida, and it means he knew.

He came to know that she was sick with a fever. And it doesn't say in Matthew that she was lying down fevering. It says that she was having been thrown down and fevering.

And the word is balo. Instead of the word for lying down, it's balo, which means to cast. She was cast down.

She was thrown down and fevering. Luke uses a different word. In Luke chapter 4, verse 38 and 39, it says Dr. Luke, being an adulterer, was oppressed by.

This is sunecho. This means to hold or to oppress or to hold down or to be in the grip of a thing. Sometimes it's used in a positive sense.

Paul in one place says, I have been constrained to preach the gospel. I'm in the grip of it. I can't help it.

And Luke also says that it was a great fever, a fever megale. So we get the all of the picture here, and it's quite a fulsome 3-D thing. Luke, by the way, uses almost identical language in Acts chapter 28, verse 8, regarding the father of Publius.

You seem to get these relatives that get afflicted with a fever. The father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went into him and prayed, laid his hands on him and healed him.

That's Acts 28, 8. But the language is very similar, and of course Luke is the author of both accounts. Luke includes the detail that request was made, inquiry was made. This is the word that means to inquire about Jesus, and obviously this is based on previous observation.

They have seen Jesus heal before. They figured, well, if he can heal the nobleman's son at a distance, Lord, would you be able to do something for this dear lady? Luke also includes a unique detail that Jesus stood over her. This is epi plus histemi.

Histemi means to stand, and epi means upon or over. So Jesus stood over her and rebuked the fever. Fever, I rebuke thee.

This seems like kind of an odd concept. Do you talk to an illness? But Jesus did. This is epi temao.

So in Luke, there's this real sense of authority. Jesus epistemies, he stands over, and epi temao, speaks honor over, speaks value over, and epi temao basically means look at the difference between what you're doing and the honorable noble thing. So it came to mean rebuke.

But epi temao, where's the honor? Team A is honor and intrinsic worth, and you speak that. You say, here's the difference between your situation and what is worthy and honorable. What's the matter with you? It's a rebuke.

And that's the root of the word. This is the same word, by the way. Epi temao is used in Mark 8.32 when Jesus says he must go to Jerusalem and be delivered into the hands of men.

And Peter takes him aside and began to rebuke him. And Jesus says, get thee behind me, Satan. But Peter tried to epi temao Jesus about going in and being arrested and delivered into the hands of men.

It's used again in Mark 10.13 when the people were trying to bring little children to Jesus that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked those who brought the children. And

Jesus says, suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not. Well the disciples, Peter is trying to rebuke Jesus, now the disciples are trying to rebuke these other people.

And you have it again in Mark 10.48, the guy laying there by the side of the road, and he says, Son of David, have mercy on me. And many in the crowd warned him to be quiet. They epi temaoed him.

But he cried out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. So this is the word that Jesus uses toward the fever. He calls it down.

He testifies against it. Tells it it's not doing something it shouldn't be doing. Matthew says he touched her hand and uses the word haptō.

Mark says he took her by the hand, kratoō. Remember kratoō, this is one of the power words in Greek. And immediately the fever left her.

This is aphemi. This is the same word that's used for forgiveness. When guilt is caused to leave us.

God aphemi's our sins. Well, the fever aphemi'd, it left. No longer associated with her.

In Matthew it says that she awakened and arose. This is agairo, which airo means to raise up. And it's a passive.

She was raised up. In Mark, it says Jesus raised her. Active voice.

In Luke, it says anistemi. And Luke is a fascinating account. I wish we had time to do all the grammar.

Remember he stood over her, epistemi. And then he anistemi's her. He stands over her and he epitomeo's the fever.

And then he anistemi's her and causes her to stand up again. Anistemi is one of the words used for resurrection, as is agairo. So you have these resurrection words used.

But anistemi in Luke is an aorist active participle. What do you know about the aorist participle? Action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb. And the main verb in that clause is she served them.

Having arisen, she served them. So not only is the fever remedied, but all of its effects are eliminated. She's fully restored from both the fever's cause, that's the rebuke, and its effects.

The weakness being cast down, being held down and oppressed. Op-Echo has the idea that you can't get loose, that you don't have freedom of action. You're constrained.

And this is the standard by which divine healing, miraculous healing is measured. If somebody says today that they are going to do divine healing, they're in some kind of a Pentecostal service or some other faith healing deal. Well, here's the standard.

Fully restored, fully functional, immediately get up with no after effects, totally good to go. Immediate. All at once.

All of Jesus healings are immediate except one. And we'll see that one, which is fascinating in itself. That one's a two-fold thing.

It's immediate, but it takes two runs at it. So what is the purpose? Establish Jesus' identity. Demonstrate His authority.

Authenticate and affirm faith. Reveals Jesus' compassion. There is the opportunity for this to take place because Peter invites Jesus to his house.

Contact, fellowship, closeness. Peter and his wife are believers. There is an interesting progress where Jesus has demonstrated authority over many different kinds of things.

He demonstrates authority over creation when He turns the water into wine. Demonstrates His authority over demons when He casts out the demon. Demonstrates authority over disease when He heals the nobleman's son.

He demonstrates authority in His teaching. Here He demonstrates authority over the cause of this fever. That's the rebuke, whether it is a demon or some other cause.

So this is one of the emphases in the accounts. We're going to pause here and take our break. We'll give a quick summary of the application that we draw from this and then move into our fifth miracle, which in the order we're covering them is going to be the cleansing of a leper.

Let's pause here and take our break.