

Miracles of Jesus 12-05-20a

Good morning, this is the 29th, no it's the 20th of May, and we're here at Grace and Truth Bible Church, our Sunday morning services, it's great that everyone is here. Our entire music department is out of the state today, so we'll move more or less directly into the study portion of our worship. So, if you want to be getting ready for our study of the miracles this morning, you can be turning to Mark chapter 3, verses 1-5.

This is the ninth miracle in the order that we are taking them, and it is Jesus healing the man with the withered hand. As we prepare for the study of God's word, let's take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer and ensure that we're ready for looking at this divinely inspired supernatural text, and that God's inspiration in the form of the Holy Spirit is active within us, and that He will be our teacher, and will greatly aid and enhance the presentation of these things this morning. Shall we pray? Father, it is such a wonderful thing to be called by Your name, to be entered into eternal relationship with You through the Lord Jesus Christ, for whom we give our thanks and praise and express our love and appreciation.

The Lord Jesus accomplished things that are so far beyond our comprehension in His work on the cross, reconciling us to You, redeeming us from our sins, satisfying Your justice through propitiation, enabling us to enter into regeneration and into eternal life, into potential, into having meaning and purpose for our lives, defining our place in Your plan, our opportunities both now and in the future realms and ages. We have been released, we have been set free, and we have been given so much, and we thank You for those things. We thank You for the opportunity to share our joy with one another and our love for You and our love for Your plan and purpose as it is revealed in Your Word.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will help us to understand the things that are contained in the portions we look at this morning. May each one of us find personal application and meaning and truth that sticks with us and changes the way we think, changes the way we act, and orients us more fully to Your plan and purpose, which is invisible and transcendent and yet has such pertinence and such meaning in the reality of our lives day by day. We pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

In the coverage of the miracles of the Lord Jesus that we have taken, as I said, in somewhat of an arbitrary order, we have looked at the first eight now. We took a special session on Friday to kind of catch up because I am on a mission in both of our studies. And so we have seen miracle number one, the turning of water into wine, the Feast of Cana.

This is also the first sign that John records in his Gospel. What was the primary emphasis in that sign? It is steeped in the fulfillment of Old Testament ritual, isn't it? It is the taking of the water pots, the ritual cleansing mechanisms, water as it has symbolic value and

bringing life and reality and meaning to it. Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament shadows and of many things that you can say about it.

It is the harbinger of the transformation of ritual into reality. The coming of the Lord Jesus, the presence of the Lord Jesus, the power and authority of the Lord Jesus takes common things like water and stone and gives it life and meaning and purpose. The second sign, the nobleman, and Jesus makes the point in that second sign which is also in John's Gospel, also at Cana, unless you see signs and miracles you will not believe.

Here is this nobleman who is willing to believe that Jesus has healed his son without seeing. And this is one of the last things Jesus will say on this earth to Thomas, you believe because you have seen signs, you have handled and looked at the scars, blessed are those who not having seen believe. So once again we have this emphasis on what is real.

Is reality what you see or is reality the plan and purpose of God? Israel has a big problem. Unless they see signs, unless they see evidence they say they can't believe. Well, the trouble is even when they see signs they don't believe.

Jesus said this generation seeks a sign, no sign will be given it, why? Because signs do no good. And genuine faith does not depend on signs. Genuine faith is a response of the heart to the reality that is impressed upon it by God's Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit effected these signs, worked in and through the Lord Jesus Christ and empowered and enabled these miracles just as he did with the prophets and the apostles. It also indicates that Jesus has authority over sickness. All he needs to do is declare the son to be healed and he is.

By the way, there is a contrast if you look at the context of that, you remember what precedes it. Jesus has been in Samaria talking to the woman at the well. How many signs did Jesus do in Samaria? He mentioned to the woman that she had five husbands, that was about the most supernatural thing that he did.

But all of the Samaritans came streaming out of the city to the well and believed in him. How many people did he heal? How many miracles did he perform? How many storms did he stop? How many rivers did he part? How many loaves did he turn to bread in Samaria? And they believed. There is a contrast, there is a hardness of heart in Israel that has shown up in these miracles and the miracles themselves you would think, well, people will see that and believe.

The problem in Israel is their belief doesn't stem from love for God, desire for God, a seeking attitude. The third one, the casting out of the demons, and we saw just very briefly that this is Jesus' authority in that unseen spiritual realm. There was the issue of Jesus' identity, I know who you are, the Holy One of God, have you come to destroy us

before the time and so on, and Jesus has authority.

What manner of man is this? What kind of teaching is this? Well, they really don't get around to ever answering that question. Fourth miracle was Peter's mother-in-law, and among many things you can say there is authority over disease. The disease really isn't specified for the nobleman's son, but it's very clear the lady is prostrate with a fever, she's near death, and Jesus lifts her up, and there is that authority.

There's also blessing by association, and we also see purpose. God works in our lives for purpose. She immediately gets up and serves.

When God does something for us, our response ought to be gratitude reflected in obedience and service, and this is what she does. She's restored to function. There is a purpose, and it is not only a blessing, it's not only a benefit to Peter and Andrew and to the lady herself and to the whole household, because we know that this household is a center of function.

This is going to be Jesus' headquarters anytime he's in Capernaum. This is where he stays, and so he makes provision. This is the lady who makes everything go in that house, and if she's down, Jesus raises her right back up, and it's a combination.

There's great blessing for the family, but that family is also enabled to be a great blessing to everyone else. This is the house that is going to be filled when the paralytic comes down through the roof. The same lady is running that thing.

The fifth miracle we saw was what you might call the disobedient leper. Jesus says, I am willing, be clean, and then he tells him, he enjoins him, go offer the sacrifice that Moses commanded. As a testimony to them, this is witness, obedience, doing the things that are prescribed in God's Not vocal affirmation, not a lot of testifying and testimony giving.

He says, your testimony is your obedience, and your cleansing is not complete until you go down there and follow the law, and the priest declares you clean. Well, he just gets so excited. He's got a better way.

He's got a better plan. I know how I can help Jesus. I'll tell everybody about him, which makes it impossible for Jesus to go into any town anymore, because everybody wants to see him heal again.

It makes an issue of the wrong thing. That testimony, if you go back to Leviticus chapter 14, the testimony there of regeneration, of renewal, of rebirth, of the necessary qualification to be clean so that you can come in and worship and serve and enjoy a relationship with God is all lost, because the man never goes. He's got a better idea.

The sixth miracle, the miraculous draft of fish, the catch of fish, and we begin here this wonderful set, in a way, because we saw this in detail and it's recent enough, I won't go

into a lot of the details, but one thing to remember about it is the response. What is the repercussion? What is the effect? What does Peter do as he falls only as far as Jesus' knees in this boat full of fish? What does Peter say? I am a sinful man. What is Jesus going to say in the next miracle, the healing of the paralytic back in Capernaum in Peter's house? Son, your sins are forgiven you.

Peter says, Lord, depart from me. I am a sinful man. This man comes to the Lord Jesus, and Jesus says, your sins are forgiven you.

We don't let our sins become an obstacle. We don't let our sins separate us from God, and that's exactly what they will do. Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear.

Well, that's our fault. And when we recognize those sins, as Peter does, Jesus says, you are not a sinful man, you are a fisher man. You are a fisher of men.

And Jesus transforms that recognition into opportunity, into service. Peter says, I am a sinful man. Jesus says, no, you are a fisher man.

And then we saw the second paralytic. The first one was in Capernaum. The second one is in Jerusalem.

The locations are important. Capernaum, there's great response. There's people gathering in homes to listen to his teaching.

There's people coming to him and being let down. In Jerusalem, Jesus travels relatively freely. No problem with the leper telling people anything, or any of the other people he's previously healed.

He can move freely in Jerusalem. And he walks down to the pool at Bethesda, Beit Hessed, House of Grace, goes to the five-porched pool, and he goes to the man. And we saw this great contrast just this past Friday night in these two paralyzed men.

The first one, being paralyzed, can't help himself, but he gets himself to Jesus. He's got all kinds of problems. But he finds some people to carry him there.

And when the people won't let him into the house, they come down through the roof. He seeks out the Lord Jesus. And he is a man of seeking and a man of faith.

Jesus, seeing their faith, said, son, your sins are forgiven you. No issue of faith in this next paralyzed man laying on the porch at the pool. Do you wish to be healed, Jesus asked him.

Jesus knows he's been there a long time. Lord, people are my problem. People won't help me.

He's just the opposite of the other guy, who's got four sturdy friends to help him who are willing to climb a house, haul him up on the roof, take the roof apart, let him down inside. This man, nobody will help him, probably because he's a rascally, crabby, irritable old coot. And he doesn't have any friends.

But he isn't seeking out Jesus either. Jesus has been in Jerusalem and has healed in the past. This man, and apparently everybody else on the porch, isn't really interested in Jesus.

They're waiting for the stirring of the water, apparently. So there's a contrast there. Jesus seeks this man out.

And he's irascible, he's irritable, all he can think, do you want to be healed? Well, he's not even thinking about that. He's just thinking how upset he is with all the people around him. They get in front of him and so on.

Jesus says, arise, take up your bed and walk. Very same thing he says to the other man. The man does so, but we find out in the story, he doesn't even know who did it.

He has been healed of a 38-year paralysis, and he doesn't even ask Jesus' name. The sign, the miracle, the personal benefit, he is so subjective. All he can think about is himself.

And he doesn't even ask Jesus' name. Apparently he doesn't say, thank you, by your leave, who are you that I may... I mean, at least the leper went around telling about Jesus up north as much as he wasn't supposed to. This man doesn't even ask.

And here's what's really interesting. I didn't say any of this on Friday night because I ran out of time. But here's sort of the coda to this eighth miracle.

This man is very obedient and very interested when the religious leaders ask him questions. He says, well, I don't know, but I'll try to find out. And when Jesus comes back and he finds out who he is, he immediately goes back to the religious leaders.

This man is a picture of the Jews of that day. Jesus comes, don't recognize him, can't even figure out his name, but they're very ready to follow these religious leaders. That's their authority.

Not the Lord Jesus, doesn't recognize the divine authority that is reflected in these signs. They can't see where the purpose of God is, where the authority of God is, the plan of God is. And this is what can happen to us.

We can be blind to the plan of God and the purpose of God, the provision of God, the grace of God, when we define our own terms of what is and isn't important, who is and isn't important. The Lord of glory, the Son of God, come from heaven, God incarnate,

standing in front of him, performing a miraculous healing, resolving instantaneously a 38-year paralysis, and all this guy, he has more conversations with the religious leaders. And he knows their names, he knows who they are, and he goes back to be sure they get the information they want.

But think about this. You think about this picture. These two paralyzed men are like the two kinds of people in Israel.

There is that small minority who are seeking, who have a fellowship of other believers, who are also seeking men of faith, who find the Lord Jesus, recognize who he is, and they don't let anything get in their way. They will get to him no matter what. And the great fruit that they recognize and that they appreciate, and that Jesus gives them first and foremost, is invisible.

Jesus doesn't actually consider or talk about healing that first paralytic until people start carping about how can you pronounce this man's sins forgiven. It doesn't say Jesus saw him, had compassion on him, healed him, and then had a discussion. Jesus said, son, your sins are forgiven you, as though that was the reason the man came.

He wanted to see Jesus, and that's what he really needed, and Jesus gives him that great grace declaration. And it's almost an afterthought when they start saying, well, who are you to say his sins are forgiven? And he says, so that you will know that I have the power to do what I just did, I'll do this kind of secondary thing. Eh, take up your bed and go home.

The crowd parts. They wouldn't part to let him in, but they sure part to let him out. Why didn't he go back up through the roof? The crowd is so big, nobody can make a hole.

Doesn't seem to be a problem on the way out. But he never complains about the people. Jesus says, son, your sins are forgiven you, and he says, oh Lord, I'm sure grateful, because look at this bunch of people that wouldn't let me in.

None of that. This is different, this man. But think about the two kinds of people in Israel, because in the first case, they both have the exact same problem.

In the first case, this man is not so embittered that he doesn't cultivate close friends who are like-minded in the area of faith, and who are mutually encouraging, who are willing to do these things for him. And through him and their association with him, they're in history. These four men, we don't know their names yet, but we will.

Great men of faith. Fast friends, faithful friends. And that's what this man spends his time doing, is he may be paralyzed, but he can still be a man of faith, he can still associate with men of faith, and he knows what to look for.

Second man, laying there, spending his day, self-satisfied and carping about all the

people that get in his way and all the people that won't help him. Jesus goes to him and doesn't even bring up his sins. He says, do you want to be made well? The man doesn't answer the question.

Jesus says, well, look, take up your bed and walk. And he does. Doesn't even ask Jesus' name.

This, in both cases, is sort of a picture of that first advent. Jesus comes, as the Old Testament says, with healing in his wings. How often I would have gathered you under my wings, he says to Jerusalem.

But notice the first guy is not in Jerusalem. He's not in the center of religion. He's up in Capernaum, where there are other people who will come and assemble just to hear.

By the way, Sermon on the Mount, what area? Jerusalem, Galilee, Capernaum, up in the north, up in the hinterlands, up in the farmlands and the fisherlands where the city-fied urban people say no good thing can come from up there. That's where the interested people are, much more so. You've got problems in the synagogue in Nazareth and so on.

But where there are people, that tends to be where they are. But think about the first advent and think about the second advent. Do you notice that Jesus only has one contact with the first paralytic, and that's enough? Jesus comes back to the second man.

Think of that second man as the nation of Israel, the disinterested. He came unto his own and his own received him not. Well, Jesus is going to come back a second time.

They didn't even know his name the first time. Never figured him out. They tried to get what they wanted from him, which was healing.

No, didn't look to him for the solution to the sin problem. They just wanted physical healing. Can you get rid of the Romans for us? Can you heal our diseases? Can you give us this bread always? We'll make you our king.

Just start a bread factory for us so that we don't have to work and we can just live on the dole when he's up there in the north. So Jesus comes back. There's a picture of the second advent when he comes back to the man and the man finds out his name.

But what does Jesus say to him? What does he say to him? What's that second piece of verbiage? Remember what he says? You have been healed. Go your way and sin no more, lest a worse fate befall you. What's going to happen in the millennial kingdom when all of the Old Testament saints are raised? There's still two kinds.

There's going to be those who resemble the first paralyzed man. Their sins are forgiven. They enter into opportunity.

They walk out ready to do something. They're obedient, unquestioning, grateful. Second

one, Jesus has to come back and say, Look, now that you know who I am, in the light of what has been done for you, go your way and sin no more or something worse will befall you.

You missed it the first time. Now you've got the millennial kingdom to straighten up and fly right. Don't forget about that judgment at the end, that sheep and goats judgment.

What are you going to do? But there's two conversations. There's two comings. In both cases, Jesus comes and finds the man.

He comes and finds him at the pool of grace with the five porches under the law. He comes back and finds him at the temple. Where did Jesus go looking for people during the tragic entry, the triumphal entry? Where did Jesus go? To the temple.

He's looking to see if anybody has figured him out, and they haven't. And he goes away, and you have the cursing of the fig tree and so on. This takes place in the temple.

It's not without significance. This isn't Capernaum. This isn't Cana.

This isn't Nazareth. This isn't any other place. This is Jerusalem.

And it starts at the place where the sheep were prepared for sacrifice, and it ends at the temple where the sacrifice would be offered and where the significance of the sacrifice would be. And Jesus talks with this man, and he says, Look, you kind of missed it the first time. You need to stop your sinning.

And then you also have that third component. You have the onlookers. In the first case, the onlookers say, Who are you to forgive sin? In the second case, Who is this man to do this kind of stuff on the Sabbath? And they want to know where he is.

Who is this man that has done this? Well, that would be the right question if it was motivated properly, right? Who is this man? The first paralyzed man, he already knows who Jesus is. That's why he will do anything to get to him. He knows who he is.

He's a man of faith, and Jesus sees his faith. The group of five, they all have faith. Down here, there is no faith involved.

They're asking, Who is he? But this is kind of like Herod when Jesus was born. Where is this king that I may worship him? Well, that's not his motivation at all. And this is the identical question with a very similar motivation.

Who is this man, and where is he that we may kill him? So their attitude, although they are Israel and they're at the temple, they're the custodians of the religious life of the people, what are they doing? They're taking Herod's part. Wise men come, where is he that is born king of the Jews? We have come that we may worship him. Herod says, Well, when you figure out where he is, let me know, because I'd like to worship him too.

I'm going to worship him with a big sword through the chest. These men have a similar reaction. Well, this brings us to the ninth miracle, which is the withered hand.

And, as I said, you'll find this in Mark 3. In Mark, this says, He entered the synagogue again, which tells us that Jesus' habit and pattern was to be in the synagogue. And when He was in an area, He would go there every Sabbath, and probably many other times as well. He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand.

So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath so that they might accuse Him. Now, it's one thing when you look to the Lord and you say, God has got this wonderful power. He delivers us from sin.

He takes us out of darkness into light. He regenerates us. He gives us eternal life.

He raises us up out of the miry clay and sets our feet on a rock. He does all of these wonderful things. And we look to Him for His grace.

We look to Him for His mercy. We look to Him for His love and compassion. We look to Him as our Heavenly Father.

These people are actually looking for a miracle because the miracle will be a Sabbath day violation. I can think of so many illustrations of this. Some lady has got a troubled pregnancy, or her baby is being born in breach, or has the cord wrapped around his neck or something.

And some guy heroically manages to drive across town and get this lady to the emergency room so that the doctors can save both the mother and the child. But there's a cop standing there saying, you parallel park there, and this is a no-parking zone. And I figured you'd come by because I'm going to give you a ticket.

I've seen you driving around before. Oblivious to the real meaning and the priority and the purpose of everything, I've got you on a technicality. And with this technicality, what are they going to do? Let's skip down to the end.

In verse 6, the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him how they might destroy Him. And by the way, read the rest of this. They watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath so that they might accuse Him.

He said to the man who had the withered hand, Step forward. Is there any problem with walking in the synagogue on the Sabbath? Any regulation forbidding that? Step forward? Any violation there? No. Then He said to them, Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill? Which, of course, is the point.

But they kept silent. When He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, Stretch out your hand. Now, by any

remote exaggeration and hyperbolic stretch, is sticking your hand out a violation of any Sabbath regulation? No.

Anybody can stick their hand out. You can't get the door open without sticking your hand out. And He stretched it out, and His hand was restored as whole as the other.

And this infuriates the onlookers, because they are there trying to find an occasion for accusation. Jesus knows it. Jesus heals the man on the Sabbath, and there's been no violation.

And they're just incensed. And they go out and they plot together with the Herodians, who are this sort of terrorist party, on how they can destroy the Lord Jesus. What kind of heart, what kind of attitude, sees this gracious, beneficial action, and says, This man must be destroyed.

We can't have this. We can't have withered hands being healed. We can't have lepers being cleansed.

My goodness, we can't have paralyzed people regaining the use of their legs. This is an outrage. This must be stopped.

What is the motivation? They are jealous of that very attitude we saw in the paralyzed man at the porch. They want people looking to them for guidance. They want people looking to them for leadership.

They want people looking to them as authorities, and as big wigs. And Jesus isn't cultivating a following. He isn't usurping authority.

He is simply demonstrating the presence and the power and the purpose of God. That's all He's doing. But the presence and the power and the purpose of God is anathema to these people who claim to represent God.

And you could not illustrate more effectively the heart problem that underlies the superficial dedication to quote-unquote obedience to the law in Israel. Personified, typified, exemplified, embodied in these religious leaders. Well, there's much more for us to observe here.

We're going to pause and take our break. But as a point of application, what is our motivation in our obedience? These men claim to be dedicated to obeying God's word. That's what the law is.

That's what the Sabbath day regulations are. They've been greatly expanded and corrupted. But they claim to be guardians of the holiness of God and of the holiness of God's day and God's sanctuary.

And they're dedicated to the word. We like to think of ourselves as dedicated to God and

His plan and His purpose and the truth of His word. We identify ourselves in that way when we think of our spiritual life.

We think, well, I'm a biblical Christian. But does our dedication to those things become an end in itself that has been disconnected from its moorings to God and is now a rudderless ship out in the middle of the ocean instead of anchored on the rock of the Lord Jesus Christ? Have we made our approach, our way of life, our attitude toward the word of God something with which we actually beat others over the head, we become critical, we become dismissive, we become judgmental, and we actually start seeking ways to destroy someone who may actually be more gracious and more plugged in to the plan and purpose of God than we are. But we find an occasion, we bear a grudge, we find a source of irritation, and we justify it in our own minds as, well, this is the divine standard.

And it actually isn't. We really have to judge ourselves lest we be judged. The judgment of God is going to fall on this attitude just as we saw it fall in the book of Isaiah, just as we saw it fall in the book of Ezekiel.

This self-righteous, self-serving, jealous, self-important, completely ungodly attitude does not go unnoticed and it does not go unpunished. Well, let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to finish up this withered hand miracle and then we are going to look at the one that follows it, miracle number 10, which is the centurion's servant.

We're going to see some similarities and differences with the healing of the nobleman's son in that miracle. Let's pause here and take our break.