

Miracles of Jesus 12-07-15a

And this is Sunday, the 15th of July, 2012. In our study of the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have come to, I believe in our series, this is the 18th miracle. The one we studied last week had to do with the two blind men who are healed by the Lord Jesus.

And this morning we're going to look at the mute man. Both of these were in Matthew chapter 9. Let's take a moment as we address ourselves to this portion of our worship by going to the Lord in prayer and dedicating our time of investigation to Him. Shall we pray? Father, thank you for your many expressions of grace toward us, both in blessing and in arranging the circumstances of our lives to challenge us, to test us, and to give us opportunities for faith.

We know that without adversity and without these people and places and things, circumstances entering into our lives, we could not lay hold of righteousness because we would have no occasions for faith. We are grateful that you have given us all of the tools, all of the resources, all of the provision to not only navigate successfully the obstacles and the highways and byways of this life, but also to turn our journey through life into an opportunity to learn and to grow and to be prepared for future things. We often do not understand your purpose, but we are content in the knowledge that you have a perfect plan and there is nothing accidental, there is nothing happenstance, and there is nothing that falls outside your will for those who love you and who are pursuing your calling.

We thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for the tremendous multifaceted work that He has accomplished on our behalf and all of the blessings and opportunities that come to us through Him and in Him. We thank you for His ministry on our behalf at your right hand as He intercedes for us, prays for us, argues for us, and makes us acceptable in your sight.

And we ask that as we study this portion of your word this morning that the truth that is contained in it will penetrate to the deepest recesses of our hearts and our minds, will transform us, that your divine power will illuminate, that God the Holy Spirit will speak to us through it in the minutes and hours and days that remain to us in this life so that we can truly walk in the light that is so much a part of your essence and as a result we can reflect your glory. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

In Matthew chapter 9, as we saw last week, Jesus is accosted by two blind men who say, Son of David, have mercy on us. And we went into great detail there looking at that healing of these blind men who in verse 30, their eyes were opened. Jesus warned them sternly.

The Greek word there, I don't have the Greek in front of me, but I believe it's *embryomai*. Basically in Greek it means to snort. It's used of horses snorting.

And it reflects, in many cases, in other places in Greek, it means that someone is very angry. But it certainly means that they are very intense and very stern and very focused in what they are saying. And Jesus basically takes these two blind men and sort of slams them up against the wall and very emphatically says, see that no one knows it.

They've just regained the faculty of sight, and He says, the first thing you need to see is that I'm telling you, don't noise this around. We saw the reasons for that. There is a phased approach to God's plan with regard to the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is work that He intends to do before He publicly proclaims. Now Jesus, as we're going to see this morning, is already well known, but it's what He is known for and what His identity is that is the issue. But this brings us immediately in the next verse, verse 32, to our passage for the morning.

Matthew 9, 32 through 34, As they went out, and that's the blind men departing, Jesus has just braced them with a stern admonition, with a command, and the only command that they ever received from the lips of Jesus, they immediately disobey. When they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country. And then you get a little bit of a step back in time.

As they are leaving, the two blind men are just looking around. They have no trouble finding the door. They can see now.

They don't have to tap their way all through the city. They had to tap their way into the house, assuming they were using sticks. But now they walk out unencumbered.

As they went out, behold, look. These blind men can see. We need to see.

Don't ever ignore the beholds. When you see behold in Scripture, it's a good idea to circle it. It's a good idea to put a star by it or emphasize it or at least pay close attention.

It's not there as just filler. If you ever read some of the pseudo-Scripture that's been written by people trying to emulate the King James, they just throw these beholds around willy-nilly. Read Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon.

He uses behold like people say uh. He just, well, you know, I can't think of anything at the moment. Behold.

That's always a good gap filler. Not so in divine-inspired Scripture. When you see edu in Greek, it means and look! Look.

These blind men have just been given sight. Are we going to miss their example and be blind ourselves? The Scripture is emphatic. Look.

Pay attention now. This is like knocking on the thing and saying, hey, I'm talking to you. Wake up.

Pay attention. It is a sort of a command of preparation. Whatever I'm going to say next, you need to take it on board.

So as these two formerly blind men went out, look now. They brought to him a man mute and demon-possessed. Now, these could be two separate maladies, but the indication, as the story proceeds, is that one is the result of the other.

He is mute because he is demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, it was never seen like this in Israel.

There's an awful lot of seeing in this section of the chapter, is there not? Look now. Here's a mute man with a demon. Casts out the demon.

The man speaks. And the people marvel at what they have seen, saying, we haven't seen anything like this in Israel. Which tells you that there weren't others healing and casting out demons.

Jesus isn't another. There's a conversation he has with the Pharisees. We'll get to that in a little bit.

But it's unique. Never seen this in Israel. But, verse 34, the Pharisees said, he casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.

Well, this, of course, is a heinous accusation. He's not from God. He's not representing God.

He represents Satan. Let not your good be spoken of as evil. If you look at the parallel to this in Luke chapter 8, beginning in verse 40.

Just flip over there right quick. Jesus gives a response that Matthew does not record, but Luke does. Oh, I'm sorry.

I've given you the wrong passage there. When the Pharisees... We're going to get to that a little bit later anyway, what Jesus' response to that is. Does someone have that passage? It may be in Mark.

Where they accuse him of casting out demons by Beelzebub. Is that in Mark 7? This is what I get. I was just talking to somebody the day before yesterday about how it is a fatal error to study in one Bible and bring another one to teach out of.

And that's exactly what I did this morning. So nothing is in the right place on the page. We'll get to it because it's further in my notes.

But you remember what Jesus said. They said, you cast out demons by the prince of demons. And he said, no house divided against itself can stand.

If Satan casts out Satan, then his house is divided. But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom has come upon you. Luke chapter 11 is where that... I said Luke 8. I meant Luke 11.

But anyway, this is an occasion where this blasphemous accusation is made. It's an explanation. And the impugning of motives is something that people will do to us.

You will be doing things for honorable reasons. And people will say you're doing it because you're greedy or because you want power. Or you're trying to get yourself ingratiated with the leadership.

Authority implements an unpopular policy. And you very energetically and effectively implement that policy. And then you are accused of being a bad... Oh, you're just... There are different terms that are used for people that are just slavishly trying to initiate good favor with their authority figures.

And people will wrongly accuse us in terms of why we do what we do. They refuse to recognize that we're motivated by our faith and by our morality and the ethics that we draw from Scripture. And they judge us by what they would be doing in our place.

Well, if I was doing that, I know I'd be doing it because I could be getting ahead. I could be serving myself. And they can't understand the things of the Spirit, so they parse it and they interpret it in light of what they would do in our shoes.

Judging others by yourself is often a mistake, because other people may not be like us, both in the good sense or in the evil sense. Sometimes we give people too much credit. So, it is time for us to take a look at this whole demon issue.

We've seen Jesus cast out demons in the past. We saw it most recently with the man over in Gergesa or Gerasa or Gedara, depending on how widely you want to define it. We saw the man in the synagogue, and Jesus had that conversation.

He says, I know who you are, the Holy One of God. Have you come to destroy us before the time, et cetera? So, we need to take a little bit closer look at this. And one of the things that will really help us is, particularly in this account, because this mute man being restored to speaking function by the casting out of the demon is only found here in Matthew chapter 9. Well, context always helps us.

So, you need to kind of strap in. If you're going to take notes, you'll be taking a lot of them. So, here we go.

This section in Matthew, we haven't done the Gospel of Matthew. It's the only one we have not done. But this section is a very well and clearly defined section.

Turn back with me to Matthew chapter 4, verse 23. If you look up in the earlier section of

chapter 4, Jesus' ministry begins. Satan, while he's out in the desert, tests him.

And then Jesus begins His Galilean ministry. And when John is put in prison in verse 12, Jesus went to Galilee, leaving Nazareth. He went to Capernaum.

It says He dwelt in Capernaum. We believe He's staying at Peter's house, Peter's mother-in-law and so on. And look at verse 16.

The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. This is the light of the presence of Jesus Christ. Upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death, light has dawned.

This is the land of Zebulun and Naphtali. This is Galilee. This is where He's going to begin the self-revelation that launches His public ministry.

From that time, verse 17, Jesus began to preach. And what is He preaching? Change your mind because the kingdom of heaven is imminent. It's right on the threshold.

18 through 22, He gathers the first few disciples. Then in verse 23, here's where we start. Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

His fame went out throughout all Syria. This is the Roman province of Syria. This is the whole northern region, even beyond Galilee.

And they brought to Him all the sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics and paralytics, and He healed them. Great multitudes followed Him from Galilee, from Decapolis, the ten cities on the other side of the Jordan, one of the southernmost being Gadara, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond Jordan. So that's all the way down to the area around the Dead Sea, which is Perea on the other side of the Jordan.

Great multitudes followed Him. So what do we get from this? If you distill it down, Jesus is doing two major things. He's preaching and teaching.

He is prophesying. He is preaching the Word of God. He is preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom.

We had that up in verse 17, and it's repeated again here in verse 23. Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. Where is He doing it? He's doing it in the synagogues.

He's doing it in the open road. He's doing it on hillsides. He's doing it from boats on the Sea of Galilee.

He's traveling all over Galilee, preaching and teaching the Word of God. This is the message. And the primary component of the message is what? Hi there, I'm the Messiah.

Believe in me to be saved from your sins. What's the message? What is He preaching? God's promised Kingdom foretold by the Old Testament. Feasts and sacrifices and the prophets proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord.

It's here. He isn't even necessarily associating Himself with that Kingdom, is He? Is He saying the Kingdom is here and I'm the King? Is He saying the Kingdom is here and I'm your Savior? What is the message? What's the issue that He is presenting? It's the simplest thing for the simplest people who have not been looking, not been thinking, not been learning and growing in God's Word. What's the simplest thing? Your identity as the people of God is about to be vindicated.

Your national destiny is about to be accomplished. God created the people of Israel for His own presence to be a light to the Gentiles. All of the promises to Abraham, all the promises through Moses, all the promises to David, the land promises, the king promises, the perpetuation promises, all of that, Jesus says, is here, it is at hand, right? And that's all.

So, what is Jesus not yet proclaiming and what does He tell some of the people that He heals not to proclaim? What were these guys yelling out, those blind men? Son of David, have mercy on us. Son of David, Son of David, tell no man. I'm not talking about myself as the Son of David yet.

I am just trying to wake people up that kingdom time is here. And let's start with that. Are you personally ready for the kingdom? Before we make an issue out of who the king is and before you go off the deep end and try to overthrow the Romans and get into politics and have debates and town meetings and get into a bunch of ugly crisscross back and forth about is it wise.

You can think about the American Revolution. There was an honest debate about, well, fear God, honor the king. All of you Tories are loyal to the king and all of you people for independence are rebelling against the king.

You're rebels, you're unscriptural. Well, is it time to be independent? Is it time to throw off the yoke? It's an interesting debate. Where would a Christian stand in the 1760s and 1770s? What part do you take looking at the word of God? Do you stay a Tory and loyal, support the British troops occupying New York and Boston? Or do you join with General Washington and Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson and the others, Benjamin Franklin, who were arguing for independence? Well, Jesus says the first thing you need to digest is that the time of fulfillment of God's promise is at hand.

Where do you stand on that? What's your heart on that? That's the place to start. Don't be jumping ahead because without your view of what the kingdom is and the fulfillment of God's promises, you're not ready to talk about the king. You're not ready to talk about much less redemption and propitiation and the fulfillment of the sacrifices.

We're just talking about it's kingdom time. This is plowing the ground before you ever drop in those more powerful seeds. So that's why He's preaching, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

That's His message. That's His theme. That's what's on the marquee.

Well, this tells us He was preaching and teaching and healing in 423 of Matthew. All kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. Why? This is the visible harbinger of the kingdom.

What is the kingdom? It's God's rule on earth, right? How is God's rule visibly communicated? God rules over disease. God rules over demons. God rules over death.

Look at here. The authority of God has come to earth. So people are bringing the sick and afflicted with various diseases and torments and He's healing them.

And great multitudes are following. Now, keep your finger in chapter 4 and turn over to the end of chapter 9. Right after our mute man has his demon cast out and speaks, what is the conclusion at the end of chapter 9? Jesus went about all the cities and villages. This is 935 of Matthew.

Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. Does it sound familiar? What did we just read in 423? Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. This is what we call a what? A chiasm, a bracket.

We've got an opening bracket in 423. We've got a closing bracket in 935. If you missed that, I just don't know how I can help you.

I mean, they're just so identical. It's very clearly sort of an inclusio. Now, what Matthew gives us in between 423 and 935 is example, samples.

So, what's the first part, the preaching and teaching? Chapters 5 through 7. This is one of many, many sermons that Jesus gave. This isn't a Reader's Digest condensed version of all of his sermons. This is one specific sermon.

It's the sermon he gave on the mount, and it is representative. If you've ever heard a preacher preach the same sermon more than once, and I know a number of you who have, you'll know that many times if you have one version of that sermon, you've pretty well got it. If you listen to gospel quartets and you hear them in concert and they sing the concert version of their song, you don't have to follow them from city to city because it's going to be the same arrangement sung in the same way.

I used to think when I was collecting statesmen, well, here's a concert they gave in Raleigh, North Carolina, and here's a concert they gave in Fort Worth, and here's a concert they gave out in California at the garden someplace, and I wanted a tape of each one. Well, I started listening to those tapes. They're identical.

They sing exactly the same song. So, one will serve. This Sermon on the Mount is the outline and the substance that Jesus preached everywhere He went.

We just need the one copy for Matthew's purposes. So, Jesus went about preaching and teaching. Here's the preaching and teaching that He did.

Matthew 5, Matthew 6, Matthew 7. That is the preaching and teaching. Comprehensive study and summary of what Jesus taught. What else did He do? He went about healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Chapter 8, Chapter 9 gives us ten different miraculous efforts by the Lord Jesus, invoking divine authority and the power of the Holy Spirit. There are ten miracles. Number one, and some of these we've studied.

A couple we have not yet. Number one was the leper. Chapter 8, verses 1 through 4. This was the, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.

Jesus touched him and said, I am willing to be cleansed. The leprosy leaves him. See that you tell no one, but go your way.

Show yourself to the priest. Offer the gift that Moses commanded as a testimony to them. It's not time to tell.

It is time to obey. I will say that again. It is not time to witness.

It is time to obey. Show yourself to the priest. Offer the sacrifice that Moses commanded as a testimony.

If you want to testify, let your life obedience be your witness. Just like we sang, your life should be your witness. The scriptures show the way.

So obey. That's the witness. Number two, the centurion's servant.

What is that a picture of? It's one of the longer accounts of a miracle. And there's a great discussion of authority. It is the invocation of divine authority.

Why? Because authority defines the kingdom. What is a king? He's the highest authority. Number three was Peter's mother-in-law.

In 8, 14, and 15 of Matthew. Lying sick with a fever. What is the emphasis in that one? Restoration to service.

She is able to do the things for which she is gifted and has opportunity by the removal of this oppressive fever. Number four was the windstorm. This one seems to stick out because all these others are people getting healed.

But here's my take on the windstorm. Why does Jesus call them the wind and the waves? Because there's erosion of the seashore. The fish are being unduly disturbed.

Why does Jesus call them the wind and the waves? Because forces of nature have put his disciples into a panicked and fearful state. Right? All of these, Jesus does on behalf of a person who is oppressed by forces greater than them. It's either a demon.

It's a disease they can't cure or escape or get over. Or it's, in this case, just great wind and great waves. But Jesus does it for the disciples, does he not? He talks to them during and after.

Where's your faith? So that's number four. 23 through 27 of Matthew chapter 8. Number five. The Gerasene, Gadarene, Gergesene, Demontiac, parentheses, S. There's actually two guys there.

Number six. Paralyzed guy let down through the roof by his friends. In chapter 9 verses 1 through 8. Number seven and number eight are that sandwich miracle of Jairus' daughter and the woman with the issue.

9, 18 through 25 of Matthew chapter 9 verse 18 through 25. That's seven and eight. Number nine.

The blind men we studied last week. And number ten. The mute Demontiac that we're looking at this morning.

So he has given us three full chapters of the teaching. And he's given us two full chapters of the solving of human problems when it comes to disease and demons, wind and waves, whatever it might be. The uncontrollable forces around us.

Jesus manifests this. Now, what is the purpose? What is the mission? What is the message in this inclusio? Well, right at the end of chapter 7 and beginning of chapter 8. And, of course, these chapter divisions are arbitrary in later times. But look at 7:28.

It was so when Jesus had ended these sayings that the people were astonished at his teaching for he taught them as one having authority. His miraculous efforts reflect authority. What manner of man is this at the wind and sea? Obey him.

What manner of man is this that demons obey him? What manner of man is this that he has authority over disease to banish it, to send it away? What manner of man is this who teaches with authority? Authority is the defining principle of what? Kingdom. The kingdom of God is upon you, has come upon you. The kingdom is at hand.

Over there in Luke 11, if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. It's the kingdom. A few years ago we had that political campaign back in the 90s.

It's the economy, stupid, or whatever. They had those bumper stickers and signs. Well, if Jesus had had bumper stickers, it's the kingdom.

It's the kingdom. Start with the concept of kingdom. That's what the whole Old Testament reveals.

God's imminence, spelled with an A, imminence. God's intrusion, God's eruption, spelled with an I, into human affairs. The Shekinah dwelling in the midst of his people.

He came into his own, his own received him not. This message is going to be lost. Now, that's where we are.

We're at the end now of Matthew's great section explaining the gospel of the kingdom and how Jesus presented it. What is the reaction to these things? Well, we're going to pause here and take our break, because the reaction of the people is a reflection not only of that time, but of all times. What is our reaction to the authority of God? God's authority is manifest in the teaching of Jesus Christ.

God's authority is manifest in the works of Jesus Christ. His words and his works. His preaching, teaching, and his healing and casting out of demons.

It's all about authority. What is the reaction? What should our reaction be? And what do we need to watch for? Is there a little area of darkness that we tend to walk in, because there's some area where our response is not correct? Well, we're going to see that in detail. This is going to move us forward into the whole idea of what demons are about, and back to this mute demoniac in our second session.

Let's pause here and take our break.