

Miracles of Jesus 12-08-26a

Today is Sunday, August the 29th, 2012, and we're continuing... Is it the 26th? I wish it was the 29th, but it's only the 26th. It's like vertical dyslexia. This is August the 26th, 2012.

We're in our study of the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are coming up on having done about two-thirds of them, but we're going to look this morning at the healing, the ministry to the Syrophoenician woman's daughter. This follows on the heels of our studies of the feeding of the 5,000, 4,000, Jesus' miraculous provision of fish to the disciples on the lakeshore, and that whole discussion about bread.

And interestingly enough, bread comes up again in the healing of the Syrophoenician woman's daughter. So we'll take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer, and then we'll read our passage and see what truth God has for each of us personally and individually within it. Father, what a privilege it is for us to assemble, to gather in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be His representatives on this earth, to be the residence place for Your Holy Spirit, who shines like the Shekinah did in the Old Testament from the Holy of Holies.

We know that our bodies are the temple in which the Holy Spirit now dwells, and His presence and His influence are so precious to us. We thank You for that gift. We thank You for His ministry to us during the time of the absence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We know that one day we will be united with Him, whether through death or through the joining with Him in the air at the rapture. As ones who are living, we know that the time is ever closer, and the time remaining is more short. And we know that it is valuable time.

Will You leave us here and have apportioned us the circumstances and the opportunities of this day and this time so that we can learn and we can grow and we can be prepared to serve and to function effectively both now and in the kingdom of Your Son and in Your own kingdom which follows. We thank You for the passage of Scripture that is before us. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will be our teacher, will illuminate it for us, will show us those truths that are pertinent and meaningful and applicable to us so that we will live differently, we will live better.

Our thoughts and the intentions of our hearts will be acceptable and worthy in Your sight. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

As I said, the episode we're going to look at is contained in two of the four Gospels, the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Mark. I was somewhat entertained as only I can be when I was looking through my references preparing for this this past week. And in the exegetical dictionary of the New Testament, I made a mistake several weeks ago when I

was talking about the woman with the issue of blood.

And I referred to her as the Syrophoenician woman. And I think I corrected myself maybe right after the break. I think I said something with reference to her.

She was the woman that touched the hem of the garment and so on during the Jairus daughter double miracle account. And so I corrected myself and I said, she's not the Syrophoenician woman. And I got this scratch in my head and I thought, I don't understand why I said that.

Well, I was reading the exegetical dictionary of the New Testament, not for fun or entertainment, but because I was looking something up. And I was looking at the word for tremble. And in the exegetical dictionary of the New Testament, they mistakenly labeled the woman with the issue of blood as the Syrophoenician woman.

And I think this is my excuse. I've seized on an excuse for why I got those confused. This thing was originally written in German and then was translated into English and some were either the author or the translator because they're both apparently Gentile women, but this woman is the Syrophoenician woman, the woman we're going to look at this morning.

Matthew 15, Mark 7 are our passages. Let's look at it first in Matthew since that's conveniently at the beginning of the New Testament. If you look at the preceding context of Matthew 15 and 16, you see that there is the feeding of the 5,000.

Actually, this is back in Matthew 14. The 5,000 are fed in Matthew 14. Then you have Jesus walking on the water in the latter part of that chapter.

We just studied that in some detail over the last few weeks, right? Oh, you of little faith, if you've got a red-letter Bible like I do, you can see that in verse 31. Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand, caught Peter, said to him, Oh, you of little faith, why did you doubt? And if you ever wanted a refrigerator magnet verse, this is the one I suggest. Don't put, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Don't put, oh, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Well, you can. But this is my suggestion.

If you want a single verse to stick on your mirror, hang from a chain on your neck or whatever, this would be my suggestion. Oh, ye of, because it's, this is my life verse. This is my testimony verse.

Oh, ye of little faith, why did you doubt? This is my dread. This is my fear. At the judgment seat of Christ, after scores of people in front of me have gone through and they're coming out, I walk in.

The Lord Jesus looks me in the eye. He says, Shmuel, oh, you of little faith, why did you? Sent you to seminary. Gave you unlimited access to every resource on the planet to study, to learn about me, to know the truth.

I brought you to the Father. I pulled back the curtain of heaven, showed you the glassy sea and the throne and the seraphim and the cherubim. You have had access from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22.

Why did you doubt? And as I emerge, patting the smoke and flames out of my skinny white robe, then it will be your turn. All of us are going to have to answer this question, aren't we? Why do we doubt? Why do we fall short? Well, this is in the context because after this, in Matthew's account, chapter 15, you have Jesus and the disciples accused by the Pharisees, by the legalists, by the scribes. Look at 15.1. The scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus saying, why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? Do you ever face this? I've faced it at various times.

Why are you so non-traditional? Why aren't you a member of a big church? Why aren't you the pastor of a big church? Why don't you have a parking lot and an education building and a baptistry and a choir loft and a bunch of Sunday school rooms and pews and an organ? Well, we actually have an organ and piano. I mean, we've got music. On other weekends, we've got a music ministry comparable to any.

But, you know, where do you meet? I don't think I've heard of your church. Where do you go to church? Oh, grace and truth. Where is it? Plano.

I don't think I've heard of that. Well, probably not. Non-traditional.

You violate the tradition. You don't do the normal thing. They do not wash their hands when they eat what? Bread.

Do you know what bread is now? Do you remember the significance of bread? We don't want to be the disciples who forgot about the loaves, did not understand about the loaves. So just by way of quick review, I know we've done it three, four weeks in a row here, what is the bread? If you turn over, keep your finger here in Matthew 15, turn over to your Mark 7 parallel, you remember that the disciples are, in verse 52 of chapter 6, had not understood about the loaves because their heart was hardened. If you flip forward a little bit to chapter 8 in Mark, verse 11, the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with him, seeking a sign from heaven.

Why does this generation seek a sign? Then look at verse 13. He left them getting into the boat and departed to the other side. The disciples had forgotten to take bread.

We have to understand about the bread. Our miracle this morning is all about bread. There's a woman, there's a daughter, there's a demon, but it's all about the bread.

The disciples, verse 14, Mark 8, had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. Jesus charged them saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.

Jesus, being aware of it, said, Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? Having eyes do you not see? And having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? O ye of little faith! What's your problem? Can you not hear? Can you not see? Can you not understand? Is your heart hard? This is the conviction we do not want to hear at the judgment. Thankfully, look around. We're all alive, right? Jesus has not come back.

We are not at the judgment seat of Christ, right? Just saw where Neil Armstrong passed away yesterday. It's very sobering. He's only a month older than my father.

My father is in better shape and is outlasted. One of the great astronauts of all time. By the grace of God, I'm thankful for it every day.

But it's sobering. You see people leaving this earth. People you've known and seen all your life.

And more so in our day of communication and media and so on. We're aware when somebody leaves. Neil Armstrong has been as far away from the earth as any man has ever been.

He was on the moon and came back. It's time for judgment. His life has been lived for better or for worse.

All his thoughts and actions are written in the book. We still have some blank pages left in ours. Don't know how many pages.

But we still got some blank pages. So we can benefit so much from looking at these things. We have to understand about the bread.

We cannot have a hard heart. We can't be blind and deaf. Why do you reason because you have no bread? This is the problem.

Our reasoning takes place on a human physical level, doesn't it? We can reason because we lack provision. We can reason because we lack health. We can reason because we lack promotion.

We can reason because we lack opportunity. We can reason because we lack grades. We can reason because we lack something in this earth.

My car broke down and it's going to cost more to fix it than the car is worth. Why did God let this happen to me? Look at the fix that I'm in now. I've got a relationship problem.

I've got a parent problem. I've got a child problem. I've got a spouse problem.

I've got an employee problem. I've got an employer problem. I've got a fellow student problem.

I've got a roommate problem. I've got a name your problem. Fill in the blank.

We reason about these things. And even when we factor God into the equation, we think, well, God is doing something down here on my level. It's like the rat in the maze and God has put a stick in there and is poking the rat to get him to go some way.

I just need to figure out which way God is poking me so I'll know which way to go. This can happen, but it's not God's typical way. How does God typically guide us? Not with circumstances, but with the Word of God, the truth of God applied into and through circumstances.

I am under pressure. Should I stand and fight or should I flee? The devil is after me. Should I put up my shield of faith with which I quench all of his fiery darts, or should I resist the devil and he will flee from me, or should I flee youthful lusts and run the other way? Which should I do? I can find a Bible verse that will apply different ways.

I don't know if God is disciplining me, if God is testing me, or if God is blessing me. I just really don't know. Well, this is the problem with trying to divine God's intentions through interpreting circumstances.

God, in the person of Jesus Christ, asks the disciples a question, doesn't He? In fact, He doesn't even ask a question. He says, Take heed, beware the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. They say, hmm, why did Jesus say, Beware the leaven? Leaven is not in fish.

It's not in spinach salad. It's not in hummus. It's not in tabbouleh.

It's not in whatever else they might have been eating in these days. What is leaven found in? There's only one thing you leaven, and that's bread. And they think, oh, bread.

Right. I remember all those baskets. I remember hunking chunks of bread, picking them up, getting them from 12 baskets, 7 baskets.

And now we've only got one little tortilla here. We've only got one little flat loaf. So this is a rebuke because we didn't bring more bread.

Reasoning. Jesus says, Why are you reasoning? Because you have no bread. Did I say anything about you having no bread? No.

You've made a leap here. It is a faulty application, isn't it? Principle, from the Word of God, it is a principle. You know the difference between a doctrine and a principle, right?

Doctrine is a statement of fact about God and His creation.

Jesus Christ is undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever. That's a doctrine. God the Holy Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son.

That is a doctrine. Jesus Christ will return to collect His bride 7 years before He comes back as the Messiah and Davidic King to institute the Millennial Kingdom. That is a doctrine.

What is a principle? Principle is where we take truth and live by it. We apply it. I should not worry.

I should have faith. I should be a person of prayer. I should meditate on the Scriptures day and night.

I should pray often, evening and morning and at noon. These are principles. Not just commands, but principles.

If we put God first, if we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, we don't have to worry about provision. Take no thought for what you will eat, what you will drink, what you will wear. Your Father in Heaven knows that you have need of these things.

This is a principle. Principles, doctrines survive in the abstract. You don't need a person living a life for them to be true and meaningful.

Principles are the outworking of divine truth in human life. Principles are what we live by. Doctrines are what we meditate on.

You can move from a doctrine to a principle, but that's the difference. When we say doctrines, principles and promises, that's what we're talking about. Doctrines are truths.

They're axiomatic. Principles are like formulas that are based on axioms. This is how you get work done.

This is how you solve for X. Principles, they're practical. The pragmatic, useful, I'm going to get it done thing is a principle. So, Jesus says, Take heed and beware the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.

What is it? Doctrine, principle or promise? Principle. Don't be led astray because somebody is taking the bread and corrupting it, adding something to it, which is commonly added, which people think is good. Makes the bread more tasty.

Watched somebody make bread just this weekend. Put in the leaven, roll up the dough, stick it in the pan, come back a little while later, up she comes, if all goes well. You didn't get the water too hot and so on.

Everybody I've ever watched make bread, I mean everybody from my great-grandmother on down, always you can see the relief in their eyes when they come back and the bread has risen. Because sometimes it doesn't. It just lays there like a pie crust and you think, wasted all that flour.

People like leaven. Makes the bread tasty. Our life is leavened.

You cannot get away from leaven. We are in this world. We are fallen.

The world is fallen. Other people are fallen. There are principalities and powers, rulers of the darkness of this age.

They're fallen. Everything is fallen. Everything is leavened.

Jesus doesn't say, you know, separate yourself. He says beware. He says watch out.

Keep track of it. Know about it. Identify it.

Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. Now, why Pharisees and why Herod? By the way, this is all about the woman with the daughter. We've got to understand about the bread.

What do the Pharisees represent? This is religious attainment. Religious views of things. The religious standard by which things are measured.

This is tradition, right? Traditionally, the Pharisees, what actual biblical authority do Pharisees have? Are they Levites? Did God send Moses down from the mountain and say, you guys, you're the Pharisees. It's their self-appointed authorities, aren't they? They've gotten together and made a little club, the Pharisee club. And, well, I think you're a pretty righteous guy.

Well, hey, I think you're a pretty righteous guy, too. Well, let's get this guy over here. He can be righteous and we'll just have the righteous club.

And, you know, the people that aren't in our club, they're not as righteous as we are. And, you know, this is what makes you righteous. What do you do? Well, I go to synagogue and put a big bag of money in the thing.

Well, you know, I do that, too. That's our standard of righteousness. What we do is righteous and what everybody else does is not.

And they'll, you know, recruit some Old Testament scriptures to support their views, but they expand it and they take the scriptures and add a bunch of stuff to it to fluff it up and make it tasty. The leaven of the Pharisees, taking the Word of God and turning it on its head, inflating it with a bunch of foamy nonsense. What about the leaven of Herod? The Pharisees are pseudo-spiritual authorities.

What is Herod? He's a pseudo-kingly authority. He's a pseudo-political authority. He's got sort of son of David ambitions, doesn't he? He's the social and political guy, self-appointed.

You know the history of the Herods. I don't have time to go into that, but this is social action. Herod has tried to be a good guy, hasn't he? Spent all kinds of money refurbishing and coddling the Pharisees and their whole system of worship.

He said, well, this is the thing that seems to prevail, so hey, I'm in with it. I'm one of you guys. I'll support you and finance you and protect you such as I can.

I'll buffer between the Romans and you and get you some privileges and some favors and some exceptions. And he's the great compromiser. He's the great intermediary.

And he's as close as he can trying to sit on the throne of David, be sort of the king. But he's a pseudo-king. This is the Pharisees are pseudo-spiritual leaders and both of them employ and adduce scripture to support their views, but they have to corrupt it.

They've got to inflate it. They've got to add a bunch of foam. Jesus said, beware.

Don't let your scriptural understanding be corrupted, be compromised, be intermingled with falsehoods, with wrong things. This is Jesus' concern. Now, why would he say this? What had just happened back up in verse 11 and 12? The Pharisees came and began to dispute with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven, testing him.

If you are the Messiah, what scripture says, you should be able to do the following. They're putting him to the test and quoting Old Testament, right? Well, how do we know you're descended from David? Give us a sign that shows that you're actually from God. What has he been doing for months and months and months now? But they want to see it for themselves.

Well, I've heard that you do miracles, but I want to see one for myself. I'll put you to my own scriptural test and see if you measure up. There's a verse over in Zechariah that I don't think you meet and I want you to prove it to me.

And Jesus left them getting into the boat. He's thinking about the Pharisees. He's thinking about their view of government.

They like Herod. The Pharisees are thriving under Herod. They've got this unholy alliance.

And they see... Do you ever wonder why the Pharisees were so anti-Christ? Wouldn't you think if there was anybody that could do miracles and so on, they would just seize on that, even for political reasons. They like the status quo. And they have built their understanding of the status quo on their leavened version of Scripture.

And when Jesus comes and people start acknowledging Him and following Him and listening to Him, this upsets the status quo. Hey, wait a minute. What's going to happen to me if this guy gets some traction and starts becoming popular with the people? We're going to lose our status.

We're going to lose our authority. Jesus said, beware. Why would He tell the disciples this? They're not Pharisees or in Herod's government.

So why would He tell the disciples to beware of that leaven? What's going to happen after Jesus leaves and these guys become apostles and they become the leadership of the church? What is their temptation going to be? Well, hey, I've got an apostolic status quo here. We've got this new church thing going and I kind of like being an apostle. I like going around and everybody, you know, wanting to touch my handkerchief to get healed and treating me like the next best thing to Jesus Christ Himself.

I kind of like this status quo. I don't want to see things change. We're in the age of miracles.

I don't want the miracles to go away. We're in the age of spoken authority of new revelation, and I kind of like that. The church is all Jewish.

I kind of like that. I kind of like the fact that God has done a new work in Israel, but this Gentile thing, I don't remember Jesus saying anything about that. He said, you know, He sent only the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

I don't want to see it change. I don't want to see my apostolic authority. Who's this upstart Saul that's calling himself Paul now and claiming he saw the Lord? We were with the Lord.

We're the ones who have the, you know, the pyramid with the eye on top, and we're the ones that have got the secret mysteries of the Lord. We were with Him from the beginning. We elected Matthias.

What are you talking about this Saul guy? Last I heard, he was hailing people into prison and persecuting and held the coats while our brother Stephen got stoned. Who is this guy? Jesus is telling them now. Notice how far in advance of when they're going to need this warning that Jesus is giving it to them.

Do we learn things now that we need to remember for much later? Of course. God can't give us a crash course Cliff Notes Bible class right before every test. If He's given it to them this far in advance, how are they ever going to remember it? How are we going to remember the things that we learn so that when the time for application comes, they will be there for us? This is what meditation does.

This is why we have to. This is not an option. It's not a, wouldn't it be nice and wouldn't I

be holy if? We must take time to sit and think about things that we have learned.

We have covered over 21 miracles now. If you at random pick any of those miracles, pick anyone at random, pick Jairus' daughter, can you think of one point of application from Jairus' daughter? One thing we learned after covering that thing extensively that is important to remember for me today and tomorrow and the next day. What is the principle? Why is that recorded in Scripture? Feeding of the 5,000.

Can I think of anything from the feeding of the 5,000 that is meaningful to me and that I need to remember for my walk before the Lord? My walk under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I'm trying to stay on the straight path, head for that narrow gate that leads to life, and this is the thing I learned from that miracle. Reach a little further back.

What about the wedding feast at Cana? What about the centurion's servant? Is there one thing I can remember? We have covered more than 21 miracles. There ought to be 21 separate things. Just by thinking of a miracle, I can say, you know what? Covered that thing for half hour, an hour.

I ought to remember one thing from it. If we don't remember, what was the point of going through it? 1 Thessalonians went through an entire book. Is there one thing I can remember out of 1 Thessalonians? One thing.

If you're not meditating, you can't answer that question. Went through the whole book of 1 Peter. I remember 1 Peter is about suffering.

I think he was saying, you know, be good to each other. One thing. Can we not remember one thing? Went through 66 chapters of Isaiah.

Can you think of one thing from that book that is meaningful and applicable? Hopefully, you're sitting there saying, yeah, you know, I actually can. In fact, I can remember two or three things. I remember several things.

Praise God. If you can't, I will tell you from Scripture, I will tell you from the authority of the Word of God, you are not meditating. And if you're having trouble, if you're having questions, if you're reasoning, thinking you've got no bread, it's because you are not meditating.

Have we not taken up 12 baskets of bread out of these studies? Have we not grabbed another seven big baskets of fragments out of these studies? Why have we only got one piece of bread in the boat? If you feel like there are areas of struggle in your life as a believer before the Lord, ask yourself a question. How many Bible classes have I been to? How many pages of notes have I got? What am I carrying with me in my boat today? If you're not meditating, you're going to be in a boat with one piece of bread, and when a statement is made, when an issue arises, you're not going to know what that one piece of bread means. The one piece of bread, look at them.

They got one piece of bread and they're screwing that up. Why? Their hearts are hard. Why is their heart hard? Why is ground hard? Because you don't plow it.

Because you don't work it. You don't till it. You don't break up the clods so that the seed can sink in and germinate and grow and have a stalk and a leaf and a flower and bear 30-fold, 60-fold, and 100-fold.

Meditation is your plow. Rehearsing and reviewing, this is what gives you bread in the boat, and when Jesus says, Beware the leaven, you say, Yes, Lord, got it. I know exactly what you mean.

That leaven, when I've got the pure truth of the word, I don't want it adulterated. I don't want it modified. I don't want it conditioned.

I don't want it fluffed up and made more tasty with a bunch of human viewpoint, with a bunch of humanly-purposed redirection and twisting, taking truth and twisting it to serve personal ends. I've got it. I am going to be watching out for that leaven of the Pharisees.

I'm going to be watching out for that leaven of Herod, taking my relationship with God and my knowledge of the truth and diverting it to try to accomplish my own ambitions and my own goals. I just want to get my stuff done. I want to be a great Pharisee.

I want to be a great king of the people and have political sway and be popular. That's the leaven of Herod. That's the leaven of the Pharisees.

Jesus says, watch out for that stuff. They don't have bread and what they do have, they don't understand. Their hearts are hard.

Why? They did not understand about the loaves. Now, we're going to pause and take our break. When we come back, we are going to see the Syrophoenician woman and you know what? She understands about the loaves.

She has got the loaves down cold. She lives in tire for crying out loud. She doesn't walk with the Lord Jesus.

She's not even an Israelite. She's a Canaanite woman and she's got the loaves totally figured out. Totally figured out.

Let's pause here and take our break.