

Miracles of Jesus 12-09-02a

This is Sunday, the 2nd of September, 2012. We continue our study in the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ. And while I had originally attempted to have sort of a discrete study for each miracle, we have been synthesizing recently what I would loosely call the bread miracles.

This is the feeding of the 5,000, the feeding of the 4,000, the commentary that Jesus gives about those to his disciples when they get in the boat and realize that they have no bread. Most recently, the Syrophoenician woman up in Tyre who claims God's grace using a metaphor that Jesus introduces of bread that is given to children and yet is falling from the master's table. And we're going to see that there's a reason for this that transcends just the common thread of bread.

And so we'll take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and our worship and our study and then we'll begin. Father, we are grateful and we thank you for the many expressions of grace that we receive every day as we look over this past week and we see the interweaving of circumstances and provision and opportunities and challenges and testing and guidance and the occasions where we can think through the things that we see and learn from your word and put them into practical effect, expressing our faith and laying hold of righteousness and seeking to be more fully equipped and more fully prepared for service now and in the ages to come. And we're so grateful that you have incorporated us into your overall plan and purpose for the universe and for this planet, for human history, for this nation, for our families and for ourselves as individuals.

We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you that he has set such a tremendous example of faith and obedience, working with the very same flesh and the very same provisions and endowments that have been given to us, living by the words that proceed from you, the Holy Spirit that proceeds from you. We know that we too can be faithful and obedient to our calling, even as he was.

We know that he intercedes on our behalf. He makes appeal for us as he sits at your right hand, even as we speak. And we look forward to the day when you send him to return to receive us to himself and we move into that great and expanded phase of opportunity and service in his kingdom and in yours.

We pray that as we fellowship and study your word this morning, that God the Holy Spirit will superintend, that he will teach us, that he will enable us to remember and to find application for the things that we see, that it will transform us and change us and thoroughly equip us for every good work. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thinking back over the things we've looked at the last several weeks, there are a number of ways to view it. You think about the Syro-Phoenician woman, the miracle we have most recently seen. She is a Gentile.

She lives up in the region of Sidon and Tyre. I think it's probably Tyre, the southernmost city. If you look at a map, you'll see that that area, which is now Lebanon, is much closer to Galilee than Jerusalem is.

It's probably twice the distance to get down to Jerusalem from Galilee as it is to get up to the coast cities of Tyre and Sidon. So it's not that great a distance geographically, but it's a huge distance culturally, religiously and spiritually, moving out of Israel and out of God's chosen people, those who have, by covenant agreement, entered into and under the law of Moses and its requirements and provisions for those who believe in God. So why does Jesus go there? Well, this is the only episode we have recorded.

And much as he went across the Sea of Galilee on behalf of one man, the man with the legion, a demon possession of large proportions, so he goes almost in the exact opposite compass direction. Instead of going southeast, he heads northwest and encounters the very same problem, demon possession. This woman's daughter has a demon.

So if you step back and you look at the parallel, and you can do this, for example, in the Gospel of Mark, you can pick a number of ways of doing it, but just for the sake of argument, turn to Mark chapter 6 and you will see that that chapter begins with a significant event. This is Jesus' rejection at Nazareth. Nazareth is Galilee, this is northern Israel, and it is Jesus' home locale.

And Jesus marvels in verse 6 because of their unbelief. He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching. He calls the twelve to himself and sends them out by twos, gives them power over unclean spirits, gives them power over unclean spirits, commands them to take nothing for the journey, and so on.

You have John the Baptist beheaded, which is another significant event, both literally and symbolically. The man who represents the people of Israel, their king, decides that John should no longer live. When he is forced to make a decision, he chooses against John and against John's message.

Then you have the feeding of the 5,000, and this is really where I would suggest a parallel. If you have notepaper and you want to make this parallel, I would suggest two columns, a column on the left and a column on the right. On the left, put the feeding of the 5,000.

This is Mark 6, 31 through 44, feeding of the 5,000. In the right-hand column, put the feeding of the 4,000. This is Mark 8, 1 through 9. Next to each of those, or under it, or in the periphery, you can put bread.

Bread is involved, right? Bread is one of the main elements of those two miraculous events. Now, below the feeding of the 5,000, what is the next thing that happens? After verse 44 of Mark chapter 6, it says in 45, immediately he made his disciples get into the

boat. They are going to cross the lake.

So, your second entry in the left-hand column is crossing the lake. This is Mark 6, 45 through 52. We've looked at this walking on the water miracle in our recent weeks of study.

In the right-hand column, right beside that, what happens after the feeding of the 4,000? Look at Mark chapter 8, verse 10. Immediately, got into the boat with his disciples, crossing the lake. So, on the right-hand side, crossing the lake, Mark 8, 10a.

And, when you look at verse 14, of course, there is a bread element involved in that second crossing. The third thing you can put in the left-hand column, in Mark chapter 6, 53 through 56, Jesus lands at Gennesaret. He comes to the shore at Gennesaret.

And, of course, he's going to go up and you're going to have the great sandwich miracle. Jairus' daughter, the woman who comes up behind him and touches the hem of his garment. And, in Mark 8, 10b, it tells us that he came to the region of Dalmanutha.

So, he lands at Dalmanutha. And, there is no corresponding sign. It would have been kind of a nice parallel if Jairus' daughter had been after the feeding of the 5,000, and the woman with the issue of blood had been after the 4,000, but it's almost as though the woman with the issue of the blood got sandwiched over with Jairus, and so there is no miracle after the landing at Dalmanutha.

But now, your third entry, in the left-hand column, comes immediately after, in Mark chapter 7, controversy with the Pharisees. Controversy with the Pharisees. Mark chapter 7, the Pharisees come and see his disciples eating bread with unwashed hands.

And, they don't do that. They don't eat anything unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders, as it says in verse 3 of chapter 7 of Mark. When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash.

There are many other things which they have received and hold, the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. A little extra detail to inform this controversy with the Pharisees, coming from Peter through Mark. So, the Pharisees and scribes ask him in verse 5, why do you and your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders? That's the next thing in your left-hand column.

Controversy with the Pharisees. And, there's 23 verses of it in chapter 7. If you've got a red-letter Bible, your whole middle of the chapter is nothing but red ink. And, he has to go on to explain that it's not what goes into you that defiles you, it's what comes out of your heart.

Well, on the right-hand side, oddly enough, in chapter 8, verse 11 through 13, you have the Pharisees came and began to dispute with him, seeking a sign. Controversy with the

Pharisees after the 5,000 and the landing. Controversy with the Pharisees after defeating the 4,000 and the landing.

After this, on your left-hand column, verse 24 of chapter 7, from there he arose and he went to Tyre and Sidon. This brings us to our most recent miracle study. The Syrophenician woman.

And, he has a dialogue with her in verses 24 through 30 about whether or not Jesus should act on her behalf. And, the metaphor there is bread. On the right-hand side, after the controversy with the Pharisees in chapter 8, verses 11 through 13, Jesus has a dialogue with the disciples in 14 through 21 about bread.

Beware the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. On the left-hand side, big explanation of the tradition of the Pharisees. Their tradition, their tradition, their tradition.

They wash this, they wash that. They don't do anything without washing, without ablutions, without their traditions. On the right-hand side, Jesus tells his disciples, watch out for that stuff.

Don't be taken in by religious tradition. We're a fairly non-traditional church. We don't have a lot of the accoutrements and the things that are traditionally associated with church.

But, that doesn't mean we're right. It doesn't mean we're any more holy or spiritual. It is what goes on in your heart.

There are people who engage in very traditional forms of worship, and they are godly, spiritual, wonderful, healthy, growing, productive, fruitful, kingdom-bound believers. It isn't just, well, I've eschewed tradition, so I'm on the straight and narrow. It is what people use tradition for.

If tradition becomes your idea of righteousness, or if your lack of tradition becomes your idea of righteousness, you've missed the boat. Literally, missed the boat that crosses the lake, gets to the other side. Dialogue with disciples about the bread miracles in 8, 14 through 21.

So, you begin to see that there's a pretty significant tracking parallel here, right? Now, what's even more interesting is, right after all of this, what is the next thing in your left-hand column? After chapter 7, verse 30, when Jesus finishes with the woman, what happens? Verse 31 of Mark chapter 7. Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. Came through to Decapolis. You remember, that's way over straight east of the Jordan River, between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.

Decapolis is straight over. The only thing south of that is Perea. But you've got Perea,

you've got Decapolis, and you've got up there where Caesarea Philippi.

Sidon is roughly at the same latitude as Damascus. They're almost on the same latitude line on the globe. And then you've got Tyre somewhat below that.

You've got the Sea of Galilee. But Decapolis, if he's leaving Tyre and coming to the Sea of Galilee, he made a loop. If I'm doing it this way, here's Sidon, over here's Damascus.

Here's the Mediterranean Sea. You've got Tyre down here. Here's the Sea of Galilee.

Here's the Jordan. Here's the Dead Sea. And Jesus comes way around and loops through Decapolis and comes back to the Sea.

Now, if he goes through Decapolis and comes back to the Sea, you know where he is? He's in the region of the legion man. Where did the legion man, where was he told to go and share his testimony? He shared it through all the region of Decapolis, right? He was down there in Gadara, Gerasa. Remember that? So, Jesus has left Tyre and Sidon and has looped back around, not on the Israel side of the Jordan, on the hog-jumping side, on the Decapolis-Peria side.

Looped all the way around there and came to the Sea of Galilee. Is he back on that same shore? Is he looking at those same bluffs? Could be. But he didn't just make a straight line.

He didn't make a straight line from Tyre and Sidon back to the Sea. It says he went through the region of Decapolis. So, he made a big, wide swing.

And what did they do? They brought to him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech and they begged him to put his hand on him. So, the next item in column A, your left-hand column there, after the Seraphimician woman, is curing the deaf-mute. Just for comparison purposes, over on the right, after the dialogue with the disciples about the bread miracles, in 8.14-21, look at chapter 8, verse 22.

Then he came to Bethsaida, and they brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. 7.32, they brought to him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech and they begged him to put his hand on him. 8.22, they brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him.

Does this look parallel in any way? I mean, it starts to be almost predictable. So, he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town, and when he had spit on his eyes, put his hands on him, asked him if he saw anything. When you look at the one on the left, you look at 7.32 and following, he took him aside from the multitude.

Deaf-mute man, taken away from the multitude. Blind man, taken away from the city. We're just really being asked to see a parallel here, are we not? Is this showing up?

Looking up to heaven, verse 34 of chapter 7, with the deaf-mute, Jesus took him aside, put his fingers in his ears, spat and touched his tongue.

Verse 23 of chapter 8, took the blind man by the hand, led him out of the town, when he had spit on his eyes. Spit in chapter 7 with the deaf-mute. Spit in chapter 8 with the blind man.

Not a common element of Jesus' healings. And behold, they brought to him all who were sick and afflicted, and he spat upon them. It's just that's not what you read.

But here, in both cases, saliva is involved. Now, did Jesus need to use saliva? Did he need to touch? Did he even need to see them? Have you noticed, by the way, in looking at the Syrophenician woman, that this was another of Jesus' long-distance miracles? Think about the long-distance miracles. In Matthew chapter 8, and in Luke chapter 7, Matthew chapter 8, Luke chapter 7, you have the parallel accounts of the Roman centurion and his servant slash son.

Right? Roman centurion. Jew or Gentile? Gentile. Does Jesus see the person healed or not? He does not.

You have no need. Authority. I say come, they come.

Go, and they go. You can do the same. Jesus says, be it to you not seeing so great a faith in Israel.

And he's healed. Gentile at a distance. John chapter 4. Remember when we went through the Gospel of John? You got the seven great signs.

John chapter 4, after the wedding feast at Cana and so on. You get to that. What is it? Healing of the nobleman's son.

What kind of guy is the nobleman? He's a great friend, he's a sponsor for the synagogue, and so on. What kind of guy is he? Gentile. Does Jesus see the person healed? No.

The man returns healed at that very hour. Mark chapter 7, the Syrophenician woman. Jew or Gentile? Gentile.

Gentile. Does Jesus ever see the person healed? Healed at a distance. Kind of a consistent pattern of touching the Jewish, dealing with them, hands on, personal contact.

The Gentiles, the only Gentile you can really think of that gets healed, is what's missing in our parallel? What happens after the crossing of the lake of Gennesaret in the left-hand column? You've got Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood. On the right-hand side, you've got sort of a gap. There's no miracle after the crossing.

There's no sign when he lands at Dalmanutha. And we don't know the status. This

woman who touches the hem of his garment, we don't know.

She's not identified. It doesn't say, and behold, a woman of Gennesaret, or a woman of Nazareth, or a woman of Capernaum. It doesn't say where she's from.

She's anonymous. She's had this affliction for 12 years, just as the daughter of Jairus is 12 years old. When the daughter of Jairus was born, this woman developed the issue of blood.

And Jesus, she is healed. And it's interesting because she's healed, but Jesus doesn't seem to know it. She sneaks up from behind.

It's not really one of these, and they brought to him a woman with an issue of blood, and he said, woman, it's a miracle behind him. It's a miracle almost without him. Who touched me? Someone touched me.

I perceive that virtue has gone out of me. And she's behind. So that could possibly be another of these odd miracles in the sense that Jesus is not actively and consciously having a dialogue with the person who got healed.

Talking with others. Jesus spends a lot more time talking to the disciples about figure out who touched me. In the press of the crowd, everybody has touched you.

So we have come now to these miracles of the deaf man in chapter 7 and the blind man in chapter 8. And last week, the last suggestion I made about the Syrophoenician woman and her daughter, I said look at the very last phrase. It's a clue. And so when you look at chapter 7, verse 30, when the lady had come to her house just as with the centurion, just as with the nobleman, just as with these distance miracles, at the time that Jesus spoke it, the girl is healed.

Now, I said there are several different ways of looking at this. When people's sons and daughters have been healed, when women are healed, when anybody gets healed that's been prostrated or thrown into fits by demon possession or whatever, what typically happens? What happened when Jesus said, Talitha Kumi, in the upstairs room with Jairus' daughter? What happens when he takes the hand? What happened to Peter's mother-in-law? She was prostrated with a fever. When Jesus healed her, what did she do? She got up and began to serve them.

What happened when he says, Talitha Kumi, and takes the little girl by the hand? Give her something to eat. She's up and about. The servant, the nobleman's son, the woman with the issue of blood, all these people, the lame, take up your bed and walk.

The blind, they can see. The people that are leaping and stretch forth your hand and his hand is as whole as the other and he's fully functional. Do you see anything unique about this miracle? This little girl has a demon.

Her mother pleads on her behalf. Jesus says, for this saying, go your way, the demon has gone out of your daughter. And when she gets back home, where is the daughter? And behold, the daughter was up leaping and dancing for joy.

The daughter was out playing. The daughter was in the kitchen making food. Where is this daughter? What does it say? Where is the mother finder? Lying on the bed.

Now, what do we make of this? It's a detail. In the parallel, by the way, it doesn't mention this. It just says the woman went home to find that the demon was gone.

But here in Mark, Peter tells us, she went home to find the daughter lying on the bed. By the way, how does Peter know this? How does Mark know it, to write it down? They've had some subsequent converse with the woman, right? They have had contact with her later. Because Jesus leaves Tyre, but they must have had a subsequent conversation.

Did she come back to say thank you? Or did, before they left, did she come flag them down? But how do they know that she found the daughter lying on the bed? Somebody has talked to her after she went home, right? But she found the daughter lying on the bed. I think in the world of symbolism, in the world of carrying additional freight, we, from our perspective, know that this anticipates the Gospel coming to the Gentiles. The world of salvation and the Apostle Paul and everything else going to the Gentiles, right? But it's not yet.

What did Jesus tell this woman? I am sent to the children. It's the little children. I shouldn't take their bread and give it elsewhere.

In another place He says, I am sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Remember that? So, when these things happen for the centurion or the nobleman or the Syrophoenician woman, or perhaps this woman that comes up behind Jesus in the crowd with the issue of blood, it's sort of an exception, right? And Jesus says, here's faith outside Israel that I haven't seen in Israel. The crumbs are indeed.

Big pieces of bread are falling off the table and how can you deny these who are hungry for it? Even if their status isn't that of a child and of a son in the household, how can you deny the bread to those who are hungry for it? Who are asking for it? Who are repeatedly pleading for it? And who have the faith to lay hold of it? And who can justify their faith based on what they know about God and what they know about Jesus as the centurion does, as this woman does? And Jesus says, be it to you according to your faith. For this saying, go your way, the demon has gone out of your daughter. But the daughter is pictured lying on the bed.

Why? These are exceptional things. The time for the full deliverance of the Gentiles is not yet. And not every Gentile miracle is going to suggest that, but I just think it's interesting that Jairus' daughter is taken by the hand and raised up.

This daughter is the last we see of her. She's still lying on the bed. The demon is gone.

Maybe she's just exhausted. Maybe she's been thrown around with fits and who knows what all. We reviewed what all can happen in demon possession.

You remember that? What the various accounts of demon possession, and this is another one of those. There are seven. You remember this from a while back when we were looking at the mute guy that had a demon and it kept him from speaking? There were seven specific exorcisms by Jesus.

There was the man in the synagogue that he had to rebuke and tell him to come out. I know who you are, the Holy One of God. There's, of course, your Gergesene, Gerasene, Gadarene, Legion man.

That was number two. This Syrophoenician woman's daughter is number three. You had the boy at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration.

The disciples that were not up with Peter, James, and John had tried to cast out the demon and could not. Jesus says this kind comes out only by prayer. That's in Matthew 17, by the way.

There's the mute man in Matthew chapter 9. There's the blind and mute man in Matthew chapter 12 and also Luke chapter 11. And there's the bent-over woman that has the spirit of infirmity. And Jesus says, should this yoke not be removed? We take yokes off of animals on the Sabbath.

Should this woman who has been bound by a spirit of infirmity all these years not be delivered? Luke 13. So, this is one of those demon deliverances. And we don't know exactly what this demon was doing.

We know what demons are capable of doing. They can cause people to rave. They can cause them to be self-destructive.

They can cause them to tear off their clothes. They can give them seizures. They can make them mute.

They can make them deaf. They can make them blind. Or they can cause them to speak out.

Demons can take over the voice box and say, I know who you are, the Holy One of God. If you come to torment us before the time. And so on.

All of these are known effects of demon possession. We know that they have a limited ability to tell the future as the girl in Acts. And when she's healed, they get mad at Paul, the slave girl in Acts 16.

We know that they can create great depression as the spirit did for Saul in the Old Testament. So, all we know about this is that after the demon left, the girl is found lying on the bed. So it seems that she's not fully and completely restored, or she'd be up and around.

She'd meet her mother at the door. Behold, when she went home, her daughter met her at the door. She's lying on the bed.

And that detail is significant. It's not quite yet the time for the Gentiles. They have a limited grace, but their grace is by association with Israel.

By association with Israel's Messiah. By recognizing Israel's Messiah, as Ruth did, as Uriah the Hittite did, as Naaman the Syrian did. There is blessing.

Those that came out, the mixed multitude with the Israelites from Egypt, they recognize, but it's always association with Israel. And they're still sort of lying on the bed. They're not going to be independently and collectively recognized with their own status until after the resurrection, after the ascension of the Lord Jesus.

So, having said all that, we see now that we've got these two miracles that follow. We've tracked them. I feel like we need to sort of complete this arc or this cycle that really began with the feeding of the 5,000, the feeding of the 4,000, followed by the crossing of the lake, followed by the landing, followed by the dispute with the Pharisees, followed by these sign conversations, if you will, that have to do with bread, bread with the Syrophenician woman, bread with the disciples.

And now we have the cure of the deaf mute, and we're invited to compare that with the healing of the blind man in chapter 8 of Mark. So, we're going to pause and take our break. When we come back, we're going to kind of do two miracles at once, or we're going to see Jesus do two miracles, and we're going to look at them at once and see what this invitation to comparison and contrast can teach us.

But let's pause here and take our break.