

## **Miracles of Jesus 12-09-23a**

This is Sunday, the 23rd of September, 2012. We continue our study of the miracles of the Lord Jesus by looking at, by what is in my numbering, Miracle 25. We're about two-thirds of the way through the three dozen miracles of the Lord Jesus, the specific ones that are recorded in Scripture.

And this one you might call, Casting the Demon Out of the Lunatic Boy. Lunatic. Lunar.

Blow up the moon. That explains my earlier reference, somewhat. But he is called in Scripture, Moonstruck.

This is Casting the Demon Out of the Moonstruck Boy. So let's take just a moment to ensure that our hearts are prepared and that we're receptive to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. We've cleared away any unconfessed sin or distracting thoughts and perpetrations of evil that might be lurking in our souls.

And we can make sure that we are free of the influence of evil as we look at Jesus eradicating it from this boy. Shall we pray? Father, what a blessing it is for us in the midst of busy days and busy weeks and busy times to pause for reflection, refreshment at the oasis of Your Word. Have our souls nourished and strengthened and brought more sharply into focus in terms of our spiritual opportunities, our relationship with You, the brief time that we spend in this life and in this world in preparation for the eternal life that is ours through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank You for Him, for His personal example, His teaching, His gifts to us, not only in securing for us a relationship with You and the privilege of representing ourselves before You as priests, being enabled to wash ourselves, be sprinkled with the blood of the Lord Jesus so that we can come before You with boldness and claim Your many promises and Your many expressions of grace. We pray that as we look at this portion of Scripture that reveals to us directly the Lord Jesus in His words and actions, that God the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and the presenter and will effectively and impressively bring these things to our hearts so that we'll remember it, we'll understand it, we'll see its pertinence and its application in our individual walk before You. We pray that as a result we will live in a way that pleases You, that fulfills our calling, that justifies the work of the Lord Jesus in saving us and calling us to this wonderful life that You have provided.

We pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen. This miracle is recorded for us in three of the four Gospels. And by the way, if I was going to write the Sam Hall version of the Scriptures, when I got to the New Testament, my first book would be John.

Can you think why? How does the Old Testament begin? How does John begin? I think they screwed up. I think it should have been John, Matthew, Mark, Luke or something. John, Mark, Matthew, Luke, something like that.

But don't you think it would just be so symmetrical and so beautiful if John was the first book in the New Testament? And you'd have this nice chiasm, John at the beginning, John at the end. In the beginning, evermore, kingdom of the Father. How could they have not done that? To me it just seems insane that you wouldn't start the New Testament with John, but that's just me.

Anyway, this miracle is in three of the four Gospels, not in John by the way, but Matthew, Mark and Luke all carry it. And there are details in each, so we're going to need to kind of be checking back and forth. Let's begin by looking at it in the Gospel of Matthew.

And if you look at Matthew, we have been in this general area, Matthew chapter 15 with the woman who says the crumbs that fall from the children's table ought to be available to the little dogs. You've got the feeding of the 4,000 there at the end of Matthew 15. You've got the Pharisees and the Sadducees seeking a sign in chapter 16.

And Jesus warning His disciples about the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. We've been through that in great detail. Jesus asks after they get to the other side, Oh, ye little faith, why do you reason that you have brought no bread? We've exhausted that passage.

We haven't exhausted it, but we've exhausted ourselves looking at it. Exhausted me. In verse 13, Peter confesses Jesus, Who do men say that I am? John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, one of the prophets.

Who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus says, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona. Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

On this rock I will build my church and so on. Then from that time, verse 21, Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, be killed and be raised the third day. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.

It tells us in the parallel over in Mark that Jesus was saying these things openly and Peter got nervous because he was saying the Pharisees, the scribes and the elders of Israel are going to do this. And Peter says, You're just saying this out in the open. You're accusing them.

And he took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. Far be it from you, Lord, this shall not happen to you. But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind me, Satan.

You are an offense to me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men. Now, bookmark that, put a little mental yellow sticky next to that very last statement. You are an offense to me.

Why? You're mindful. Remember my introduction? How easy it is for us to get caught up in the affairs of this life and to forget that God has got a larger, grander plan. Just remember, we are the two-year-old.

God is the wise parent. He knows more than we do. He is up to things and if we get to stamping our little feet and throwing our little fits, we have become an offense.

We are offensive to the Lord Jesus because we have our eyes and our minds on the things of men and not on the things of God. Now, what kind of sense does it make to Peter that Jesus, the Lord of glory, the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God, should be turned over to the hands of men and abused and killed? Well, that's just heinous. What kind of sense does that make? That's not logical.

That's not proper. Should Peter know better? Has Peter ever seen the Old Testament sacrifices? Does he know anything about the Levitical rituals? Has he got any idea about the suffering servant? Well, of course he does, but he's not thinking about that. He's got his mind on the immediate, on the circumstances.

There are real flesh and blood Pharisees, real flesh and blood scribes that are actively plotting. They've heard this stuff. It gets back to them.

Servants who work in the households of these guys over here, conversations, and they're believers and they come and they speak to the disciples. Bartholomew is out there and he happens to know a guy that works where the Pharisees are in the Sanhedrin meetings or whatever. He comes and he says, you know, they're plotting to kill your master.

These guys come back and they tell Jesus, you know, these guys, this is getting serious. They're hiring Sicarii and guys that are taking oaths and vows that they're going to kill you. They're going to get you up on charges.

They're going to trump something up. And Jesus says, look, it's going to happen. Peter says, Lord, we can't let this happen.

Be it far from you. We'll find a way to hide you. We'll escape.

We'll do something. We'll go up in Galilee and I know a cave. And Jesus says, look, where's your head? Where's your mind? You're just thinking about the short-term, immediate downside of this and you're not thinking about the larger plan and purpose of God, which comprehends short-term evil.

This is a point. The plan of God includes, allows for, works together for good, short-term evil. It's a part of the plan of God.

We see evil and we think something has gone wrong. Just like the little child, take him to the doctor, roll up your sleeve, I've got a sharp thing here and I'm going to hurt you. Oh,

that can't be good.

Parent understands short-term evil, long-term benefit. We as believers have to trust our heavenly Father. Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, you lose Lot and his two concupiscent daughters, his two lascivious, I'll do anything to get a child, daughters.

Oh, that can't be good. Oh God, for the sake of any amount of people, you've got to deliver Lot. Oh Lord, that Ishmael might live before you.

Look at him, little boy. How did Ishmael come about? That was Abraham's mistake. Abraham and Sarah concocted this scheme of the Egyptian maid.

Abraham knows that it's supposed to be take a wife from the sons of your people. How can he possibly think that God is going to bless his heir when he's Egyptian, half Egyptian? Anyway, short-term, we have such a short-term myopia. We just can't see beyond the immediate.

We say any kind of pain is bad, any kind of evil is bad, any kind of breakdown in my general happiness is bad. Well, maybe, maybe not. Go to God, see what God thinks.

Sometimes these short-term evils are bad. I will deliver you out. I will deliver you through.

I will clear the way for you. I will never suffer the righteous to be moved. There are other times when God works it together for good, and we don't understand where we've got two-year-old brains.

We don't comprehend all of the factors, but we trust. I was thinking about this the other day. I've got a dog.

He's got a tag on his lip. To ever get that tag off his lip, I'll have to take him to the vet. They'll have to sedate him.

They'll have to put some local anesthetic on there. It's just a big ordeal. It'll never happen.

He's going to have the thing from now on. Next time you see him, just look on the right side. He's got a little tag there.

It's no big deal. But if he trusted me, if he would sit still while that thing is small, I could nip it off. There'd be a little momentary.

I've done that to myself. You find some little weird thing coming out, you just nip it off. You don't have to go to the doctor and anesthetic.

Just get something and cut it off. There's a little pinch, and it's gone. It's gone forever.

I've gotten rid of all kinds of stuff that way. You don't have to be a rocket scientist or a surgeon or have some disinfectant around. But it takes trust.

If he trusted me, he would sit still, I would do this, and it would never be a problem. But of course he can't. He can't fathom what I'm up to.

He's not going to sit still for that. I'd have my arm in a sling if I tried that. You try to do something with a cat.

You try to help a cat. That's danger on wheels. That's danger on four legs.

You get some oven mitts, and you might not get injured. But there's just no trust there. Cats have no trust.

Cat doesn't trust you as far as they can spit. We are different. We're sentient.

We know our Heavenly Father we ought to have our minds on the things of God, and we ought to sit still and trust Him when He says, now this is going to pinch a little bit. Do you want the little momentary pinch before they drill through all the roots of your teeth or not? Pinch? What do you mean pinch? I don't want to pinch. That stuff tastes bad.

Don't be wiping the inside of my mouth with that deal that takes the pinch away. What are you talking about? I should have no bad taste in my mouth. I should have no pinch.

Well, how are you ever going to get bigger things fixed if you don't endure these smaller things? God is fixing eternal problems for us by allowing us and in some cases taking us through the suffering of evil things. Anyway, you are an offense to me, Jesus says, if you have your mind on the things of men. Now, how can we not have our minds on the things of people? We are people.

You can't have your mind off in the clouds. We've got practical things that have to be done, right? We've got people to deal with. We've got circumstances.

So how can we do this? Well, we are doing it right now. One of the reasons you are here is God the Holy Spirit opens our hearts and minds and souls to the truth of God's things. And we put our minds on these.

It is not enough to look at it. We need to meditate on it. We need to think about it.

We need to ponder it. How did Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus, get through one of the most spectacularly unusual circumstances that has ever hit any person in the human race? An angel shows up. How many people have ever seen an angel walk through the door and start talking about God's purpose? Can you imagine? You would think somebody has drugged me.

I am hallucinating. I have gotten a hold of some kind of bad mojo somewhere. I'm seeing

angels.

Angel walks in and says, blessed are you, you are going to have the Christ child. You are going to be the Messiah's mother. What does Scripture say she did with that? Mary pondered these things in her heart.

Let it be to me according to your word. She not only pondered it, she sat down and wrote a poem about it. There is nothing that will focus your thoughts like anybody that journals or keeps a diary or writes emails to other people and tells them what is going on in their life.

Haven't you found this to be true? As you are writing a thing down, it kind of clarifies it. It organizes it in your mind. You can see things as you are communicating it on paper or to others.

Mary pondered these things in her heart. Remember the Magnificat, Mary's song of praise? That is what we would call therapeutic, to put it down. My soul magnifies the Lord.

Look how blessed I am. She thought about it. She put it down.

You can't write a poem, not a good one, if you don't meditate, if you don't ponder, if you don't think, if you don't weave things together in your mind. That's what she did. Mindful of the things of God.

Mindful. Look at the word, circle it. You are not mindful.

Break it into two words. Your mind is full of the things of God. How much of the day do we spend with our mind full of the things of men? A lot.

Mindful of the things of God. Now it doesn't mean that Peter can never go mend a net or cast it into the sea or catch a fish or navigate a boat or deal with his wife and his mother-in-law or anything else. What does it mean? When it comes to things like what's going to happen to the Lord Jesus, if the Lord Jesus says a thing and he's going to react to it, your mind is not full of the things of God when it comes to the plan and purpose of God, the forward movement of circumstances.

There's going to be a downturn. There's going to be some bad times coming. Well, as you contemplate those bad times, is your mind working in human terms or is your mind looking at it full of the things of God? This is the point.

If our mind, as we contemplate the plan and purpose of God and His weaving together circumstances for us, is not full of the things of God, guess what? We're offensive. We're offensive because we should know better. There's no excuse.

Certainly not for anybody in this room, not for anybody listening to the sound of my

voice. We know way too much of the Word of God. We have seen far too much of the plan and purpose of God to lack the ability to fill our mind.

Do you seriously think that we just don't know enough to fill our mind with the things of God? Look at the books that we have covered. Look at the passages we have excavated in detail. Look at this miracle study all by itself.

Two dozen miracles of the Lord we have covered in depth. We know how God works. We know what His plans and purposes are.

We understand these things, and our mind should be full of it. We should call it back up. Go back and look at our notes.

Go back and listen to the Scriptures. Get an audio Bible. Read it in the morning.

Memorize it. One of the great ways to memorize, you know, is to take a phrase at a time. This is O.S.'s suggestion as well.

Write it down on a card in your own writing, and then go phrase by phrase. Just start with the first couple of phrases. Make sure you've got those clear in your mind.

You can say them without a hitch. Add a phrase. Say that over and over and over.

Add a phrase. Add a phrase until you get the whole thing. And then for several days after, any time you've got a break or a pause, stuck at a red light, waiting in an office, got something, nothing much is going on, bring it to mind.

Run it through. This refreshing, it's just like the refresh on the old CRT screens. The cathode ray tube has got a gun in the back, and it's spraying the phosphorescent front of the tube with a stream of particles that cause those phosphors to glow.

Well, it's got to be refreshed. Information that is displayed in pixels comes from memory, and it's got to be refreshed. If you want the picture to move, if you want to see a movie, that picture has to change with each new iteration.

And we need our minds refreshed. We've got to go to the source and get that information up on our screen. Well, this is the background now, because what's going to happen next? Who is it that is most worried about what Jesus has said? It's Peter.

He's one of the de facto leaders. Who are the leaders of this group of disciples? Who are the three most prominent disciples? P. J. and J., right? Peter, James, and John. They're the ones that get it.

They're the ones that are thinking ahead, and there's an intermediate level of knowledge where you can either be an ignorant bliss and, oh, scribes and Pharisees, well, that's interesting, you know. Has anybody got any bread? I mean, they're just not really

engaged. Then you've got Peter, James, and John who say, hey, wait a minute, Lord, that's not good.

And then you've got those who have their minds on the things of God, as the Lord Jesus does, and say, well, we need to be preparing ourselves for this time of trouble. We need to be sure we reinforce and that we're in prayer and that we're looking at the will of God, not my will but Thine be done. I need to be fortifying myself.

I need to be drawing on the comfort and encouragement of Scripture for this, because it's going to be a test. It's going to be a challenge. And I know my flesh is weak.

The Spirit is willing. The flesh is weak. Oh, Lord, help me.

Help me pass this test. I see it coming. I'm not asking for it to go away if it's Your will, but give me the strength to get through it.

Peter, Satan has asked for you that he may sift you like wheat. I'm praying for you that your faith won't fail, that your strength won't fail. It doesn't say I'm praying that God will send a big balloon to carry you off away from the sifting.

So that's the context. Now look at chapter 17 of Matthew. What does your Bible say at the beginning of that? Jesus transfigured on the mount.

Why this time? Why wasn't Jesus transfigured right after the baptism of John? Why wasn't He transfigured right after He fed the 5,000? He's up on a mountain. How about after He fed the 4,000? Why isn't He transfigured in front of all these crowds? It seems like it would have been handy when they were coming to try to make Him king. He was just transfigured before them, and they all bowed down and said, this goes way beyond anything we can do.

Why here? Why now? And who sees the transfiguration? Who are the witnesses of the transfiguration? P.J. and J., Peter, James, and John. Why? Who is real nervous about the scribes and the Pharisees and the elders of Israel trying to put Jesus to death? Peter, James, and John. What does God do for them? Probably at the Lord Jesus' request to fortify them for this upcoming trial.

He says, look, you've got to look past it. Moses died. Elijah died.

Look at them. They're back. The Lord Jesus will die, but He's been trying to tell you after three days He will rise again, and this is the means to His glory.

He will be glorified through this. So what does God do? You've got to get past the things of men. The things of men is, look at the threat.

The things of men is possibility of death. The things of men is, what will we do if they take the Lord Jesus and arrest Him and crucify Him? What will we do? The things of God

is, look at the result. Look at the long term.

Lift your eyes to the hills. Look beyond the six foot radius around you, and look to where you're going. Look at the destination.

Look at the result. Look at the long term plan and purpose of God. That's why the transfiguration occurs here, right after Jesus says, who do men say that I am? You're a prophet.

You're Jeremiah. You're John the Baptist. Come back.

You're Elijah or whatever. Short term, you're more of the same. You're one of the old guys.

Come back doing the same thing the old guys did, looking back. I see men like trees walking. You're just one of the trees.

Need a second application of divine encouragement to see the reality. Now I see what you really are. Peter is getting there.

Peter says, you're the Christ. You're the Son of the living God. But then, right after that, what should he be doing with that? If you're the Christ, the Son of the living God, why should I fear what men can do unto me? It would be a more interesting question if Peter was going to run with that knowledge.

Well, Lord, what is God's purpose in this? Help me. I'm struggling with this whole turned over and delivered into the hands of men and dying and rising again. And Jesus says, well, think about your Passover lamb.

Think about your scapegoat. Think about your Levitical rituals. Think about the dove that's broken in the cleansing of the leper back in Leviticus 14.

And think about the sacrificial atonement, application of the blood through this. Sin is taken care of. The penalty is taken care of.

Redemption, reconciliation, propitiation. And the culmination and the coup de grace is resurrection. I will be raised.

That will enable you to be raised. That will enable everybody else to be raised. And what do they see next? Here's two Old Testament saints raised.

Back. You think I'm, some say you're Elijah, some say you're John of the Baptist, Jeremiah, one of the other prophets. Who's one of the other prophets? Who's the first great prophet? Moses.

Well, clearly Jesus is not Moses or Elijah because they're standing on each side of him.

Confirmation and elaboration, amplification. Here's why the Son of Man must suffer because this is where he's going.

This is the glorified state that is going to be made possible. This is the resurrection that is going to be, it's a beautiful picture. So Jesus is transfigured.

The disciples fall on their faces. They're greatly afraid. In verse 6 Jesus says, arise and do not be afraid.

When they had lifted up their eyes they saw no one but Jesus only. Now, verse 9, as they came down from the mountain Jesus commanded them saying, tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead. This is not information for those who are not ready.

Over and over again you have this idea that there are hidden things. Peter, James, and John are not to tell Philip and Andrew and the rest of them what they just saw until after Jesus is raised. Why? God will impart information to us, to you, and to me when we have the capacity to use it and appreciate it.

We shield our little ones from certain kinds of information. We used to. Our culture doesn't anymore, but there were certain things that we didn't talk about with little kids.

We don't, you know, grandma's going to the hospital. We don't say, you know, she might die and you'll never see her again. No more Christmas presents, no more cards, and we're never going to grandma's house anymore because she'll die and she'll turn cold and stiff and she'll rot in the ground.

We don't tell little kids this, do we? They're not ready for it. It'll mess them up. They'd be little psychopaths because they don't have the capacity to process that kind of information.

You don't give people information that is going to mess them up. Wait until they're ready. Wait until they're older.

Wait until they've got other information. There are things that we learn from the Word of God that we don't evangelize with. It's not the appropriate time.

You need a foundation. We don't take our second graders and try to teach them binary math or hexadecimal numbering systems or, you know, integration and differentiation. They're not ready for it.

It's just discouraging them to never do math again. What? Differentials? I mean, I quit doing math once I saw differentials and I was in college. Man, other people need to do that.

I want to be Bartholomew. I don't want to be Peter, James, or John when it comes to, you

know, the big long S-shaped curve there. It's great for others, not for me.

Not ready for it. Can't handle it. Well, this is the background now and it is essential and it precedes in all of our accounts this next miracle of the Lord Jesus.

Now, now we are ready. Let's just quickly look at this and we'll take our break and then we'll come back and analyze it. But we're in the book of Matthew, chapter 17, verse 14.

Jesus has just rehearsed, by the way. Elijah is coming first. John the Baptist is Elijah, if you're willing to receive it.

The disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist. Now, go back to 16, 14. Some say you are John the Baptist.

Some say you are Elijah. Some say you are Jeremiah or one of the prophets. What have they seen? What have Peter, James, and John seen up on the mountain? As they're coming down, Jesus is having this conversation with those three and who are they talking about? John the Baptist.

Who have they just seen? Moses and Elijah, the prophets. This is no accident. Elijah has come already and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished.

Likewise, the Son of Man also is about to suffer. Do you see the connection back to, far be it from you, Lord, this shall not happen to you, back in 16, 22? The transfiguration is God's grace to Peter and James and John. You know James and John are thinking the same things.

Peter is just the one bold enough to speak. But these are the guys who are far enough along that Jesus says, look, let me help you out here. You're the ones far enough along to be concerned.

You're the ones far enough along to get some comfort and encouragement and additional information to help you, to remind you, to put your mind on the things of God. Elijah has come already. The Son of Man must also suffer at their hands.

This is part of the plan of God. Think about it. Appreciate it.

Get with it. Put your mind on it. Don't get distracted by the short-term evil, the seeming triumph of badness.

God is going to convert this thing. It is going to lever. It is going to springboard.

It is going to exponentially accomplish the plan and purpose of God. And so the disciples are making this incremental progress. They understand that he's talking about John the Baptist.

They're getting there. He's unsticking the wheels. He's teaching them how to think and how to apply and how to process.

Well, this next miracle now is going to advance that. It is no accident that this boy is at the base of the mountain and that his father brings him. No accident.

It's God's timing. It is for the disciples, all of them, the ones who went up the mountain and the ones who went down. It's an amazing thing that God split the disciples up into three plus nine so that they would separately deal with this moonstruck boy.

No accident. How many times can you have an afflicted person and the disciples see him in two different groups, the nine and the three? These three are different, aren't they? They're the ones asking the questions. They're the ones getting the transfiguration answer.

They're the ones having the conversation with Jesus coming down the mountain. Now they're going to get a view of this moonstruck boy that is separate and distinct. They're going to have an experience of this and watching Jesus deal with him that the nine did not get.

It's different for them. That's critical background. All of this flow goes right into this miracle.

So we'll pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to see this poor little boy and what the Lord Jesus says and what the Lord Jesus does is just profound. So we'll be back in just a few minutes.