

Miracles of Jesus 13-01-27a

This is Sunday, the 27th of January, 2013, and our concluding study in the miracles of the Lord Jesus is going to be in John chapter 21 and address breakfast by the sea, as it says in my New King James, or the second miraculous draft of fish. Draft is D-R-A-U-G-H-T, along the analogy of the word laugh, or, that's the only one I can think of. Second miraculous draft of fish.

Cast your net, been fishing all night, nothing caught, suddenly can hardly haul it into the boat for the size of the haul. This will be in John chapter 21. Let's take a moment as is our custom to address ourselves to the Lord God in heaven, enter into His throne in thanksgiving and appreciation and our petition that He, through His Holy Spirit, will enable us to understand and benefit from the things we see in His Word this morning.

Shall we pray? Father, what a privilege it is every time we take advantage of our priesthood, of our standing in the Lord Jesus Christ to come before You and speak to You directly. We have no intermediaries, we have no veil to part, we have no hurdles that we must clear. We have been given unrestricted access as Your children directly into Your presence, into the very throne room where angels fear to tread.

And we thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ who has granted us this privilege through His work on our behalf, His life and His death on the cross, His current ministry of making appeal and intercession on our behalf as He sits even now at Your right hand. We thank You for the gifts that You have given us, the provision that You have made for us as we come to faith in Christ and are left in this life to learn and to grow and to prepare ourselves through training and through discipline and through all of those provisions that You have made to live in Your presence and be productive and effective in service and in reflecting Your glory in the ages to come. We know that this is the reason we are here, that we have been given time as a resource to invest, to redeem.

The days are inherently evil, but through the presence of Your Spirit and the power of Your Word, we can convert that time into something lasting and meaningful. We pray this morning as we turn our attention to this portion of Your Word, that God the Holy Spirit will be our teacher, that it will be of interest not only in the sense of understanding the story and its significance, but also its application and what it means to us and how we should live in its light. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Let's read this story. I want to provide a little bit of context.

Of course, Jesus has gone to the cross. He has entered the grave where He stayed for three days and three nights. Not one day and two nights.

Three days and three nights He fulfilled the sign of Jonah. It would have been very easy to put Jonah into the belly of the fish for part of a day and a night, a whole day and

another night, and have the fish spit him up early in the morning on the second day. But He didn't.

He was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. And the Lord Jesus Christ said He Himself would be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights, the number three figures in this story. So I remind you of that.

We have just had the account of this in John's gospel in the preceding few chapters. And John has recorded in chapter 20 two resurrection appearances of the Lord Jesus. After He rose early in the morning on Sunday, He was seen by His disciples first in the upper room.

You have this in chapter 20, verse 19. The same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, Peace be with you. When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side, and the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

Now, why does Jesus appear to them in the upper room? You say, well, sooner or later He's going to appear to them to show that He is alive. Why does He appear here? Keep your finger in John chapter 20 and 21 and turn back to Matthew chapter 28. I don't know that I've ever heard anybody bother with this detail, but it fascinates me that Jesus comes to the disciples who are assembled in the upper room and appears to them and shows them His hands and His feet.

Why does He do this? Matthew 28, verse 10. The women, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, have gone to the tomb. They see the Lord, and they run quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and run to bring His disciples word.

As they went to tell His disciples, Jesus met them saying, Rejoice. So they came and held Him by the feet and worshipped Him. Then Jesus said to them, What? Do not be afraid.

Go and tell My brethren that I am risen, that you have seen Me. Hallelujah, I am alive again. What is the specific message they give the disciples? What's the first thing Jesus tells the women to tell the disciples? Tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.

This is Sunday morning. Jesus tells the women, Hello, I have risen from the dead. Go tell the disciples I'll see them in Galilee.

Keep your finger in John. Leave Matthew. Go to Mark chapter 16 and verse 7. As soon as I say Mark 16, you say, Oh, I know the ending's not supposed to be in there.

Well, this is before the ending difficulty. This is in the valid part of Mark that you don't have to worry about. Mark 16, verse 7. I'll go back a few verses.

Entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. But He said to them, Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth who is crucified.

He is risen. He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.

But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him. Now, this is the same two gals that we saw in Matthew.

This is Mary and the other Mary, right? So the angel tells them, Give this message to the disciples. Go to Galilee. There you will see the Lord Jesus.

Jesus Himself appears to the women and says, Go to the disciples and tell them, I'll see them in Galilee. Now, go back to John 20, verse 19. The same day at evening, being the first day of the week.

So the women saw the angel, saw the Lord Jesus in the morning, went and reported to the disciples and said, He goes before you into Galilee. Now, this is not the Sabbath. This is Sunday, right? It's not a day on which you cannot travel.

Why are the disciples still in Jerusalem? Jesus told the women to tell the disciples twice, Go to Galilee. I'm going to Galilee. You go to Galilee.

I will see you there. They haven't left. Why haven't they left? They spent the whole rest of the day hiding in Jerusalem Why didn't they leave? Well, the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled.

Why? For fear of the Jews. They were afraid to go out. They were afraid to be seen in the streets.

They were afraid to be seen on the road. They were afraid to be caught out. They thought, you know, the first thing these authorities are going to do is look for us.

It's just like the police. When a crime is committed, they say, Well, they're going to be watching the bus stations and the trains and the airport terminals. We can't travel.

They'll catch us. Jesus told them to go to Galilee, but they're afraid. So, now, why does Jesus appear to the disciples in the upper room? What's the first thing He says to them? Peace be with you.

What's the second thing He says to them? Peace to you. Calm down. Calm down.

Be peaceful. Perfect love casteth out fear. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and sound mind, self-control.

He is there to calm them down. The first two statements He makes in the upper room in

John's account are, Let not your heart be troubled. Pretty much the same thing He told them before the crucifixion in John 14.

Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Peace. Calm down.

So, now, in chapter 21, after these things, Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples. This is going to be the third time. On Sunday night, He appears to them, but Thomas was not present.

Remember in chapter 20, verse 24, Thomas called the twin, one of the twelve, was not with Him when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to Him, We have seen the Lord. Unless I see Him, putting my finger in the scars, I will not believe.

Look at verse 26 of chapter 20, and after eight days, His disciples were again inside. After eight days. So, after eight hours, they haven't left, and Jesus appears to them and says, Peace.

Eight days later, they are still in the same place. They were again inside, Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said, What? Peace to you.

Thomas, reach your finger in here and look at my hands. Reach your hand in here and put it into my side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.

Now, why doesn't Jesus just berate them and say, What are you still doing here? How come you haven't gone to Galilee? I told you twice, go to Galilee, and you haven't gone yet. It's been over a week, and you're still here. He doesn't just address the symptom.

He addresses the cause. Why is it that they have not left? Because their fear has not left, and their faith has not been strong enough. So He says, Look, if you're not strong enough to believe, here's some additional evidence.

Put your eyes on my scars. Put your fingers on my scars. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.

You know how Jesus uses the indirect approach. I've mentioned before, one of my favorite books when I was a midshipman was by Liddell Hart, Sir Liddell Hart, and it was called The Strategy of the Indirect Approach, and how much more effective it is sometimes to bring something about indirectly. Don't just barge into the china shop and start crashing.

Think. And the Lord Jesus was a master of this, as He was of everything. But He doesn't just mechanically give them a command.

That would be sort of like the law of Moses. Instead, He says, Look, if you can achieve peace, peace I leave to you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives, how many

times has Jesus spoken to them, Let not your heart be troubled? Have peace. Because in an environment of peace, this is where you can exercise your faith.

And if it's a time of trouble, you've got to calm yourself, center yourself. You've got to orient yourself. And so you claim a promise of God.

You look at the problem in terms of perspective. You get it in its context and its background. God hasn't brought us this far to abandon us and leave us to an awful fate.

And peace and faith go hand in hand. We use faith to claim the promises of God, and we have peace. In an environment of peace, we can think and we can identify those things that God has given to us to do, and then we will do them.

And we'll do them for the right reasons. He could have said, Get thee to Galilee. How many times do I have to tell you? Well, they would have gone, but not for the right reasons.

That would not have necessarily given them peace. It wouldn't have restored their faith. So Jesus doesn't take the direct approach.

He takes the indirect approach. He says, Look, let me remind you of my presence. Let me give you assurance of the reality that I am risen, and I am going before you into Galilee.

And so He appears to them not once, but twice. Now in chapter 21, we are finally getting to the appearance that Jesus intended all along. The other two were really extras.

If you look at Matthew and you look at Mark, the plan was, I will see you in Galilee, and they were to go in faith. But they are not much different than they were the night of the arrest. Their faith is weak.

And so Jesus comes to them and reinforces them. And notice, He does not rebuke them. He gives them what they need, which is comfort and assurance and a reminder that they should have peace.

And He does that with His presence. And this is what He does with us. How do we enter into the presence of Jesus Christ in this day and age? He is not going to appear, I don't think, at the foot of our bed.

That wouldn't give me peace. I would be alarmed out of my mind if the Lord Jesus had to make a personal appearance to me to get me to do what I was supposed to. I would think, How badly have I failed that other believers can do just fine working out of the Word of God and with the Spirit of God, but I need a personal appearance to get motivated enough to do what I need to do.

It would be a horrible rebuke to me. I don't want Jesus' eyes moving in some picture,

watching me go around the room. I don't want a heavenly visitation.

I don't want an angel with a flaming sword. That would be needful if I was weak. God's Word and God's Spirit are all sufficient.

God took Jesus to Himself and sent another Comforter who would lead us into all truth, who would be the means of fulfilling all of our needs. And if I was so messed up that that was insufficient, where it has been sufficient for millions of other believers, I would feel terrible. It would not give me peace.

These appearances of the Lord Jesus are designed to give peace. And how does Jesus manifest His presence to us today? Well, we did this study just last week. What does it mean to be in Christ? How is Christ formed in you? Why is that the hope of glory? And it is abiding in Him through not just hearing the preaching and teaching of God's Word, but entering into it in our thoughts, thinking about it, chewing on it, reflecting on what it means, setting some time aside so that it becomes real.

It is not enough to hear a good sermon. It is not enough to remember a Bible verse. We have to answer for ourselves the question, so what? If these things are true, if I'm a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, if this is what the Word of God says, how should I then live? How should I address the things that are lined up for me on this day? What kind of attitude should I have? What sort of conversation and speech should I have as I communicate with people around me? How patient should I be? How thoughtful should I be? Should I be ingrown and circling around the egocentric star at the center, which is me, myself, and I? Or should I be looking outward? Should I be thinking about others? Get out of myself.

Look out not only for my own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in me, which was in Christ Jesus, who didn't hang on to his equality with God and his sonship and his kingship in heaven, but emptied himself and took on the form of servant and came in the likeness of men and being found obedient. He was obedient even to the point of death.

Can I even approach that attitude today in the things I am about to do? This is Christ in us. This is Christ visiting us and assuring us of his victory over death, his resurrection, the future hope that he has secured for us. It is a real thing.

It's not just mumbo-jumbo. It's not a ritual. It's not some sort of automatic function.

This is the reality of Jesus Christ in our hearts and in our souls. You only get there by seeking it, by pursuing it, by going after it, and that takes time and thought. So Jesus, now in chapter 21, showed himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias.

And if you skip forward down to verse 14, this is now the third time Jesus showed himself to his disciples after he was raised from the dead. And John makes this point rather

subtly, but why is this the third time? Because in their weakness, Jesus had to appear to them two previous times that really should not have been necessary. This episode could have happened much sooner if they had left on Sunday.

Jesus has sent them out before, take no staff, don't take two pairs of sandals, go, God will take care of you. Don't worry about the Jews. If Jesus said, go to Galilee, and he's going to see us in Galilee, then we're bulletproof.

We're indestructible. We can't be arrested. We can't be stopped.

We can't be imprisoned. We can't be killed. We can't be touched by the Romans or the religious Jews.

Jesus said, he will see us in Galilee. I will take that promise to the bank. Right? He goes before you into Galilee.

He will see you there. It's a promise. And it just didn't, they didn't take time to think about it.

It's understandable. We would be rattled. We would be afraid in that circumstance.

But if you love the Lord Jesus, if you believe what the Lord Jesus says, and he says, I'll see you in Galilee, then you should say, wow, I don't know how he's going to do it, but I can walk right out here into the street. I can walk right down the road. I can head out the north gate of the city, and I can travel.

I can go right through Samaria. Jesus said, don't worry about the Samaritans. You don't have to go around.

I'll take a direct route. I'll get up there. I can't wait to see the Lord Jesus.

They have missed the opportunity to spend quality time with the Lord Jesus. He's going to appear and startle them in the upper room, but they're going to get to spend an entire morning with the Lord Jesus in quietness and in fellowship and in peace and in safety in familiar surroundings. They're on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus is going to cook them a meal, and they're going to be able to relax and have fellowship. This is what Jesus had in mind for them, and they imprison themselves in the city. They don't go.

What a shame. Could have had this much sooner. But Jesus has to come to them and prompt them and encourage them and get them out of their fear and out of their self-centeredness.

Interestingly, He does not remind them of the promise. This is something they're supposed to do for themselves. If they stop and think, did not the women tell us that the

angel said? Did not the women tell us that the Lord Jesus said? And by the way, that promise was communicated to them via messengers.

They get it second and third hand, and yet it's a promise of the Lord, and they should have taken it to the bank. That's why they're there. After these things, after these things, every phrase in the Bible is there for a reason.

Shouldn't have been after these things. Should have been Sunday night or maybe Monday morning, right after the resurrection, they would have been at the sea. But this is at least a week and a half later.

After these things, Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias. And in this way He showed Himself. Simon Peter, Thomas called the twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.

Not all of the disciples went. Why? Why aren't they all there? Despite the appearances in the upper room, some of them were too afraid to go. Notice they are the disciples that are always down at the latter end of the list.

Who is there? Peter, James and John, the strongest three, the leaders if you will. Who else? Thomas called the twin. And this is Thomas Didymus.

This is Doubting Thomas. This is the Thomas who in the second episode and in the first episode was mentioned. This Thomas is mentioned all three times by name.

Did Thomas get the message? Yes, he did. And they always call him Doubting Thomas. Now you can call him Faithful Thomas.

He was the guy that was most afraid. He was the guy that was the most untrusting. But once he touched, Jesus gave him what he needed.

If you need an assurance, here it is. And he has now braved everything to go up to Galilee and he's there. And he is mentioned second, right behind Peter.

That's the distance he has moved from fear to faith. Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus or the twin. By the way Thomas also means the twin.

Didymus is the Greek, the DI as in Diana, two Annas. Di means two, a dipole and so on. Didymus means the twin.

So does Thomas. Thomas comes from Hebrew. And Tome has the idea of cutting a thing in two.

And Temo is where Thomas comes from. And it also means twin or divided. They're two things.

So he's twin to twin. Nathaniel and Netanyahu. Benjamin, son of the right hand.

Netanyahu, gift of Yahweh. So Nathaniel and Netanyahu are almost synonymous. Now Nathaniel is interesting because the sons of Zebedee, you would expect that, James and John.

But the only other named disciple after Peter and Thomas and James and John is Nathaniel. Nathaniel was mentioned by John at the beginning. John only mentions him and only refers to him by this name.

In all of the other disciple lists he has a different name. Do you know what it is? Bartholomew. Nathaniel is Bartholomew but John doesn't call him that.

Bartholomew, which means son of the plowman. But John always calls him Nathaniel. And the last place we saw him was in, if you flip to the beginning of the book, John 1. You remember the story of the introduction of the first disciples before Jesus has assembled the twelve, before Cana of Galilee and the turning of water into wine.

You have John in verse 35 standing with his disciples and two heard him speak. And one of them in verse 40 was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said, We have found the Messiah, which is translated the Christ, brought him to Jesus.

When Jesus looked at him he said, You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas, which is translated a stone. The following day he found Philip and said to him, Follow me.

Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Bethsaida is in what region of Israel? Galilee. That's where Peter and Andrew are from, right? They're Galilean fishermen.

Philip is from their town. Philip found Nathaniel and said to him, We have found him of whom Moses and the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathaniel, this is the one quote you get from Nathaniel or Bartholomew, his claim to fame, his only recorded words in Scripture in 66 books, this is the one thing he says, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Then Jesus says, Behold an Israelite in whom is no deceit.

Nathaniel said to him, How do you know me? Jesus said before Philip called you when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. Nathaniel answered and said to him, Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said to him, Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.

Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open and the angels of God

ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. So this is that Nathaniel. And in the wonderful, chiastic way that the Bible so often does, those who were with him at the beginning in the Gospel of John are with him at the end.

At the beginning they are going to go to Cana in Galilee, at the end they are going to go to the Sea of Tiberias in Galilee. So I can speculate that I know the names of all seven disciples that are mentioned here. He says two others.

If you were going to hazard a guess, who would the other two disciples be? When you see Peter, who else do you see in Galilee? Who would go to Galilee with Peter? Andrew. If you see Nathaniel, and by the way, you never see Bartholomew mentioned without this other disciple in the other three Gospels. Philip and Bartholomew, the teams of two that went out, you would expect that these that are listed in pairs would be together.

So you have, I think, Peter and Andrew. They've gone to Galilee. You think Andrew would say, I'm too afraid to go home.

Probably not. Nathaniel is from here, and so is Philip. James and John are from here.

And then you have Thomas Didymus, and he rounds out the seven. You've got the three pairs, and then you've got Thomas. Who is a twin? He counts for two.

And so you have that seven-eight numerical thing going on as well. So this is the setup. This is the background now for our miracle, and we're going to pause and take our break.

When we come back, we will see the miracle proper and see what it might mean, not only in its context and in its day, but now and for us. Let's take our break.