

Miracles 24-09-04b

We're in John chapter three, moving toward chapter four to see this second miracle, the healing of the nobleman's son. And the reason I've done a little bit of an extended review of the sequence and the first miracle is there's a lot that has to do with time and circumstance in these early chapters of John. In John chapter two, it's not the right hour.

And yet Jesus finds a way to satisfy this request and meet this need. In John chapter three with Nicodemus, he's unprepared even though he's a teacher in Israel to understand the new birth and the moving of the spirit rather than the stone tablets of the law that they have specialized in and the traditions that have accrued around them. And the weight of tradition is blinding Nicodemus to these spiritual truths.

So there is timing that seems to be in the way. There is expectation and tradition and experience that seems to be in the way. And now in chapter four, we're gonna see that status and distance seem to be in the way.

So having talked to Nicodemus, Jesus comes to Judea in chapter three verse 22 and there's baptizing going on. John is in Anon near Selim because there's much water. Of course, you know the argument here.

If you're gonna do water baptism, you need much water. You can't just get a jug and John could have gone up to Cana and baptized out of the purification jugs if all he had to do was sprinkle. John had not yet been thrown into prison.

There arose a dispute between John's disciples and the Jews about purification. We just had purification mentioned in chapter two with regard to these water jugs. And they came to John and said, "'Rabbi, he who was with you beyond Jordan "'to whom you have testified, he is baptizing "'and all are coming to him.'" John answered and said, "'A man can receive nothing unless it has been given "'to him from heaven.

"'You yourselves bear me witness that I said, "'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him. "'He who has the bride is the bridegroom. "'The friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him "'rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice.

"'Therefore, this joy of mine is fulfilled. "'He must increase, I must decrease. "'He who comes from above is above all.

"'He who is of the earth is earthly "'and speaks of the earth. "'He who comes from heaven is above all. "'And what he has seen and heard, that he testifies.

"'And no one receives his testimony.'" Notice, this is John again, referring back to bridegroom and wedding terminology that occurred at the wedding feast in Cana. This is such a wonderfully woven gospel account. And Jesus is not the bridegroom at that wedding feast in Cana.

In a sense, he is the friend and he is in a background role. He is out of sight, providing in an out of sight way, even though it's a supernatural ministry, much as John the Baptist is preparing the way for the Lord Jesus as the friend of the bridegroom. But you have to ask the question, well, if Jesus is the bridegroom, who is the bride? And they might have assumed at the time, well, the bride must be Israel, but it's not gonna be Israel.

Israel has already been described as the unfaithful wife to God in Old Testament scripture. And Israel is not the bride. So notice this same idea.

It is about receiving the testimony. He doesn't say, believing the signs. He who comes from heaven is above all.

And in verse 32, what he has seen and heard, he testifies. He doesn't provide you something to see and hear that is going to convince you without which you won't be convinced. He is giving you testimony.

And the one who receives his testimony certifies that God is true. That's verse 33. That's you, that's me.

If you wanna boil this down to where the rubber meets the road, look at verse 33. If we receive the testimony of scripture, we are believing, we are affirming, we are celebrating that God is true. God's truth is truth.

Jesus is gonna talk later about the liberating power of that truth. So, he whom God has sent speaks the words of God for God does not give the spirit by measure. Again, look at the difference between signs and miracles and what is spoken.

He whom God has sent does miracles and mighty signs and wonders. What does John say here? The one whom God has sent speaks the words of God. It is about the message.

I've said this innumerable times. This is why we are a Bible church and not the church of mighty signs and wonders. We are not here looking for God to intervene and break the laws of physics and do wonderful things that will dazzle us or benefit us in circumstance.

We crave understanding. We greatly desire and seek to know the word of God, to have his words and to keep them. The one whom God has sent speaks the words of God.

God does not give the spirit by measure. What does that mean? The spirit is either present or he's not. He's God.

You can't divide him. You can't get a teaspoon full of the spirit. The Holy Spirit is a person and he is complete and entire.

Christ is not divided. The spirit is not divided. God the Father is certainly not divided.

So what is it that spreads the field as we were talking about earlier? Who are those who

advance and reflect the glory of God and are equipped for good work and are used by God and are incorporated into his plan now and in the future? It isn't, well, you need a greater measure of the spirit. The spirit's not given by measure. What comes to us by measure? How much of the word do you have? How much truth have you gleaned? Have you listened to and affirmed by faith? The quantities differ depending on how faithful, how interested, how hard we seek, how much we ask.

You can ask a little and receive a little. You can ask a lot and receive a lot. You can seek a little and you're gonna find a little.

If you seek a lot, you'll find a lot. If you knock on a couple of small doors, a couple of small doors will be open. If you bang on the big doors, God will open the big doors.

Ask and it shall be given. Seek and you will find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you.

The one who asks receives. The one who seeks finds. The one who knocks, that door into life and opportunity opens.

This is the promise of God, but that's the measure. The measure is how much do you want it? How much of the word of God will you incorporate? The tricky thing is we live a mundane, circumstantial life. There are walls and doors with knobs.

There's cars with keys. There's grass that grows. There's laundry that needs washing.

There's food that needs to be eaten. There's sleep that needs to be slumbered. We just have earthly material, mundane things going on all the time.

I was enjoying one of my all-time favorite singers, Merle Haggard. It's a wonderful thing, these videos they've got, where you can pull up guys like him in their prime and hear them sing, are the good times really over for good? I wish a buck was still silver. What a great song.

And the working man blues and the ethos that you hear in Oki from Muskogee that we are traditional patriotic Americans and we don't do a lot of flaky things, but we're enmeshed in circumstances. And when you look at this spiritual truth, he doesn't give the spirit by measure, it's the word. Well, how do I incorporate? How do I pour the oil of the Holy Spirit into the flower that is my material life? This is where we have to recognize that there is no distance.

It's not like, well, church and Bible class are spiritual, my job and my home life and my tasks and my chores, these are material, these are secular, that this has got nothing to do with my Christianity. It is all about investing every single thing we do with spiritual value. The spirit isn't given by measure, but how much of the word do we plow into? How much of the spirit's effect on us do we put into what we do day by day? The next conversation we have, the next set of thoughts that we think, the next concerns that we

think about, are we gonna worry or are we going to pray? Are we going to hold onto it and turn it over and have it keep us up at night? Or are we gonna bring it before the Lord, claim His promises, put it in His hands, ask Him to show us what we can do, shine a light on my path.

If there's something I should say, somewhere I should be, something I should do. If I'm doing something that I should quit, if I should put some distance between myself and this issue, Lord, shine a light on my path. I am ready to do Thy will, O God.

Examine ourselves, ensure that we're in the faith, confess our sins. The Holy Spirit is fully present to lead and to guide. The extent to which He can do so is that measure of the word.

How much of that is circulating in the seemingly ordinary conversations, thoughts, and actions in which we engage day by day. We can't put our identity in Christ on a shelf. We are complete in Him.

We are His body. We are Him on this earth. If the Lord Jesus had this job, if the Lord Jesus were having this conversation, if the Lord Jesus were present in this environment and this situation, what would His effect be? It's not just what would Jesus do, what would Jesus be? What influence would His presence have on this circumstance? Because we are Him in the sense of that presence.

We are His body. We represent Him. We should share His thoughts.

We should express His actions. We should reflect His glory and His grace, His mercy, His compassion, His love, as it is guided, as it is conditioned by what the word of God says. You can't love everybody.

You can't please everybody. You can't do and sacrifice for everybody. So the father loves the son and has given all things into his hand, verse 35 of John 3. He who believes in the son, the last verse of John 3, everybody knows 16, but look at 36.

He who believes in the son has everlasting life. He who does not believe the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. People want to quote 16 a lot more than 36.

Whosoever believes will not perish, but have eternal life. But if you do not believe the son, you will not see life. What does that mean? Your resurrection is post kingdom of the son.

It's the great white throne. And you're going to be raised to be judged, to make your case. You're going to be tried and found guilty and convicted and sentenced and into the lake of fire to be no more.

And this is an individual choice, an individual judgment. You either believe in the son and

you have everlasting life. And by extension to believe in him, not just for salvation, but to believe in him for the daily requirements, provision, protection, opportunity, blessing, to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in the most mundane minor circumstances.

Got a setback, got a shortfall, got a challenge. I've got an opportunity. I've had a windfall, a blessing, something good has happened.

To immediately think as one does when they are in love with a fellow human being of the opposite gender. Anything that happens, you immediately think of that person. Well, I want to tell them, I want to share it with them.

I want to celebrate. What will that mean? Will we have more time? Will we have opportunities? Everything impinges on the one I love. That should be our life.

When we believe in the Lord Jesus, we believe that he's really there. We believe that he is our actual savior, that we are his body. He's interceding for us at the right hand of the father.

And everything we encounter relates to and impinges on him. How can I best honor the savior that I love and appreciate as I am carrying out this task, as I am spending this time, as I am working, resting, relaxing, whatever it is I'm doing, do all to the glory of God, do all in belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. To believe in him means you're aware that he is really actually there all the time, just like your most beloved significant other.

It affects everything. You can't be deeply in love and then married to the love of your life and then just put that on the shelf and pretend it doesn't exist and go off and do stuff for days and weeks, can you? It's impossible. It conditions everything.

It permeates everything. And that has to be what our belief does. The Holy Spirit is always available.

He's not given by measure, but our awareness and our taking advantage of what has been provided to us, that's the measure. And it's the measure of faith. And we determine what it is.

It can be little, it can be much. He who is forgiven little, loves little. He is forgiven much, loves much.

We're all plenty sinful. So if you're forgiven little and love little, what is that circumstance? You are refusing to acknowledge a lot of other stuff that needs forgiveness. And you don't feel a need.

I'm not that bad. I'm well above average in terms of morality and ethics. And I don't commit armed robbery and I don't hurt people.

I don't even hurt animals. I carry flies and spiders outside instead of killing them because

I'm just such a nice person. So yeah, the occasional thing, I'll confess.

You love little because you are not recognizing the deficit that is being filled by the Word and the Spirit. It should permeate everything. So then you come to chapter four.

The Lord knew the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John. The Pharisees had been paying attention to John. You remember all Jerusalem goes out to see him.

And the Pharisees are aware that there's some kind of a happening going on down at the Jordan. Well, now John has moved to Anon near Salim. Jesus' disciples are baptizing.

There's clarification elsewhere that Jesus didn't actually baptize his disciples to. There in verse two, he left Judea and departed again to Galilee. Notice there are times to confront Pharisees and there are times to avoid it.

There is a belief that in the Sermon on the Mount, when it says toward, oh, it's in the later part of the Beatitudes in chapter five, you know, blessed are the poor, blessed are the peacemakers, those who hunger and thirst and the rest of it. And then it says, blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you for my name's sake. Rejoice and be glad for so they persecuted the prophets before you.

And into this is read that we have a responsibility to be prophetic. I saw something about this just today. Christians have a responsibility to be prophetic.

And what did the prophets do? They called out problems with social justice and oppression of the poor. And they expressed the compassion of God's heart for the poor and the oppressed. And they called out abuse of power and they called out the sad situation of the poor.

And this is wrong on two fronts. A, what Jesus says, blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you for my name's sake. Rejoice and be glad for so they persecuted the prophets before you.

Why were the prophets persecuted? Is it because they were calling for social justice and reviling those in governmental authority and saying that they were adopting bad policies and prosecuting wars and all of the things that people today think is being prophetic is to call out governmental bad decisions and you shouldn't support this war and you shouldn't send arms to these people. And you're buying bullets and you're not buying meals for the poor in the streets. That is not what the prophets got persecuted for.

Why were the prophets in the Old Testament persecuted? Because they called out the spiritual apathy, the spiritual rebellion, the breaking of covenant with God on the part of Israel. When there was prophecy against other nations, it is for their treatment of God's people, Israel. Not that they were mistreating their own people.

God doesn't call out Moab and Edom and the rest of them because they're oppressing their people. It's because of what they do to Israel, their effect on God's people and they are prophetically placed under judgment. But interestingly, the description of those judgments is given to Israel.

They didn't mail these out to the King of Moab and the King of Edom and all of these other ones, the King of Tyre. They don't get it in the mail from the Israeli prophet. The prophets in Israel were comforting God's faithful people and calling out spiritual malfunction, spiritual malfeasance, spiritual covenant breaking and refusal to honor the commitment that they had to their God.

And for that, they were persecuted for carrying God's message about lack of faith and obedience in Israel. They weren't hounded and persecuted and thrown into pits and sought into and the rest of it because they were lobbying for social justice and raising their fist against the empire. Why did the Pharisees put Jesus on the cross? It isn't because Jesus was lobbying for better conditions for the poor and boo on Rome, was it? It was his condemnation of their spiritual evil and their abuse when they should have been shepherds.

They were those shepherds that are described in Ezekiel as muddying the water and making themselves fat at other's expense. And this was all about spiritual issues, not social issues, not political issues, not international warfare issues, spiritual. But Jesus isn't saying, well, you need to be prophetic and call out people's spiritual problems.

He said, blessed are you if you are persecuted for my name's sake. And who's he talking to? Go back to the beginning of chapter five. When Jesus sees the crowds, he climbs a mountain and his disciples came to him.

And he is talking, especially in those initial verses to his disciples. They are going to be messengers carrying the same message as the Lord Jesus. And if you are persecuted for carrying the message of Jesus and he wasn't decrying empire and lobbying that everyone ought to help the poor, it's just a complete misunderstanding.

But the Lord knew the Pharisees had heard that he was making and baptizing more disciples than John. Though Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples. He left Judea, departed again to Galilee, but he needed to go through Samaria.

Now you have the woman at the well. You're well familiar with that story. And notice, first we had an untimely provision.

It's not my hour in Cana. Then we had an untraditional approach to a message that a well-educated teacher in Israel could not understand. This message doesn't fit with expectation, with tradition, with what everyone thought was going to happen.

It's out of place, doesn't match what was expected. Now he's gonna go through Samaria

and talk to a woman who isn't part of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They don't believe you should worship in Jerusalem.

They say, we should worship up here in Samaria. And they're gonna have that discussion about the day is coming when it won't matter which mountain you choose, Mount Zion or the mountains here in Samaria. God is spirit in verse 24.

Those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth. And I who speak to you am he. And Jesus is going to commit himself to this woman.

And all he has done is tell her that she's had husbands, five husbands, and the one she's living with now is not her husband. He knows her. This isn't a sign miracle.

It is a recognition miracle. Come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Come see a man who knows my situation, who knows me personally, knows about me personally and is talking to me anyway.

Any Jew who knew her marital history and her current situation wouldn't give her the time of day and wouldn't accept a cup of water from the well, but he does. And she recognizes that even though she's not the right kind of person, the Lord Jesus is meeting her need anyway. And again, the conclusion we draw from this is we should not try to put God in a box or decide that there are certain things that God just won't do.

So why bother to ask? Now, there are things that we know. We know that God's not gonna override someone else's free will because I ask him to save them or to rescue them or to do something for them. God is not, there are certain things he will not do.

God is not the author of sin. He's not gonna do something wrong because I ask him to. He's not going to violate his plan and purpose.

But to the extent that I understand his plan and purpose, and even though maybe this is not the time for supernatural intervention, if I give God a good reason, if I've got faith as a grain of mustard seed, I will take the request to him anyway. And he may answer that request in a way that I did not expect, that I could not foresee, but I have taken it to him and left it with him. And my expectation is he will find a way.

It doesn't matter if I'm a Samaritan woman in this situation. It doesn't matter if I'm a teacher in Israel that doesn't understand. He'll give me the message anyway.

He will accomplish the purpose anyway. And it doesn't matter in this case of the nobleman that his home and his son who is ill is 17 miles away. Is distance a limitation? Well, time isn't a limitation in Mary's case at the wedding.

Misunderstanding isn't an obstacle when he's talking to Nicodemus. And as you pick up now in verse 39 of chapter four, many of the Samaritans believed in him because of the

word of the woman who testified. Do you see a pattern? These people who believe the word of testimony, it doesn't say Jesus did a miracle.

He didn't turn the water in the well to wine and everybody had a big celebration. They didn't carry jugs of wine home from the magical well. It doesn't say Jesus healed anyone.

He testified. He told this woman about herself. It was a testimony.

It seems to be supernatural and that he knew things about her without prior contact. But compared to healing lepers and giving sight to the man born blind and so on, it's not spectacular. But that word of testimony, she tells the people and they come out and they believe.

These are the people that will populate the kingdom. In our age, you and I believing the word of testimony are the ones who will be blessed now with opportunities to reflect God's glory, to serve, to be used, to be a blessing to others, to manifest and reflect the love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given without measure in accordance with the word that we have. We know when and how to express love because we know the difference between one another love and neighbor love and love for those who are outside and even enemy love.

We know the limits. We know the opportunities for those different kinds of love. We know not to cast our pearls before swine.

We know not to give what is holy to the dogs. But at the same time, if there are responsive dogs like the woman with the ill daughter, God will say, well, you know, true. Jesus is sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

You're not in Israel, but I haven't seen this kind of faith. It's a rare thing. And because of your faith, we're gonna disregard the rules.

David ate of the showbread. He was a man of faith. And the significance of the showbread and the rules for the tabernacle did not outweigh God meeting the need of a faithful man.

And Jesus is gonna cite that example when his disciples are accused of quote unquote, you know, reaping on the Sabbath and allegedly violating the law as they understood it. It is all about faith in the word of testimony. That's why we dwell on the details because every one of these words is significant.

Every detail is significant. So when you come to those people talking in verse 42 to the woman who had been at the Samaritan well, now we believe not because of what you said, we ourselves have heard him and we know that this is indeed the Christ. We have heard him.

You conveyed a testimony that initially sponsored our belief just like John the Baptist did for the first six disciples. Now we have heard for ourselves and we believe because we have heard him. Just like those same disciples did when they heard the Lord Jesus.

Now look at verse 43. Now after two days, he departed from there and went to Galilee. Jesus is with non-Jews for how long? There are times when the time is not important and it just says he went to Capernaum and didn't stay many days.

He went down to Judea. It doesn't say how many days, but when he's in Samaria, how long does he stay there among the non-Jews? Two days. If you like the model of 6,000 years, 4,000 years of the age of Israel, four days, four days for the Passover lamb to be examined from Abraham forward from the early patriarchal days.

You know, the model is 4,000 years from Adam to Christ, 2,000 years for the church age. And then after two days, to whom is Jesus going to return at Armageddon to establish his kingdom? It would be after two days. So however you understand the two days, they are mentioned here and it's significant.

He spent two days. That means he spent a day and a night and another day, possibly two nights. Could have been two days and two nights.

But after two days, he's going to leave Samaria and go back to Galilee. And Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. Jesus stayed where they honored him and they listened to him.

But there have been problems in Galilee. So he came to Galilee. The Galileans received him.

That means they let him come in. Having seen the things he did in Jerusalem at the feast, they also had gone to the feast. So they receive him based on what? What they heard him teach or what they saw him do? Which is it? They saw the signs.

And he comes in because of the signs. What will he do for me? We'll receive him and see what he will do for us instead of what he says. It isn't the word of testimony that motivates their reception.

It's, oh, he's the miracle worker. That's a bad sign to begin with. So Jesus came again in verse 46 to Cana of Galilee, where he had made the water wine.

There was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. And if you look at this in detail, the word that is used and where he resides and so on argues for this not being a Jewish man. He appears to be a ruler that is in some part of the Roman government, but not a centurion.

He's a low level. He might be a mayor or some other factotum. His son is sick at

Capernaum.

This is 17 miles away from Cana. Remember when Jesus and his disciples went to Capernaum after the feast at Cana, but they didn't stay there many days. So when he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee in verse 47, he went to him and implored him to come down and heal his son who was at the point of death.

Remember after the wedding feast at Cana, the destination for Jesus, his disciples, his mother and his brothers was Capernaum. And this is where this man lives. And he has come up to Cana to talk to Jesus.

And this is a pretty fair hike. It's a long distance. It's a hard days walk or two days if you take a moderate pace.

Jesus said to him, unless you see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe. Isn't this the issue we've been looking at here? Will you believe based on the testimony or do you have to see signs and wonders to be convinced? And there are two different camps. The Galileans receive him because he's done signs and wonders.

The Samaritans receive him because of the word of testimony. What the woman says and then what they hear from Jesus' lips themselves. They believe.

The Galileans will not believe unless they see signs and wonders. They heard about them. Many of them heard about it in Jerusalem by word of mouth, but didn't actually see Jesus do something.

They want to see it. So what happens? The nobleman says, sir, come down before my child dies. This is the only issue on his mind.

He's not worried about signs or belief or anything else. He is sure that Jesus can do a beneficial thing for his son. Jesus said to him, go your way, your son lives.

Notice, like the wedding feast miracle of water to wine, this is not done in a spectacular fashion so that the people of Galilee can see it. The same people of Cana that didn't see water turned to wine and may not even know that that happened, don't see the nobleman's son healed. The nobleman isn't going to find out about it until verse 51.

As he was now going down, his servants met him. The man believed the word that Jesus spoke and went his way. He is on that long 17 mile road to Capernaum.

And he leaves when Jesus says the word, his son lives and is suddenly healed and well, and servants leave. And so they're going to meet in the middle. I would guess at about the eight and a half mile mark, they meet.

Eight and a half, this is several hours later. And he's well away. The people in Cana didn't get the first miracle as a sign.

And they don't get the second miracle as a sign. Why? Unless you see signs and wonders, you won't believe. And that's not good enough.

That's not the kind of faith Jesus is looking for, especially in this early phase. So he inquired to the servants in verse 52, what was the hour when they got better? They said yesterday at the seventh hour, the fever left him. The father knew that it was the same hour in which Jesus said to him, your son lives.

And he himself believed and his whole household. What kind of faith is this? Does he now believe in Jesus because he saw the sign? You will note he already believed in Jesus when he came to him. And as soon as Jesus said, your son lived, he believed him at that point.

But now his faith is affirmed the way the disciples had their faith affirmed in Cana. And the household, how does the household know that it wasn't just a freak occurrence of getting over it suddenly? The nobleman tells his family, Jesus said your son lives. And it was at the seventh hour yesterday.

They believe the word of the nobleman's testimony. They believe that it was in fact Jesus who pronounced healing and it took place. These people are the kind that Jesus is looking for.

The nobleman believes when he comes to him. And as soon as Jesus says he lives, the guy says, good to go. I wanna go see him.

When he communicates to his family, what Jesus said, they believe just like the people in Samaria did. This is the quality of faith we want to have and to live by. I don't need God to vindicate himself.

I don't need him to demonstrate his power. I believe the word of testimony. That's enough for me.

God has promised it. I believe it. God has promised if I cast my cares on him, he cares for me.

And regardless of time problems, regardless of past history or expectations, traditions, regardless of distance, I will place my faith in God and let him figure out how he is going to meet my needs and honor my requests because I love him and I trust him. So we don't have to get into the details of well, but if I ask for this, won't that be a miracle? And this is not the age of miracles or maybe this isn't the right time. We take our requests to God.

My son is at the point of death. We're out of wine. I know you're from God, but how can these things be? Whatever it is, we take it to God and he's got the plan and he will even make exceptions for us.

If we have faith as a grain of mustard seed, the mountains that God put in place for purposes of his own, he'll move them. When Jesus said, if you've got faith, you can say to a mulberry tree, be uprooted and planted in the sea. Why would you want to move a mulberry tree? I've had reasons in the past.

Had one that dropped berries all over the place. But why would we do that? You have to have a good reason. You have to be able to make a case to God.

Lord, I know you put this tree here. I know you put this mountain here, but here is my request. God will always find a way to reflect his glory and ensure our blessing.

If we go to him in faith, there is nothing God will not do. It's God's power. It's not our knowledge.

It's not our perspicacity. It's not our qualification or our quality or we haven't earned or deserved it. But faith is not a work.

And the more faith we have, the more God can and will do, because he is looking for people who will believe the word of testimony, who don't have to have signs and miracles to convince them that he is who he says he is and does what he says he does. We believe it. And God will bless us in extraordinary ways.

Whether time is a problem, whether distance is a problem, whether circumstance is a problem, whether past history is a problem, it will not matter. Whether birth, being a Samaritan, having screwed up in the past and had marriage after marriage, it doesn't matter. Look at what the Lord Jesus does.

Look at the Samaritan woman, had a very colorful past, but she came to Jesus and she believed what he said and he turned her life around in two days and used her to turn around the lives of countless other people in her town because she believed. That should be the quality of our faith. What a wonderful account, what a wonderful revelation of what God will do for those who love him, who are called according to his purpose, who believe it based on the word of testimony, which is the scripture we have before us.

Well, we'll pick up our study of miracles next time. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we are so grateful that you have given us this word of testimony, that the quality does not reside in us, but in the object of our faith, which is your character, your love for us, your son, the Lord Jesus, who reveals that love and grace in so many ways.

And the word of testimony that conveys all of that truth to us in an inspired and helpful fashion. We pray that as we reflect on these things in the light of our own time, our own circumstance, our own challenges, that the Holy Spirit will minister them to our hearts, encourage us, motivate us, guide us, so that we do not turn to the right hand or to the left. We aim ourselves at that narrow gate that leads to life so that we can come to know you better and reflect your glory more fully, both now and in the ages to come.

We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.