



[ 4 : 35 ] And put out your hand and place it in my side. And do not disbelieve, but believe. And Thomas answered him, my Lord and my God.

And Jesus said to him, have you believed because you've seen? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book, that is the book of John.

But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

And God's people said, amen. The passage preaches for itself, but I'm going to try to preach it anyways. Pray for me. God, thank you for this opportunity tonight to study your word. Thank you for this series we have before us now as we study the miracles of Jesus.

I pray that the end result of all of this time and time again would be my Lord and my God. There is nothing impossible with you.

[ 5 : 56 ] And if there is anybody in this place that is struggling to believe, I pray that beginning tonight, their faith would be made alive. And we pray this in Jesus' name.

And God's people said, amen. Amen. You can be seated. With a razor and a pair of scissors, he carefully cut each piece.

Each cut had a purpose. Each word was carefully considered. And then he would take those clippings and he would bind them into a red leather booklet.

It was a book that he intended to use later for his own meditation. Now, for those that knew him, they didn't think this was all that strange. He'd always kind of been known to be an inventor, a tinkerer of sorts.

But what was shocking about this is that he was tinkering with something that most people in his day found sacred.

[ 7 : 01 ] The Bible. Some of you probably know that I'm referring to the third president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson. As you likely have known before, Thomas Jefferson created his own version of the New Testament.

It was an 84-page Bible full of the teachings of Jesus, full of the morals of Jesus, full of the good deeds of Jesus, but absent of anything miraculous.

Absent of the miracles of Jesus. This two-volume set was called the philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth. And the other was called the life and morals of Jesus of Nazareth.

And in them, you would find no water turning to wine. You will find no healing of the sick. You will find no walking on water. And you certainly will not find any resurrection from the dead.

No, the Jefferson Bible, as it has become known, had no reference to anything supernatural. Historian Edwin Galsted writes, quote, Even when this took some rather careful cutting with scissors or razors, Jefferson managed to maintain Jesus' role as a great moral teacher, not a faith healer.

[ 8 : 28 ] Removing all the miraculous events was his way of, quote, cherishing the diamonds. In other words, the good stuff was all the morality of Jesus, not the miracles.

See, Jefferson had a very complicated relationship with Christianity. I don't know if you know this historically, but Jefferson was far more one of rational thought or self-determination than he was a believer in divine providence.

In fact, so much so, the Federalist charged him with being a, quote, howling atheist during the election of 1800.

Jefferson was trying to find a middle ground. He was trying to maintain a Jesus that taught good morals without a Jesus that performed great miracles.

And as a result, rather than accepting the Jesus of the Bible, Thomas Jefferson created his own. Faith, let me ask you tonight, have you ever known, have you ever met a skeptic?

[ 9 : 39 ] Have you ever come across somebody who is skeptical? Maybe they were the type of person that questioned every possible deal, right? It's always too good to be true. Or the type of person that distrusts anybody in authority.

The type of person that doubts whether things will ever get better. Maybe they're pessimistic about their team's chances to win. They always feel like they're going to lose.

Or maybe you know people that have doubted issues related to faith. They've doubted the things of God. My guess is that most of us at some point in life have come across a skeptic.

And maybe that's you. And I would invite you to please join us over these next several weeks and to bring your questions. The reason why is that's the exact type of person we find here in John chapter 20 in a man named Thomas.

You see, Thomas, the disciples, a lot like Thomas the ex-president, he's a bit skeptical about anything miraculous. Look at what he says in verse 25.

[10:52] And so the other disciples told him, We've seen the Lord. But he said to them, Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails and place my finger into the mark of the nails and place my hand into his side, I will what, faith family?

Never believe. Thomas, a lot like the ex-president, has some concerns about miracles. In his mind, messiahs don't die and dead people certainly don't come back to life.

He's skeptical about this. And that's why the apostle John includes this story in his gospel. Because he's inviting Thomas' to come in with all of their questions and behold miracles.

Amen? Look at verse 27. Then he said to Thomas, Put your finger here and see my hands and put out your hand and place it in my side.

Do not disbelieve, but believe. And Thomas answered him, My Lord and my God. Jesus said to him, Have you believed because you have seen? Well, blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

[12:10] Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book. Let me give you three things tonight from this passage by way of introducing us to miracles.

The first is this. It's an extremely basic, but we've got to start here. And that's the existence of miracles. I mean, how many of you believe that miracles happen? Okay.

I've got a lot of convincing to do. There's three of you that believe in miracles, but that's okay. Okay. We'll convince others along the way. It's clear from this passage, both in this specific example with Thomas and John's reference to the other examples that are not included in the Gospel of John, that miracles do exist.

In fact, you don't need a PhD in the New Testament to realize that the Bible is frequently presenting you with the miraculous. In fact, I would go so far as to say that if you remove the miracles from Scripture, specifically the Gospels like Thomas Jefferson did, you've actually removed Christianity. Amen? Okay. By the way, you just have my permission to say amen. Anytime you feel like it, just say it. All right. Notice this on the screen. No miracles, no Christianity.

[13:31] Christianity. That's how important this issue is. If you do not believe in miracles, you do not have Christianity. I mean, think, for instance, what without miracles, what we would be left with.

For instance, we would have no incarnation, no God taking on flesh. That's a miracle. We would have no virgin birth. There would be no salvation.

That is, some of you earlier, when you were singing about, and I ran out of that grave, like you were testifying that I was dead in sin, and God came along and breathed life in me, and I, like Lazarus did physically, spiritually came out of a grave.

How many of you, that's your testimony? Then you believe in miracles. It is a miracle that you are saved. Amen? But if you don't believe in miracles, then you don't even have Christian salvation. You also don't have the resurrection from the dead. Now listen to what the Apostle Paul says about that idea, 1 Corinthians 15, verse 12.

[14:38] Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain. Oh, we are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that He raised Christ, who He didn't raise, if it is true that the dead are not raised.

For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you're still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

And God's people said to that, Amen. You get rid of miracles. You've gotten rid of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. You get rid of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[15:45] You don't have Christianity, and you don't have hope in this world. Are you with me tonight? And so what John here, in John 20, with the story of Thomas, is he's pushing us to say that even if you're like Thomas, and you doubt, there's got to come a point when you believe in miracles.

You simply cannot separate the morals of Jesus from the miracles of Jesus, like Jefferson tried to do. Because without the miracles, there's no basis for Christianity at all.

Now you might say, but why should I believe in the miracles of Scripture? How do I not know that they weren't just made up? Well, there's a few reasons. First of all, it's interesting how the miracles are presented as matter of fact.

And what I mean here is this, is the miracles are not presented in a sensational way. That is, they're not some version of a magic show.

They're not presented like a, and you won't believe what Jesus did next. Like it's trying to pull one over on you. No, as you read, and as we study through the Gospels at the different miracles, what you're going to discover is, is that they're presented in a very, this is what took place fashion.

[17:09] The Bible is not trying to trick you. It's just trying to tell you what happened. And it's presented that way. A second reason why I would say you should entertain this study and be open to the belief in miracles is that skeptics aren't shunned.

Thomas' are included in the story. Like if you didn't want questions asked, you wouldn't allow somebody like Thomas to be included.

You would try to keep them at a distance. But rather, I love this faith family. I hope you're listening. Rather than saying, hey, don't ask any questions here. Stay back.

The Bible is actually saying, bring your questions. We've got nothing to hide. We're not afraid of Thomas' who have real questions about real things.

No. Come on in. You are welcome questions and all. Amen? Whereas if these weren't real, what would you try to do?

[18:15] You'd try to figure out a way to shun anybody asking questions. But I love that the Bible doesn't do that. Thirdly, is know that there are multiple, multiple witnesses.

This is not based on one guy's testimony of Jesus, but this is based on multiple, multiple eyewitness testimony of Jesus Christ.

Number four, the enemies of Jesus even acknowledge His miracles. Even the people that are trying to discredit Him, include the fact that the one thing they can't deny about Him is that He is a miracle worker.

Amen? The Jewish leaders accuse Him of casting out demons. The Talmud, which is a record of rabbinic tradition, says this, and I quote, you were on the way to church tonight, saying, I hope He quotes the Talmud.

Right? Come on. Admit it. It's what it says. Quote, it has been taught on the eve of the Passover that Jesus was hanged for 40 days before the execution took place. A herald went forth and cried, He is going forth to be killed because He practiced sorcery.

[19:27] And so there was no denying even by the very enemies of Jesus that He was a miracle worker. And then lastly, number five, I would say purely based on historical grounds.

And I haven't even gotten into all the reasons why you should believe just the Bible alone. But even historically, Marcus Berg, who's not a believer, observes the following, quote, despite the difficulty that miracles pose for the modern mind, on historical grounds, it is virtually indisputable that Jesus was a healer and an exorcist.

In other words, there is good reason to believe in miracles and the miracles specifically of Jesus. Who's with me?

Just an introduction, a little bit more teach than preach. We're still good. All right. Well, this raises then the question, what in the world is a miracle? I mean, you've been using this word, but what is it?

Well, we use this word so frequently, it's become a little bit like this. You keep using that word. I don't think it means what you think it means. You keep using that word, but I do not think it means what you think it means.

[20:46] And I think that's true when it comes to miracles, right? I mean, we just use the word miracle for everything, correct? I mean, there's the miracle on ice for all you hockey fans.

I don't know why you'd be a hockey fan, but if you are a hockey fan, there you go, miracle on ice. Two weeks ago, we talked about the miracle on the Hudson. You remember that.

Viking fans, you no doubt remember the Minnesota miracle. Evidently, there was a miracle that happened on 34th Street. Or if somebody walks away from an accident, we will say, they are a walking miracle.

You keep using that word. I don't think it means what you think it means. Like, seriously, are these things, like I just described, actually miracles?

Is it a miracle to come from behind and win a game? Is it a miracle to land a plane safely? Is it a miracle to survive an accident?

[ 21 : 54 ] Now listen, because I'm not trying to offend anybody here. I'm just trying to teach you, I hope faithfully from the word. Are those things unexpected? Yes. Are they unlikely?

Certainly. Are they even remarkable? No doubt. But they're not miracles. They're not miracles. So we need to start being careful with how we use the word, because I do not think that word means what you think it means.

A miracle is an event whereby all natural explanations are inadequate. They are temporary, extraordinary exceptions to the normal course of nature.

They are things that never would happen, in fact, could never happen were not the natural process interrupted.

Or, if the natural process were left alone. Let me give you some examples. Water is never going to turn to wine naturally. Amen?

[ 23 : 07 ] Okay. Some of you might want that. You'd think, that'd be awesome. But water just doesn't turn to wine on its own. Dead people do not, on their own, come alive.

Can we agree on that? People do not naturally walk on water. That is not the way it works. Virgins do not naturally become pregnant.

They are not just going to, on their own, become pregnant. In other words, these are examples where the only way you can explain what happened is supernatural intervention.

And that's not what's happening when a plane lands safely. That is a remarkable thing. I can't believe the USA team came back and won. But it's not a miracle.

You can explain that in ways of natural process. But, faith family, sometimes, do you believe, sometimes, God who created the natural order chooses to do things in a supernatural way.

[ 24 : 07 ] Amen? The God who created the natural order can, anytime He wants, do something a supernatural way. Why? Notice it on the screen.

Because God is the creator of all things and He is not bound by anything. Amen? There is nothing that our God can't do.

And so, it's totally reasonable to believe in miracles because the very God that created the normal, natural way can at any time do something in a supernatural way.

So, the first thing that we see here from John chapter 20 with this story of Thomas is the existence of miracles. And so, we're starting this series off with that.

But here's the second thing I want us to see. And that is the purpose of miracles. The purpose of miracles. Why does God choose sometimes to do things that go against the normal, natural way?

[ 25 : 10 ] Here's a better question, Faith Family. Why didn't Jesus do more miracles? Have you ever thought about that? Why didn't He heal all of the sick?

Why only just some? I ask that question because those of you that are students of the Reformation, Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of Wittenberg.

You remember that? Luther's entire argument against the Pope was this. If the Pope has the ability to free people from purgatory, why wouldn't he free everybody?

Are you with me? Why are you making getting Aunt Flossie out of purgatory an offering drive?

Like you're taking up money and you're selling indulgences to get people out of purgatory. If you have the ability to get people out of purgatory, just do it!

[ 26 : 15 ] That was Luther's argument. And I think in many ways people could say this, Jesus, if you have the power to perform miracles and heal the sick, why don't you heal everybody?

Why did you only heal some? And even asking that question gets into seeing why miracles in the first place.

Look at verse 30 of chapter 20. We'll see this in the text. Now, Jesus did many other signs signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book.

This is very important, faith family. What is the purpose of a sign? What is the purpose of a sign?

The purpose is to point you in a direction.

A sign exists to get you to a destination. I mean, if I'm looking for a sign to go to St. Paul, I don't want to go to Minneapolis, I want to go to St. Paul, well, the sign is not the goal.

[ 27 : 20 ] Amen? That sign only exists to get me to the destination which is St. Paul. In other words, this is really important. Miracles were not ends to themselves.

They were simply signs to get you to the destination of faith in Christ. So you need to be very, very careful and I need to be very, very careful that you don't become so obsessed with the miracle that you miss the man.

Please amen that or I'll kick you. Online, thank you for all your amens. All right? It's almost like in the book of Revelation where the angels don't worship me, don't worship things that worship God, worship God.

And the danger of a study like this is that you're going to become obsessed in the miracle and I'm telling you that the miracle according to John is a sign so that you'll be like Thomas, my Lord and my God.

I'm amazed not at the miracle, I'm amazed at the man who performed the miracle. This is what miracles are intended to do.

[ 28 : 35 ] This is the purpose for their existence and it's why Jesus didn't walk around performing miracles all the time. It's why he didn't heal every sick person that lived.

He didn't relocate every mountain. He sometimes didn't even want the news of his miracle to get out too soon. It's why some demanded that he do a miracle and at times he would refuse.

Why? Listen, because each and every miracle was a purposeful sign. each and every miracle was a purposeful sign.

His goal was not to come to the earth and just put on a magic show and just heal everything and watch these mountains move. No, each one was purposeful to get you to the destination of faith in Jesus Christ.

Christ. That's why miracles exist. Let me give you five, by way of teaching in this introduction, five main purposes of miracles that we'll see examples of as we go throughout this series.

[ 29 : 52 ] Five main purposes for miracles. Number one is this, the miracles of Jesus reveal his identity. The miracles of Jesus reveal his identity.

In other words, here's why I would teach a series like this, is because you're going to get to know Jesus better. That's a good motivation for coming back. Amen? You're going to get to know Jesus better.

You're going to learn more about who Jesus is when you study his miracles. Look at John 2, verse 11. This is the first sign or the first miracle, which we'll look at.

It says this, this, the first of his signs, Jesus did in Cana in Galilee and what manifested his glory. He was revealing something about himself in the miracle. And so the miracle is a sign pointing you to who Jesus is.

[ 30 : 56 ] Listen closely, listen closely. Why does Jesus multiply the bread? bread? Because he wants to show off? No, because he wants to show you he's the bread of life.

That normal food leaves you hungry again, but when you feast on Christ, you will never hunger again. Amen? Why does Jesus calm the storm?

To show you that he is the sovereign one over creation. so much so that he speaks and the winds obey.

As we study these miracles, we're going to understand more and more about Jesus Christ. Second, is the miracles of Jesus authenticate his message or you could even say his ministry.

The miracles of Jesus authenticate his message or his ministry. Peter says this very thing and if you don't get all the notes down, I'll be happy to provide them for you.

[ 32 : 01 ] But look at Acts chapter 2 verse 22. Peter says this, Jesus was a man attested to you by God through what? Mighty works and wonders and, there's our word, signs that God did through him.

In other words, in fact, when John the Baptist asked, Jesus, are you the real Messiah or should we wait for another? What does Jesus say? He says, the blind see and the lame walk.

Why did he say that? Because he's quoting Isaiah 35 that says, when the Messiah comes, the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, then shall the lame leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

notice it on the screen. Miracles mean Messiah is here. They're not only revealing who Jesus is, as he multiplies bread, he's revealing that he is the bread of life, but these signs and works and wonders are authenticating he is the true Messiah.

John, you don't need to wait for another because the lame walk and the blind see. Thirdly, is the miracles of Jesus preview his kingdom.

[ 33 : 36 ] It's like the preview before the full show. He's preparing you for what the future kingdom of God is going to be like.

Now, for those of you that have followed my teaching for many years, you've heard me teach this before. This is something that I've taught on many different occasions, namely that miracles are a foretaste, listen, listen, this will get you excited, of what life is like in the kingdom.

Miracles are a foretaste. It's an appetizer. It's a preview of what life is like in the kingdom. In other words, miracles are putting wrongs back to right.

You see, you're not supposed to die. Amen? Death is a part of the curse. You're not supposed to be sick. You're not supposed to get leprosy. You're not supposed to be hungry.

How was Adam and Eve created in the beginning? They could eat anything they wanted any time they wanted except the one tree. Hunger was not an experience pre-fall.

[ 34 : 38 ] You were just to enjoy all that God had provided for you. But these things came in when sin came in. And so what Jesus is doing in the miracle, is reversing things back to the way they're supposed to be.

Now, not permanently, but in a temporary way, getting you ready for the permanent. Have you ever thought about the fact that Lazarus died twice? I mean, wouldn't you hate to be Lazarus?

I don't want to go through that again! Right? Really? Why'd you have to bring me back? Okay? But these were temporary things to get you ready for the kingdom when what?

There will be no more death. And there will be no more crying. And there will be no more sickness. So when you see these miracles, what you're seeing is a foretaste of glory divine.

You're seeing the introduction or the preview of what the entire movie will be about when you get to glory with your Christ.

[ 35 : 52 ] That's exciting. And so what you're going to see as we look at these miracles is how Jesus is reversing the natural way of death to the way things are supposed to be with life.

Number four is the miracles of Jesus were acts, of compassion. The miracles of Jesus were acts of compassion. Now, I put this on the list but I put this down the list because if this were all that miracles were and a lot of times this is all people think about is they think, oh yeah, Jesus did miracles because he's a compassionate guy.

Again, if that were the only thing, then why didn't he heal everyone? But listen, just because Jesus didn't heal everyone doesn't take away from the fact that healing anyone was an act of grace and mercy from Jesus.

Look at Matthew 14 verse 14. And when he went ashore, he saw a great crowd and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

You're going to see a part of the heart of Jesus. You see the heart of Jesus when he weeps upon the news of Lazarus' death.

[ 37 : 13 ] He weeps that. You're going to see the compassion of Jesus on full display as he performs miracles. And then the last reason or purpose for a miracle is this.

The miracles of Jesus are signs of salvation. They are signs of salvation. It's clear that in miracles, Jesus is healing physical bodies.

But we need to realize that the physical healing was simply a picture of a greater healing. For example, do you remember the story of the paralyzed man?

We'll look at it. When he is lowered down from the ceiling, do you remember that story? Look at, you'll see it on the screen, Mark 2 verse 5. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, son, your sins are forgiven.

And I'm not going to explain much of that now because we'll look at it when we look at that example, but I've always thought, you wonder if the guy was like, that's great and all, but I'd kind of like to walk. I mean, thanks for the forgiveness of sin, but still on a mat, right?

[ 38 : 26 ] I'm kind of here to walk again. Nobody said anything about their forgiveness of sins. But what Jesus is showing us there is your inability to walk is a physical sign of a spiritual reality.

You are unable to save yourself. Lazarus, you are unable to come out of that tomb on your own. That these leprosy, that this is a condition that you cannot heal yourself, all of these physical signs are pointing us to the work of salvation.

Then the same way you can't walk, in the same way you can't heal yourself, in the same way you can't get to life on your own, that is your spiritual condition before God.

And when Jesus says get up and walk, he's saying something greater than that. He's saying your sins are forgiven and you've been given life.

So know that the miracles of Jesus are signs of salvation. Notice this on the screen. Namely, that Jesus is not only the one who can fill your stomach, he is the one who can save your soul.

[ 39 : 45 ] These are signs of salvation. So what do we see here? Here in John chapter 20, we see the existence of miracles. Jesus did this and many others.

We see the purpose of miracles. These are signs that point us to the life and ministry of Jesus. And I want you to see one last thing very quickly as we close in verse 31.

John 20 verse 31 and we're done. But these were written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Here's the third thing and that is the response to miracles. The existence of them, the purpose of them, and then what is our response to be as we look at the miracles.

Faith family, listen, it is not enough to believe in the existence of miracles. And it is not enough to know that miracles exist to get you to a destination. Everybody look right here.

[ 40 : 50 ] If you don't actually get to that destination, a study of miracles does you absolutely no good if your response is not one of faith.

The point here for Thomas is to get him to the point where he will say, my Lord and my God, I believe.

That is, he got to the destination. He got where he's supposed to go. And so what I'm pleading for as we go on this journey these next several weeks is that you would not be a person that is like, yeah, I believe in miracles and I know that they exist to reveal about Jesus, but you're not walking with Jesus.

You're not growing in your love for Jesus. You're not standing in all of Jesus. because I don't want to spend my time the next several weeks showing you all these signs on how to get to the destination, the man Christ, and you not end up there.

Amen? I want us, it's why I started this way in this series, I want us to be like Thomas, believing in Christ because of the signs that point us to him.

[ 42 : 16 ] This brings up a good point about faith that I'll close with, namely that faith is not in opposition to reason and evidence. Sometimes we act like having faith in Jesus is this kind of blind faith, which is the exact opposite of what John is saying in this passage.

John says, I recorded these events for you so that you would believe. I'm giving you eyewitness evidence and testimony.

testimony for which your faith can rest. You have every reason to believe. And Thomas, very little reason to doubt at all.

Amen? So, these next few weeks, my hope is that your faith will be strengthened. That if you're a Christian and you already believe that every single week we're going to build up and edify and strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ.

And for some of you, maybe like Thomas, you're going to come along for the ride and you're going to have questions and you're going to have doubts, but you're going to end up at the right destination, which is my Lord and my God.

[ 43 : 29 ] So, which Thomas will you be? Will you be like the Thomas who struggled with the supernatural, only to end up forcing Jesus to fit within your cut and paste reality of your own rationalism?

Or will you be like the Thomas who ended up face to face with the risen Christ and cried out, my Lord and my God, that you will come to realize that there is nothing and I mean nothing that is impossible with Christ.

because the very God that created this world most certainly has the power to not only come into this world, he most certainly has the power to overcome it.

And all God's people said, Amen. Let's pray. God, thank you for the beginning of this journey over these next several weeks as we look to your word, as we study the miracles of Jesus.

Thank you for just the opportunity to introduce the topic Lord, to understand what a miracle is, what the purpose of the miracles are for, and how they're meant to strengthen our faith to be the grounds and basis for which we are able to say we absolutely believe.

[ 44 : 54 ] And so God, I pray that over these next several weeks you would encourage us and strengthen us in that. And if there is somebody here like Thomas and John 20 and they've got questions, good.

Bring those questions, bring those concerns. There is nothing of which to hide. There is simply a resurrected Christ to experience and we pray it in his name.

And God's people said, Amen.