

The Miracles of Jesus

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[0 : 00] All right, please take your Bibles out to Mark chapter 1. Mark chapter 1. While you're turning to Mark chapter 1, if I could give you guys an extra incentive in any way to think of camp as a good place to be, a good place to serve.

It was at camp where we had a pretty involved church camp where I grew up in Ontario. It was actually the first person camp, my counselor taught me how to read God's word.

At camp was the place where I was able to bring one of my high school friends who came to know Jesus Christ through camp when I was in grade 11 or grade 12.

And it was interesting just even at my wedding about seven years ago, besides the one person who was from my, who I grew up with, who was in my wedding party, all of my other friends were all friends that I made at camp who had still been with, still entrenched with for over 20 years.

So it's a lifetime. It's a life changer. So it's something that we need to continue to think about and pray about. So I'm just going to pray for the camp right now. I know the last couple of years, it's been hard with the COVID.

[1 : 25] I know the summer before was absolute horrible for the camping industry, not just financially, but you had a whole bunch of people willing to go and serve, and they did not have that opportunity.

So let me just lift up Tristan and the team over at Camp Quantos. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we just, what an opportunity it is to be able to hear the gospel in a place where it's so easy to connect the truths of the gospel to kids, love, relationships, being outdoors and enjoying time with one another.

There's a reason why Jesus was outside. There was a reason why he spent time with his disciples as he grew them in the truth of your gospel.

One of the most exciting things about church that a lot of people don't understand are about camp. It's not the first year. It's when the children come back year after year after year who've been touched, who've been molded, and who've been changed by the gospel.

And just as Tristan read some of those stories, for some there is the fear of going home and having their Bibles taken away. And for some of those kids, camp is the lifeline that they come back to every year because their parents won't let them come to a church, but they'll release them for a week or two during the summer of camp.

[2 : 51] Father, it's powerful to lay God's words into children who are young, who are understanding, and who desperately need the truth of the gospel to save their lives.

Father, so we just lift up Camp Quantos, lift up Tristan, and just his role in traveling across countries, not just recruiting churches, but recruiting people to come and serve at the camp.

Those are even life-changing events, not just being a kid having fun, but just serving, knowing friends, and being cared for as well. So we ask you these things in your great and wonderful name. Amen. So as I said, we're back into Mark 1. We are back into the land of Jesus Christ. Again, I want to give my thanks for Dave.

You guys don't know, but just handing Dave a sermon to say, hey, I'm too sick on a Thursday. You need to go for Sunday can be a, it's a tough job. So just very grateful for Dave to step in and to put those together for the last couple of weeks because Dave actually has another part to this church in serving and caring for you, both counseling and as he's doing school.

[3 : 59] So thank you for that, Dave. Last time we were together, we're beginning the phase of studying the life of Christ as it pertains to his time in what we call the Galilean ministry, the Galilean ministry.

The Galilean ministry is an 18-month segment of the life of Christ where Jesus went through the land of his birth, both teaching the gospel.

We're going to be learning today how he's affirming the gospel through the power of his miracles and the power and authority that he exuded for all sorts of things.

And the third aspect of his ministry in Galilee was to call for followers, was to ask those to follow him. This Galilean ministry is actually the second of three phases for the life of Christ.

The first phase is kind of through his birth, through the baptism, time in the wilderness, and time in Cana before. And remember we talked about Jesus Christ being in Judea, going into the temple, and he's kind of getting everything set and ready to go in Israel before he starts just going, I don't know how to say this word without being unholy and saying, just going crazy preaching the good news.

[5 : 27] He's just a non-stop preaching machine for the next couple of years of his life. In the third phase, and we're going to look at this in the next couple of weeks, there's going to be a transition in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

And we're going to see what's a heartbreaking series of events. As he goes through Galilee, the crowds get bigger and bigger and bigger. People want to follow him. They want to see him. They want to be experiencing what Jesus is experiencing.

But they get to a point where they reject him. They say, hey, we're all for the really great wonders, things that you're doing, but we are choosing our religion over what you've come to offer.

So he switches over to a third phase, which I call the preparation phase, where he does more teaching, building in to the disciples or the apostles to prepare them to take the gospel after he's gone.

And within that, of course, we have the Passion Week, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. So that happens in the third phase. But here we are in the second phase.

[6 : 40] And I'm going to ask Dave to put up a slide. And this slide is of Galilee, the place where Jesus was born. It was also the place where he served the most.

So it's at that yellow part, gold at the top, near the Sea of Galilee. So that is where Jesus is going to spend the greatest amount of time over these next 18 months preaching the gospel.

And he's going to do it through three preaching tours. There's going to be three specific tours that he's going to be going through. And he's got those three goals, which I talked about, right?

He's got the message that he needs to deliver. Two, the miracles, which we're going to talk about today. So this morning, we're going to talk about the purpose of the miracles of Jesus Christ and what and how they played a part in his ministry.

And then the third part of this preaching series through Galilee, we're going to look at the men and women who followed him, why they followed him, and why some rejected him.

[7 : 42] So those are the three things we're going to do. The gospel of Matthew sums up the ministry of Jesus Christ with these words. In Matthew 4, verses 23 to 25.

Matthew writes, And he being Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease.

And I want you to pay attention to that. It's not some diseases. It's not some people he ignored. The text actually tells us that Jesus Christ healed every disease and every affliction among the people. That period of time in Galilee was a disease, COVID-free zone, right? There was nothing that was able to go against his authority in that time.

It was disease. People were healed. And we're going to read about all those things in verse 24. So his fame spread throughout all Syria. And that's an interesting point because it's gone beyond Israel now.

[8 : 50] The fame of Jesus Christ is gone beyond the people he came to minister to. And they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, the paralytics.

And what did Jesus Christ do? He healed them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, which is a primary Gentile region and from Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

It's safe to say that Jesus' ministry in those 18 months would have been a worldwide sensation. If there was TVs, he would have been on all the TV networks 24 hours a day.

He would have been the one to invent round-the-clock news, right? This land, which surrounds the Sea of Galilee, as I said before, is a fertile, active, and very populous land.

Historians tell us that over 2 million people would have lived in this region. On the map, which is no longer there, he moved.

[10:14] Remember, Jesus was born in Nazareth and he now is on the Sea of Galilee. There's a city there called Capernaum. You can see it under the second city under Galilee.

That's a massive industrial center for fishing during that time. As well, major travel roads, major trade roads go through Capernaum, so it's the perfect spot for Jesus to set up camp in his ministry. And that's why, as we got to see, the news spread far and wide. Now, one of the things that I want you to remember as this is going on, and we're going to talk about this a little bit, not so much today, but we all know that there's two religious factions that exist in Israel.

We've heard the Pharisees and the Sadducees. But I also want you to think of them as political systems as well. And political systems are dependent on the power of the people.

Whoever has the most influence in a group of people, that's where their power comes from. Where Jesus is administering, the primary power is found from the Pharisees.

[11:34] And Pharisees exist mostly in the synagogues. And the synagogues, as we've talked about, I'll talk about it briefly today, were kind of like churches. These little places, basically 10 Jewish men would set up and they would pay a scribe, someone who could come and read them the law.

That's how the people learned about God. God, their Old Testament, which is in essence the First Testament, right? So they got to know about their forefathers in that way.

So, we're going to see there's going to be static that's going to come against Jesus. But a lot of it's not only religious in that point, but it's going to be political as well.

It's he who has the most influence. The Sadducees, they're based in Jerusalem, which is down in Jerusalem. And what's interesting about them, their whole ministry is based around the temple.

So, for Jesus' ministry, Jesus isn't even on their map. They really don't care. The first time they heard about Jesus when he cleared out the temple, remember we learned about that in John chapter 2, just kind of cleaned it out.

[12:43] That was kind of letting them know there's someone new in town. But then Jesus recedes to the countryside where these Pharisees. But I want you to see that they're political animals as well.

So, as we begin this second phase of ministry, I want to look at the miracles of Jesus. And I want you to see both the purpose and I want you to understand the influence and impact they had on the life of Christ.

The truth of the matter, there is a lot of confusion in regards to the role of miracles even today in our churches.

And I'm hoping by understanding the biblical text, we can come to an understanding of how they function today. And I'll talk a little bit about how that influences our thought process.

Now, one of the things I want to remind you again, the Gospels do not tell us everything about the life of Christ. Remember, John tells us that if we wrote down everything that Jesus did, there would not be enough pages to include all these things.

[13:52] But the Gospel writers are very selective in the miracles and the stories, the teachings of Jesus that they show to us. So this morning, as we know, we are in the Gospel of Mark, which is a Gospel written to Rome.

And in that Gospel, it is an action Gospel. And what I mean by that, short, pithy stories that have an action element to the story of Jesus Christ.

And we're going to learn there's a reason for that. That doesn't mean Mark doesn't teach us anything. He's teaching us through what Jesus does, more so than what Jesus says.

So this morning, let's take a look at today's text, beginning in Mark 1, starting in verse 21. So, and it says, and they, that would be Jesus and some of his followers.

And remember at this time, it's not like he has his whole, quote unquote, team settled. Not all the apostles are with him. Some disciples are.

[15:01] We believe Peter, Andrew, James, and John are there. They're with them. They're not totally committed yet. And we're going to learn as he goes through this, usually, but we get to the second tour of the ministry of Jesus Christ in Galilee.

That's when he really starts to form that team. And by the time he gets to the third phase, we're going to learn he's got his whole team behind him and they're ready to go. So it says, as they went into Capernaum, Jesus and his followers, and immediately on the Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching.

So as I said before, it's kind of like a church gathering. And Jesus used this to his benefit to go in and strategize how to reach the Jewish people. Synagogues would be all over.

Just like in Squamish, there's many churches. There'd be many synagogues within a given town or place. So Jesus Christ used that. And one of the things they would do is they would read this passage from the Old Testament or the First Testament.

And the way they used to do things is they would read the passage, then the scribe, the teacher, the rabbi, would teach them what tradition taught about those passages.

[16:12] So there was an oral tradition that existed in the Jewish faith, which I think it's around 200 AD. It gets kind of solidified in what's called the Mishnah, which is an addition to the Old Testament.

But these scribes would study what the old prophets and rabbis thought of the passage. So that's what they were used to. And look at what happens in verse 22 of Mark 1.

It says, And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority and not as the scribes.

So right there, Mark is giving us a contrast between modern-day religion that existed in Israel, centered on the synagogue, and here is this man who comes, and he's teaching not just in a way, but what he says.

Now think of it. That totally makes sense. This is the Son of God, right? He's been around. He's eternal. Not only does he know the Old Testament perfectly, he knows the meaning behind every passage, every section, and what he's doing is he's building a case for him.

[17:33] And he's taking them through these passages. Luke says they spoke well of him. Remember, in his first, his home synagogue, they tried to kill him, run him off a hill.

But in that process, they said before they tried to kill him, they actually spoke well of him and marveled at his gracious words. So there is something to Jesus' teaching that is unlike anything that they have ever heard.

And I want us to pay attention to Jesus' teaching had authority. There's two components to the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Christ. The first component is that he taught he is the long awaited Messiah. Remember a couple Sundays ago, last sermon, I talked about this.

What is the message? That he is the good news. He is the gospel. Right? So he came with the message. You can be free of this false religion, this legalism, all these traditions you've been piling on, trying to be right with God.

[18:51] Here is the way. You know how you get there? You repent. Repent. Turn your back on that. Come follow me. And they know the message that the Messiah will come and save his people.

Now the second aspect to the teaching that Jesus Christ is that he is actually in fact God come in human flesh.

He is the son of God. God. He is the flesh of the father. Now what's interesting throughout Jewish history and let's be honest, even in our history, people have claimed to be Messiahs.

Remember David Koresh? A couple dozen years ago down in Texas, he claimed to be the Messiah. If you know anything about some young Kim over in South Korea, he is a self-appointed Messiah.

People come and claim self-appointed Messiahs all the time. So Jesus claiming to be Messiah wouldn't have been all that new.

[19:54] But to claim that you were God come in the flesh, that's something else. So if I was here and told you that, did you guys not know, this kid from North Bay is actually the Messiah, right?

You might listen to my words, right? I might have some pithy wisdom for you that you might say, hey, I want to follow that. But then as soon as I said, oh, by the way, I'm God, oh, wait a second. You're going to say, hey, man, I've heard you yelling at your dogs, right? You've been late. You've been unthoughtful. But you're going to sit there, show me the proof.

You need to show me that you are indeed God. Now, remember, in the early part of Jesus' life, which we talked about in his birth, Jesus Christ was able to point to the prophecies that came true in his birth.

And Jesus was able to show that he is rightfully the Messiah. Why? Remember, because he's Joseph's son, he is the rightful king to the throne of David because everybody in Israel knew that for Messiah to come, he had to be of the lineage of David.

[21 : 21] But also through Mary, the blood side, he was also in line with King David. But not only that, Jesus Christ, through the lineage, the genealogy that we read in Luke, was able to trace his lineage to Abraham and also to Adam.

Amen? That Adam for us is a big deal because he's not only the father of the Jews, he's also the father of us Gentiles who are non-Jewish. Right? So he was able to do those things.

So he had the right blood and he had the legal right, but to say that you're the son of God, that's something else. And this is where the miracles of Jesus come into play.

But what's interesting, it's probably not going to be how you think. Now, I want you to think, I'm not going to ask you that right now, so let's go to the text, verse 23.

So Mark is going to be giving us a battering of miracles and things that Jesus did. He doesn't give us a lot of background, he's just kind of going through event to event to event.

[22 : 35] Verse 23, and immediately there was in the synagogue a man with an unclean spirit and he cried out, what have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.

It's interesting, right, throughout the gospel ministries, we're going to see the only ones who've got Jesus Christ figured out are the demons. But Jesus rebuked him saying, be silent and come out of him.

A lot of people always ask, well, why does he want the demons to be quiet if they're right? Would you want Satan taking care of your PR? Right?

Of course not. That's the last person you wanted to be speaking about you, even if he's truth. Why would you have the despot father of lies and horrible evil being the one who's propping you up?

Nobody would want that. So that is one of the reasons why when people say, well, why does Jesus always tell them to quiet? Verse 26, and the unclean spirit convulsing him and crying out with loud voice came out of him and they were all amazed.

[23 : 38] So when they questioned among themselves saying, and I want you to pay attention to this, what is this? A new teaching with authority.

He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him. And at once his fame spread throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

Now look at verse 29. And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever and immediately they told him about her.

And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up and the fever left her and she began to serve them. Verse 40. And a leper came to him imploring him and kneeling said to him, if you will, you can make me clean.

Moved with pity, he being Jesus, stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, I will be clean. In case you didn't understand, verse 42 is an incredible, passionate verse.

[24 : 47] A leper who was unclean, who was told to stay outside the walls. If you wanted to be accepted into Jewish worship at that time, you could not be around unclean.

The fact for the leper who you stay hidden from, far from, that Jesus first motion to him is to touch him is an incredible, loving, compassionate action.

And immediately the leprosy left him in verse 22 and he was made clean. Now what Mark is doing there, he's demonstrating all the different areas that Jesus Christ has authority over.

The first one being the demon came out. Jesus, shut up, get out of here. Demon had to listen.

Peter's mother-in-law, she's sick.

Could have been COVID, could have not, who knows. But she's sick, she's got a fever. Get out, sickness. So he's got this authority even over human nature.

[26 : 05] And now this leper comes to him and he's got this power over defilement, something that renders you not only ill, but something that made you unclean, unacceptable.

And Jesus defied all the laws of the land by just reaching out and touching that leper. These are the stories, every story, every miracle that we see working out in the gospel.

It's Jesus Christ demonstrating power and authority over something. In Mark, we're going to read Mark chapter 2, we're not going to go into it, but remember the paralyzed man, they had to open up

the roof, lowered him in.

Jesus not only heals him, but he forgives his sins as well. Power over sin and paralysis. Mark chapter 4, he's heading over the other side of the sea.

Huge storm shows up. The apostles, disciples at that time, fearful that they're all going to die. Jesus demonstrates his power over nature.

[27 : 20] Mark 3, we read about this man in the withered hand. And Jesus is in the synagogue, he's on the Sabbath, and this man's got this withered hand.

And Jesus goes over and heals the hand. And it's not just the power over the ability to heal his hand. Jesus was actually demonstrating that he has authority over the Sabbath.

Because the Sabbath, that time, that holy time to the Jews, actually stated he was not even able to heal for it would be work at that time. That's how crazy the law was.

Here's this man who's had impediment his whole life. Jesus heals that to the Pharisees, the ones who want the political influence. And we're going to see that story, right?

This is where we're going to see the Pharisees start to try to chip away at Jesus because the crowds continue to get bigger and bigger. It says all types of sickness, disease, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the mute.

[28 : 22] There is absolutely nothing that Jesus could not heal. In fact, the Gospels list over 37 types of healings that Jesus did. Now remember the context.

Mark, to a group of people in Rome, and you know it was in Rome, a bunch of statues of all these other gods, right? Every nation was able to have their statues.

You would have had Greek gods, Roman gods, all these things. Statues to the emperors who were supposed to be gods. And these first century Christians, these people were hearing this truth for the first time.

They're hearing about a God who actually has power, who actually heals, who actually saves.

Now I want you to understand there's this word authority. And we see this as having power. Now, we tend to, when we think of authority, we tend to think about position.

[29 : 28] Someone has been given a certain position in life, therefore, he has the authority. Kids in school know the vice principle. Lord willing, the teacher and the principal are an authority over them, right?

So they act with a level of respect when they're told to go for a detention. They go for a detention. When they're told to go get their hands smacked, okay, you guys didn't have that. I had that when I grew up, right?

Go in, hold the palm of your hand, there used to be that leather strap. And I never got that though. But anyway, I just heard rumors of it. You know, we recognize, Murray, I don't want to talk about how many straps.

Anyway, you know, so there was that reality that you accept that someone has authority. Police officers judge, not because they're any better, but they've been given that authority for a reason, usually through experience, education, ability.

authority. You know, all businesses have someone with authority. But it's more than that.

[30 : 34] You know what, I didn't tell you guys this, but actually at the elder meeting, I told the elders that I'm actually tearing down the house next door on the church property, and I'm going to build four new homes there.

Right? Four new homes. It's going to be really nice. We're going to use two of the homes for other ministry and I'm going to profit off the last one. Sorry, guys. But anyway, now I took it to the elders. I need permission, right? It's not my land, but I needed permission and they said it was okay. They said it was okay. However, as you all know, we live in the land of law.

And the elders actually aren't the authority of whether or not I can build a bunch of houses over there.

You know, I'd have to go down to the city, I'd have to get a permit from someone who has authority to make that decision. Now, what say, they said it's okay, we're going to try that, we're going to try that, we're going to let you guys be the first one to do it.

[31 : 43] Go ahead. So I have permission. Is permission enough? No, right? I need money. I'll be honest with you, you guys don't pay me that well, right?

I don't have the kind of money where I can build four new homes over there. And of course, I'm not going to hire these high-end builders that go to this church, right?

That'd be even more money. But then, just say I had the money. I've got the money, you guys don't know, I've been hurtling away, I've been investing in crypto, I'm a billionaire, and I'm going to put it there.

But I'm going to do it myself. First thing my wife's going to do is laugh. Because I struggle building garden beds, right? I'm incapable. So it doesn't matter if I have the position, doesn't matter I have the money, I also have to have the ability.

So the type of authority that Jesus Christ is bringing over all these things is he has the right to be there and do the things that he's doing.

[32 : 57] He also has the right to have authority over demons, sickness, disease, nature. Why?

Because he has the power, because he made it, amen? His is the final word, his is the final say. So when we're talking about authority, it's more than just the position.

It's the ability and the means to do what he wants to do. In the miracles that we read in our Bibles, every one of them is written with a strategic specific design to demonstrate what Jesus Christ has authority over.

So what is a miracle? What is the definition of a miracle? This is what I want to talk about. A miracle is something that clearly bends the laws of nature.

What I mean by that, you could say it breaks the laws of nature. it does not naturally occur. It is an extraordinary action and the only way to define why that event happened is God.

[34 : 15] There is no other solution. No person can counterfeit it. No person can make it look like what it is. It has to be done something that breaks all the laws.

Now, we use the miracle in such a wrong way. Right? We got the Olympics going on right now. If you guys were old enough, back in 1980, that's a long time ago, there was a hockey team made up of Americans.

And Americans were really bad at hockey back then. And the Russians were really great. They actually had a professional team and they trained and played everybody.

They were the greatest team in the world. And what happened is during the 80 Olympics, USA put together a bunch of college kids and they beat them. And it's become known as the miracle on ice. Right? That's not a miracle. That game winning home run on the bottom of the ninth, two down, two out, two strikes against you, that's not a miracle.

[35 : 22] You know what else isn't a miracle? It might break people's hearts here. Childbirth is not a miracle. Everybody talks about childbirth is a miracle. The miracle of childbirth.

Listen, kids are being born by the millions every day, all right? It's been going on since the beginning of time. It's not a miracle. It's a great thing, but it doesn't fit that criteria of miracle.

It's interesting. You guys know Elon Musk, right? the crazy inventor and all that kind of stuff. He had tweeted today how amazing that one cell was able to replicate itself into 30 million cells, all on its own.

Okay? That's the definition of crazy. All right? One cell doesn't multiply itself with nothing else and turning into 30 million cells that define our life.

I responded to him that a great place to start not only is the Bible but Aquinas' five laws for figuring out God.

[36 : 29] And the first one is there is a beginner. There's a creator. There's one who started this amazing place. So a true miracle cannot be counterfeited by human ingenuity or any means.

Now this is the purpose of the miracles. miracles. The fact that Jesus Christ did a miracle did not prove he was God.

Okay? Jesus Christ by doing a miracle did not prove that he is God. You know who else did miracles? Moses. Elijah. Elisha.

Old Testament has many prophets doing many miracles. There was a donkey who actually talked. Right? Then we go to the New Testament and we have Paul. The apostles, they were able to do great miracles as well.

That's not what it proved. What a miracle proved was that the one who is speaking speaks for God. Get that?

[37 : 33] The miracle was the proof to tell you that I speak for God. God. If I'm up here raising dead, healing sicknesses, you know I've got something to say.

And that's what the purpose of miracles. So when Jesus, he does this miracles and then it's his teaching that saves. Amen? Believing that Jesus Christ did the miracles doesn't save you.

Believing the words of Jesus Christ that he is in the good news that you need to repent and believe on him. That's what saves you.

The miracles tell you that what he is saying is true. And unlike Elijah, Elisha, the Old Testament prophets, including Moses, Paul, Peter, the apostles, they never claim to be God in the flesh. Only one person makes that claim. And he is Jesus Christ. Now look at what happens. I'm going to give you a few verses. John 3, 2.

[38 : 50] We talked about this a couple of weeks. Remember Nicodemus, the teacher of the Pharisees, sits on the Sanhedrin, kind of the Jewish Supreme Court. Jesus goes in, the temple does these great signs, and Nicodemus comes to him in the middle of the night, and it says, Rabbi, which is teacher, we know you are a teacher come from God.

If you know a teacher is from God, what are you going to do? You're going to listen. For no one, this is his testimony, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with them.

Acts 2, 22. This is Peter, men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders in sign that God did through him in your midst as you yourselves know.

So what Peter is saying, the truth of my testimony is what Jesus said, and you know he did those signs, those miracles. Hebrews 2, 3, 4, the writer writes, it was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested, it was proven to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributing according to his will.

So now the apostles are going out, they're doing miracles, and their words are validated by the miracles. You with me on that one? That's what's going on. They prove what he's saying is true.

[40 : 35] And it's interesting, these four words are used. Powers and miracles are words that are interchangeable in scripture, but there's interesting, the word works is used, there's a purpose for what is being done.

Wonders is another word used for miracles, and it's usually in areas where it denotes amazement at the miracle that is being done.

They're wonders, they're meant to create this wonder in what is what the people are seeing. And the sign that is sometimes used with miracles, just like we have signs today, points to something. So those miracles, signs, and wonders that even the apostles did were pointing to Jesus Christ and what he said. Amen? So that is the purpose of what is going on.

So I want to tackle a little bit today. What about miracles today? Can miracles happen? The Bible actually tells us that yes, miracles can happen today.

[41 : 48] But what's interesting, the Bible actually gives us not only evidence that miracles are going to happen, it tells us they're going to happen, but it also gives us way to test the miracle worker.

The first one is actually found in the Old Testament, Deuteronomy written by Moses. And I'll just read you this passage, it's Deuteronomy 13. He writes, if a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and a lot of people see prophecy as being a part of miracles, and it is if the prophecy comes correct, but it says gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you come to pass, and if he says, let us go after other gods which you have not known and let us serve them, then you shall not listen to the words or dreams.

Any person who does a miracle and is calling you to believe in any other name other than Jesus Christ have nothing to do with the person.

Because there is going to happen. And how do we know? Second Thessalonian tells us. Tells us that there's going to be the coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing because they refuse to love the truth and so be saved.

We get blinded by miracles. We do. In the New Testament, massive, massive, do you know how many, when the Bible says great crowds follow Jesus, you know, like I had a great dinner last night.

[43 : 41] You know what, the craft dinner turned out perfect. You know, great is a word used to be many things. But when Scripture tells us about the great crowds that follow Jesus, they were like mega crowds.

They were so big that he could not exist in a walled city. Do you know that? The crowds were too crowded. They would crush people. In fact, the reason why Jesus Christ goes on the boat to teach to the masses is because it specifically states because they were being crushed.

They were being crushed. crushed. And this is the tragedy. It's here God is doing the miracles and they're ignoring what Jesus is saying.

How does that translate today? How many people want to believe Jesus, want to follow Jesus for what's in it for them?

The prosperity gospel, which is a false gospel, is based on this lie. That if you get married, your problems are fixed.

[45 : 04] You will be rich. You will be healthy. You will be great. Whatever you set your mind to, and you pray with enough faith, and give enough money of course, all these great and wonderful things will happen to you.

See, the same people who followed the miracles of Jesus in the Old Testament exist here today, the ones following the promise of a false gospel.

And here's the hard point. the hard point is that living here on this earth is more important than living with Jesus in heaven.

Those who follow those false miracles, it's based on that thought process. Want me to repeat that? this life matters more than the next.

So how do we know? Revelations 13, 12 says, then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. I don't know what a dragon sounds like, but it would have been mighty, right?

[46 : 30] It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence. It makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast whose mortal wound was healed. It performs great signs even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people.

And by the signs that is allowed to work in the presence of the beast, it deceives those who dwell on earth. Let me sum this up.

If a person does a miracle, and what they say, prophecies, dreams, do not come true, that is not from God.

If anyone who does miracles but teaches anything contrary to the word of God, it's a fail. If the one who does miracles encourages wickedness in the people, in those cults that I'm talking about, they all operate on the point, I'm the prophet, I'm from God, and they do horrible, horrible things to the women and children in their midst.

I don't need to paint a picture of what's going on. Horrible things. That's not from God. If the person who does the miracle is not a person of godly character, if they are doing it for selfish or personal gain, lack integrity, they are not from God.

[48 : 07] No matter the miracle, no matter the prophecy, the negative always trumps the positive. You see, what we see in the life of Jesus are crowds so big and so massive, we wish they were there for the eternal life that Jesus offered them, right?

miracles tell us two things. One, they confirm the message of Jesus. But I'm going to tell you the other thing that miracles tell us.

Matthew 14, 14 tells us. Jesus Christ went ashore and he saw a great crowd and he had compassion on them and healed the sick.

Jesus didn't come here to rid the world of disease and all those things. He came with a message to teach him that would indeed save him. But because of his great mercy, his great passion, we're going to see these stories throughout the Jesus got something to do and then someone shows up knocking on the door.

Help me, please, I have a need. Jesus is always there. Amen? How does this relate to us today?

[49 : 33] Now, I come from a camp and I always get asked this all the time. I always get accused of this. If you've ever heard, there's theologically, there's what's called cessationists and then there's called continuists.

And the cessationists means a lot of the signs ended when the apostles died. Now, what a lot of people want that to mean, and many of you guys know that I come from John MacArthur's school and he gets painted with that camp and that's what he teaches.

That's in fact not what he teaches. And the continuous believes that God is still as active today as he was then, which I completely and totally agree with. The difference is I don't believe there's modern day apostles that walk this earth.

That the apostles ended with the last apostle John dying. And I'm going to tell you why that's a good thing. God still does miracles. I got a friend of mine, he's been pastoring for 25 years, and he calls

me out of the blue, and he's about to go to his Sunday service, and like I said, he's been preaching 25 years, he has the same similar background, and he wants to call me to think that you're wrong, you've been wrong on your cessationism.

And there's this new young lady who had been coming to the church, and she's playing piano, and she's got really bad scoliosis, and they're praying, and one of the elders just decided to pray over her.

[50 : 57] And they report without a doubt, when he was putting his hand on her, he said he felt nothing but heat, and they were literally able to see her spine straighten out right there on that Sunday.

Just God's power revealed in that one moment. So he calls me, he says, what do you say about that? I said, I totally believe that. God does those things, he answers prayer and all those kind of things.

But most of the time that I see them, they tend to be places that add faith to the young believer, but that's a whole other word. But I said, has the elder been able to go around and heal other people? Because just think, if you could touch and heal people, you would not be Benny Hinn, running these great crusades, bringing in money. You would announce it because you know that you have a gift that has been given, and it's meant to glorify God, amen, and you'd be walking just through hospitals and places where they were in need, and you would just go touching everybody if you had that power.

Now, it's interesting, if you don't know, just as a side, Benny Hinn, he's got a nephew who worked with him for many years, who's now come out of the ministry, repented, and he's now producing these movies called American Gospel, and I know Steve hates this, but he goes to my friend's church, and you know, God's really growing him when he learned these truths, because he finally understood that the miracles that they saw were counterfeited and anything great, but here's the good thing.

[52 : 22] If there was apostles or miracle workers that we needed to go see, guess what we'd have to do? Find them. We'd have to find them.

But it's Jesus who heals, amen? That is the person we bring him to. This is the one we bring our cares, our needs. Now, the big question, and this is why I said it before, why doesn't Jesus heal me?

And it goes to the point that I made. This life doesn't matter as much as the next life.

And it's really easy to get caught up in wanting to be healed here today. Not understanding the fruit that's born out of that, and I hate to say it, pain and suffering.

The other way to say it is that's how God is choosing to bring his loved ones home. Two stories going on with two of my best buddies. Both wives get cancer.

[53 : 35] The one wife believes that God means to save her and travels over different churches asking people to lay on her hands all over the place. And I remember preaching before them, and she was orange.

She stood out like she was on fire. And she was leading her five kids to believe that God meant to heal her. He didn't. She went at the time that God called her home.

My other friend, wife calls me. They called me this one time. I'm in seminary at the time. My wife's got breast cancer. Please pray for her. Three years later, I get another call.

She's got cancer again. This time it's in the bones. Fly up to Vancouver. That's actually why I'm in BC. I came to see them. She's supposed to give this women's speaking retreat.

And the way she approached cancer is she ended up preaching a sermon. And I've told you guys about this one before, and you haven't heard it. It's still on the website. It's called Death is Not Dying. And she taught on that she's accepting the death in the way that it's God calling her home, and she submits to it.

[54 : 51] And literally, that sermon has been not only viewed millions of times on the website. It's just deathisnotdying.com. I've gotten calls from friends all over Africa, Europe.

And one of the most amazing things, they said, what has really touched our people, and this is my friend, he's got a village mission in the middle of Africa. And I know it's a really big place, but it's more towards South Africa.

America, and it's to farmers and all that people. And he says, you know, it's not so amazing that she's dying. People die here all the time. It's the fact that she's submitting to God's will in her death.

Several years later, I'm blessed. I'm at this conference down in the States, and there's this woman named Nancy Piercy. You might not, Nancy Piercy. I can't remember her name. She's written many books. We've got some of her books, and she's got a radio show, and she puts my friend's wife on her radio.

And she said it was the most quote-unquote successful program that she's ever done. They broke into three parts. So in over the week, she goes, I literally not only had millions of listeners tuning in, but thousands upon thousands of letters that my friend Rachel was able to help them see that death here is not dying, but she's going on to live eternally with her father.

[56 : 22] That's hard, right? Do we not want to see those in our midst healed? We do. Life is hard. But this isn't the pinnacle of it all.

So when Jesus is there doing the miracles and he's preaching, he wants them to accept the truth so much that he's willing to die. So that we might be welcomed with him in glory.

Because without him dying, raising again, then guess what? We would only have this life. Let's pray. Father, the life of Jesus Christ and his words, and there's such a deeper meaning behind what we sometimes see.

Father, Jesus wept for his people. the last week of his life. After all the things that Jesus had done for them, healed them by the thousands, they still would not believe.

And he wept for them. The people who were the closest, who saw, who felt, who were healed, many of them ran away.

[57 : 49] Some of them, the gospel even records, they didn't even thank him. Father, I pray that we understand that not only is the gospel, but this life that we have is not our own.

It's been paid for in blood. And we're to live it in such a way that not only brings you glory for today, but glory in the next life.

That the testimony that we share, that people can come through a supernatural understanding of your truth, that Jesus came to save souls, not just fix bodies.

And as people sometimes testify, it's only in their pain, in their suffering, is where they truly met Jesus.

And their grace and their understanding of him grew a hundred fold, if only for a few short years of life on this earth.

[59 : 01] But the life that they get to live in everlasting love and light of the Father. Father, take me now.

And it answers the questions, why do we even exist? All the craziness that's going on in the government and the upheaval that we see, we want out. But we have a purpose.

And that purpose, and I pray we never fail it, is to call people to a saving understanding of Jesus Christ. Give us that burning burden to do so.

Because if we don't, liars and deceivers will manufacture false truths to bring them in to eternal destruction. We can't have that.

So Father, in our worship today, we say thank you for the miracles which prove who you are, but it's the words that you teach us about yourself that gives us eternal life with you.

[60 : 13] Thank you for your patience, your love and understanding. We're blown away by the stories of scripture which even tells that you still healed everyone.

And if it's your purpose, we can still call out to you today to understand and feel your healing as well. To this day, the greatest miracle I know is when God takes a heart of stone that's totally against him and hates you and turns it into a soft heart of flesh which loves and lives for you.

I pray that we get to see more of that in our midst. In your most holy and precious name. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.