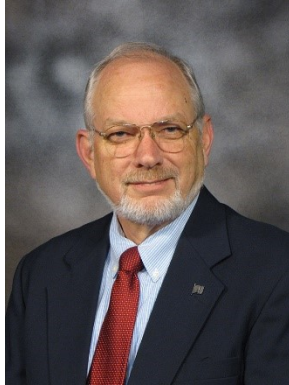


The Wonder Worker

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“The Wonder Worker” lesson series was taught in the Sunset church in October through December of 2019.

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1. The Wonder Worker

INTRODUCTION:

1. One of the most recognized facts about Jesus – He did miracles.
2. But there are a number of questions we need answered about Jesus and His miracles:
 - a. What is a real miracle?
 - b. Are the miracles attributed to Jesus history, fiction, or “figurative language?”
 - c. Why did Jesus do miracles?
 - d. Has our familiarity with the miracle stories caused us to take them for granted?
3. These and other questions and thoughts we hope to pursue in this series.

WHAT IS A MIRACLE?

1. The Bible itself never directly defines what a “miracle” is, only records them.
2. I like the information provided by Wayne Jackson at www.christiancourier.com in his article, “What Does the Bible Say About Miracles.” Briefly summarized:
 - a. Most modern events labeled “miracles” are simply amazing, imagined or fraudulent events.
 - b. “A miracle is a divine operation that transcends what is normally perceived as natural law; it cannot be explained upon any natural basis.”
 - c. Acts 8:4-13 provides us with a good example of real versus fake miracles.
 - d. Characteristics of a genuine miracle:
 - i. “A supernatural display of divine power... is a dramatic, **demonstrable fact**... Miracles either happen, or they don’t.” Not even enemies and critics denied they happened; they were matters of historical fact.
 - ii. “...Miracles always had a **worthy motive**.” They were never for personal gain but for God’s purposes.
 - iii. “As a general rule, the miracles of the Bible era were done in the presence of a multitude of **credible witnesses** – even hostile observers.”
 - iv. “Genuine miracles... produced **instantaneous effects**.”
 - v. True miracles were **demonstrable to the senses**.
 - vi. “Actual signs must be **independent of secondary causes**... there must be no possible way to explain the miracle in a natural fashion.
 - vii. “A genuine miracle will generate more than a **superficial and temporary interest**.” People will believe a miracle occurred long after the event.
3. Other terms used to describe miracles (Hebrews 2:4):
 - a. Miracle – emphasized the source and power of the event or act (*semeion* or *dunamis*)
 - b. Sign – (*semeion*) emphasized what the event or act indicated; it was an evidence, token, indicator or signifying mark of authenticity (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary*)

- c. Wonders – (*teras*) emphasized effect upon the recipients and witnesses (*Vine's*).
- d. Mighty Works, Power – (*dunamis*) emphasized the supernatural power of God

ARE JESUS' MIRACLES HISTORICAL?

1. The four Gospels are our primary sources of information.
 - a. They claim to be historical and based on eyewitness testimony.
 - b. Beginning in the next generation after the New Testament period up until the last 200 years, they have been accepted almost universally as historical. Most modern arguments against their historicity is based on humanistic worldviews and assertions which are unproven.
 - c. Evidence outside the Gospels – in other New Testament writings, later Christian records, and even secular writings – either corroborate or never deny them.
 - d. The life and works of Jesus are better documented than any other person of ancient history. And no one questions the essential accuracy of these other people.
2. The foundations and doctrines of the Christian faith depend on the historical truthfulness of the Gospel records of Jesus' life, teachings and miracles. That the faith continues and flourishes after 2,000 years demonstrates the verdict of history.

BELIEVING WITHOUT SEEING

1. In John 20:24-29 Thomas declared he would not believe Jesus was risen from the dead unless he saw and touched Jesus himself. (Thus the expression, "Doubting Thomas.")
2. While many skeptics and doubters have since made similar statements to justify their unbelief, is it possible we may also be doubters in some degree concerning the miraculous works of Jesus?
3. Our modern, multimedia culture has become accustomed to seeing drama and tragedy played out in full color on movie screens, nightly news and social media. This has possibly dulled our mental senses to seeing, feeling and being moved by "mere" words on the pages of the Gospel records.
4. But the stories of Jesus swept across the known world over the next several centuries with a profound effect upon many hearers. Without seeing or touching Him, they developed a faith that would not surrender even under persecution and death. As Jesus told Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen yet have believed." (John 20:29)

CONCLUSION: I urge each of us to fully engage our minds and imaginations as we study "The Wonder Worker." Let us be awed, feel a sense of unworthiness and fear, and be moved to worship the only One who has ever walked this earth who did such mighty works of God!

2. The Works That No One Else Did

INTRODUCTION:

1. Not only was Jesus a worker of wonders and miracles, He was the most unique and prolific wonder worker who ever lived – John 15:24
2. In this lesson we will see the uniqueness of His miracles: the different kinds, the quantity, how He did them, and compare them with some similar miracles in the Old Testament.

HEALING THE MAN BORN BLIND:

1. In John 9 we have Jesus healing a blind man begging just outside the Temple (8:59).
2. The Jewish teachers taught that suffering and disabilities were punishments from God for personal sin, rather than the result of the fall of mankind beginning in Eden. So this man would be viewed by everyone, even by his parents and himself, as under a curse from God. (Like Job's friends – Job 2:11; but God said – Job 42:8)
3. Jesus rejected that view as false. Instead, He said this blindness was “so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.” (9:3) Can we accept that God sometimes allows bad things to happen to people so that He might then work in their life to accomplish His purposes? (See also John 11:4, 40)
4. The result of his healing was stupendous!
 - a. He goes from being considered cursed of God to being uniquely blessed by God.
 - b. He becomes a believer and inherited eternal life – John 1:10-12; 3:16
 - c. His healing was a sign that pointed others to the Savior – John 10:20-21
 - d. He testified before the Sanhedrin of Jewish leaders, trying to get them to “see” what he could clearly see – that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God.
 - e. His story has both comforted believers and converted the spiritually blind for 2,000 years through the pages of John's Gospel.
 - f. He saw Jesus for who He really was... and worshiped Him! (John 9:35-38)
 - g. His healing was a sign showing Jesus really was “The Light of the World!”
5. As the blind man himself observed, “*Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.*” (9:32) Jesus had done something never known to have happened before!

CHARACTERISTICS OF JESUS' MIRACLES:

1. Not capricious or fantastic
2. Not self-serving or for gain
3. Minimal showmanship
4. Not simply to do as many as possible
5. Not to impress
6. Limited to His ministry, not earlier life

7. Seemed effortless, yet took power from Him
8. Came directly from Him
9. Often asked recipients to keep silent
10. Done out of sympathy and compassion – Matthew 8:17; 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; Mark 5:19; Luke 7:13 – not even one miracle that did harm
11. Done to both glorify the Father and Himself (distinguish between glorify and seek attention or praise)
12. Used different interactions – touch, speech, instructions, spittle – but the power was actually from Him
13. Results immediate, complete and obvious
14. No need or request turned away; nothing was beyond His power to do

COMPARE/CONTRAST WITH OLD TESTAMENT MIRACLE WORKERS:

1. Israel in the Wilderness

- Parting of the Red Sea – Exodus 14:6, 21-31
- Manna from Heaven – Exodus 16:14-35
- Water at Rephidim – Exodus 17:5-7
- Miriam struck with, then healed of leprosy – Numbers 12:1-16
- Water at Meribah – Numbers 20:7-11
- Lifting up the Brazen Serpent – Numbers 21:8-9
- Parting of the Jordan River – Joshua 3:14-17

2. Elijah

- Replenishing oil and meal at Zarephath – I Kings 17:14-16
- Raising the widow's son at Zarephath – I Kings 17:17-24
- Parting of the Jordan River – II Kings 2:7-8

3. Elisha

- Parting of the Jordan River – II Kings 2:14
- Healing of the waters of Jericho – II Kings 2:21-22
- Water supplied for the armies in Moab – II Kings 3:16-20
- Multiplication of the widow's oil – II Kings 4:2-7
- Raising of the Shunnamite's son – II Kings 4:32-37
- Curing the poisoned stew – II Kings 4:38-41
- Feeding 100 with 20 loaves – II Kings 4:42-44
- Naaman cured of leprosy – II Kings 5:10-14
- Dead man raised by touching Elisha's dead body – II Kings 13:21

4. Observations

- Few healings
- Several involved water
- Several involved multiplying food

- Three involved the restoration of life
- None restored the disabled or handicapped

Prepared with the help of www.bible-history.com

HOW MANY MIRACLES DID JESUS DO?

1. Summary and general statements about His miracles:

			John 2:23; 3:2
Matthew 4:23-25	Mark 1:35-39	Luke 4 4:42-44	
Matthew 8:16-17	Mark 1:32-34	Luke 4:40-41	
		Luke 5:17	
		Luke 6:17-19	
Matthew 9:35-36			
Matthew 11:2-6		Luke 7:18-23	
Matthew 11:20-24			
Matthew 12:15	Mark 3:9-12		
Matthew 13:54-58	Mark 6:1-6		
Matthew 14:13-14			John 6:1-3
Matthew 14:34-36	Mark 6:53-56		
Matthew 15:29-31			
Matthew 21:14-15			

2. Reading several of the above verses supports the comments in John's Gospel:

- a. John 20:30 – there were “*many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book.*”
- b. John 21:25 – “*And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.*”

RE-VISITING THE BLIND MAN:

1. Jesus said the man's blindness was so that “the work of God might be displayed.” (9:2)
2. Ultimately, what was the “work of God?” – to lead humankind “to believe in Him whom He has sent” (John 6:29). (Saul of Tarsus another great example – I Timothy 1:16)
3. Old Testament statements connected to healing the blind – Psalm 94:9; 146:8; 119:18; Isaiah 35:5-6; 42:7; 61:1-2 – which are only fulfilled in the work of Jesus.

MIRACLES OF JESUS

Permanent Disabilities Healed	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus Heals a Mute Man	9:32-34			
Jesus Heals a Deaf and Dumb Man		7:31-37		
Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman's Spine			13:10-17	
Jesus Heals a Lame Man at Bethesda pool				5:1-15
Jesus Heals a Paralytic Man	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	
Jesus Heals a Man's Withered Hand	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11	
Jesus Heals a Blind, Mute Demoniac	12:22-23		11:14-23	
Jesus Casts Out Demons and Heals Many Sick at Evening	8:16-17	1:32-34	4:40-41	
Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind				9:1-41
Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida		8:22-26		
Jesus Heals Two Blind Men	9:27-31			
Jesus Heals Two More Blind Men	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
Jesus Heals Ten Lepers			17:11-19	
Jesus Heals a Man With Leprosy	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-14	
Jesus Heals a Man With Dropsy on the Sabbath			14:1-6	
Illnesses / Injuries Healed	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus Heals a Woman with Issue of Blood	9:20-22	5:25-34	8:43-48	
Jesus Heals a Servant's Severed Ear			22:50-51	
Jesus Heals Peter's Mother-in-Law	8:14-15	1:29-31	4:38-39	
Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant	8:5-13		7:1-10	
Jesus Heals an Official's Son Remotely				4:46-54
Jesus Heals Many Sick in Gennesaret	14:34-36	6:53-56		
Evil Spirits Removed	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus Delivers a Gentile Woman's Demon-Possessed Daughter	15:21-28	7:24-30		
Jesus Heals a Boy with a Demon	17:14-20	9:14-29	9:37-43	
Jesus Delivers a Demon-Possessed Man		1:21-28	4:31-37	
Jesus Delivers a Demon-Possessed Man and Casts Demons into a Herd of Pigs	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39	
The Dead Raised to Life	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus Raises a Widow's Son in Nain			7:11-17	
Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead				11:1-45
Jesus Raises Jairus' Daughter to Life	9:18-26	5:21-43	8:40-56	
Other Miracles	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Temple Tax Placed in a Fish's Mouth	17:24-27			
Jesus Walks on Water	14:22-33	6:45-52		6:16-21
Jesus Turns Water into Wine				2:1-11
First Miraculous Catch of Fish			5:1-11	
Second Miraculous Catch of Fish				21:1-14
Jesus Feeds 5000 with 5 Loaves & 2 Fish	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-15
Jesus Feeds 4000 with 7 Loaves & few Fish	15:32-39	8:1-13		
Jesus Causes a Fig Tree to Wither	21:18-22	11:12-14		
Jesus Calms a Storm	8:23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	