

**FOUNDATION OF FAITH!**  
**GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**  
**PART 8**  
**THE GIFT OF MIRACLES**

This morning we are continuing our study of the gifts of the Spirit in our series Foundation of Faith. Last week we looked at the gifts of healings and we said that this gift focused primarily on the supernatural ability to restore health and to even restore someone back to life who has died. This is not the ability of doctors to care for the person, it is supernatural in origin, it is from God!

This morning we are going to look at the gift of miracles or the working of miracles in our lives and this is different from healings in that miracles deal with all other supernatural happenings that come from God. This is not something that man has the ability to do, it is beyond all he can do and that is why it is a miracle! The problem for us today is that we use this word, “miracle” frequently in our language. We say things like, “The miracle of modern medicine.” That is not a miracle in the Biblical sense. Also, we speak of the “Miracle of childbirth.” Granted childbirth is an awesome thing, but it is not a miracle. The child is going to be born whether you are a Christian or not! And no, the Chicago Cubs winning the World Series is not a miracle even though it is getting closer for this to really be a miracle! And thus, a miracle is something that cannot be explained by science or anything else that we know. It is supernatural in origin as I have said; it is an event or circumstance that acts contrary to or suspending natural law!

We read of this gift in I Corinthians chapter 12 as Paul tells us, “**But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for one is given . . . by the same Spirit . . . the working of miracles.**” I Corinthians 12:7-8a, 9a, 10a. Again, it is important for us to understand what Paul is saying here, what a miracle is. And to put it very simply, as I have said, a miracle is a supernatural event for which there is no human explanation for. And the gift of miracles is a supernatural, God-given ability to perform special signs and wonders that testify of God. This is something that is humanly impossible but it is also divinely possible!

The word that Paul uses for “**miracles**” is very interesting; it is a word we would probably not expect. It is the Greek word DUNAMIS, and we can translate this gift as “the operation of powers.” It is speaking of dynamic power and it is the same Greek word that is used in Acts 1:8 where Jesus spoke of the power of the Holy Spirit that He will give to us to move the Gospel message forward, that dynamic, that explosive power, that is the kind of power this word is speaking of!

And we are going to be looking at both Old Testament and New Testament examples of this gift in operation. But first I want you to understand that this gift is in operation today. Many commentators, to my surprise, beat around the bush or flatly come out and state that this gift was only used in the first century church and then it passed off the scene. One journal stated,

. . . New Testament evidence indicates that healing has ceased by the end of the first century. Even though God still works supernaturally in the lives of His people, He doesn't work miraculously through faith healers as He did in Acts. . . . Indeed, miracles were a seemingly 'normal' happening before Paul's first Roman imprisonment. In fact, there was a pattern of miraculous healing recorded or implied in the books of James and Acts and letters written to the Galatians, Thessalonians, Corinthians, and Romans before Paul's imprisonment. However, after the imprisonment there was silence in the rest of the epistles as well as in Peter's, John's and Jude's writings. . .

Another indication that miracles were waning after Paul's imprisonment is that Paul was apparently unable to heal Epaphroditus, Timothy, and Trophimus, three men whose help Paul needed badly. It seems that prayer and medicinal counsel were Paul's only recourse in healing his friends since he evidently didn't have the power to heal them.

. . . Thus, evidence indicates that once Paul and his message were communicated throughout the Roman Empire, there was no longer a need for the miracle-making ability - nor is there today.

- Gary Derickson, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, The Cessation of Healing Miracles in Paul's Ministry, July - Sep. 1998. Pages 298-315

It sounds logical when you read this. It sounds right; it does seem to make sense. But it is not right. In fact, it is wrong. How we love to deny the power of God and what the Scriptures teach so that we can justify our own pre-conceived ideas. Why were Paul's friends, his companions not healed, why do we not see a miracle in their lives? Is it because this gift was passing off the scene? Not at all! We need to remember that they were not healed because not all are healed, we do not see miracles in every situation we face. And you can see that very clearly in the Scriptures. And let me say this, and please listen carefully to what Jesus said in John 14:12 where we read, "**Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.**"

What does Jesus mean when He says that we will do greater works than Him? He raised the dead, how can you do greater than that? He is not speaking of doing greater works in magnitude because what can be more sensational than raising the dead? He is speaking of greater in scope. You see, in His earthly ministry Jesus was limited to being one place at one time but now as He works in all believers He can work throughout the world and thus, we will do greater in scope than He did in His earthly ministry.

And please keep in mind that Jesus is not speaking to His disciples alone, but He is speaking to all who believe in Him. If you do then God can work through you miracles as He wills. This was not just for the first century church, it is for us today. And we badly need this gift today. You see, miracles do two things. They meet the needs of the saints and they point people to God. Why in the world would we want to negate or dismiss this gift is beyond me. And if you think about it, there were many miracles done even in the Old Testament through men of God, it was not only a first century gift!

I truly believe we need to have a balance in our life. And this idea is spoken of in the New Testament. Remember when John the Baptist was in prison, he became discouraged and began to doubt Jesus. He was expecting the Kingdom Age and he got imprisonment instead. And he was confused about what was going on so he sent out his disciples to ask Jesus if He is the one or if they should look for another. And Jesus said to the disciples of John, “**... ‘Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.’**” Matthew 11:4-6.

Jesus wanted the disciples of John to go back and tell John the things they heard and the things they had seen. You see, not only the teachings of Jesus, but the miracles that He had done! They authenticated His ministry, of who He is and I think that is true today for us. It authenticates our ministry in that it shows people we are Disciples of Christ!

Remember in Acts chapter 4 Peter and John are imprisoned for healing a lame man and testifying of Jesus. And finally, when the religious leaders couldn't hold them any more, they warned them not to speak or teach of Jesus any more. Peter and John responded by saying, “**... ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.’**” Acts 4:19-20. Again, they are going to testify of not only what they heard, but what they have seen, the miracles that Jesus did!

Also, in Acts chapter 8, Philip heads down to Samaria and a revival breaks out. We read of what happened beginning in verse 5 of Acts chapter 8, where we are told, **“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.”** Acts 8:5-8. Notice, not only did Philip speak the Words of God, but signs and wonders followed after him and people saw the power of God, and there was great joy. Not only did Paul have this gift, but Philip, as well as a few others in the New Testament also had this gift.

Now I want to spend some time showing you examples in both the Old Testament and the New Testament of this gift in operation as well as some miracles that we have seen in the church today! But before I do, I want you to understand this basic principle. If you do, you will have no problem with anything the Bible has to say, even miracles. The reason many people have trouble believing in miracles and the other things the Bible has to say is they don't believe this basic principle.

In Genesis 1:1 we read **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”** The word **“created”** is BARA in the Hebrew and it means that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. That was a miracle to us, but easy for God. Now if you understand that, the rest of the Bible is easy. The problem comes when we try to negate this, and when we do we also make it hard to accept the rest of the Scriptures. But, if we accept the miracle of creation, the rest of the Bible is easy to accept!

## **GIFT OF MIRACLES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

### **1. CROSSING OF THE RED SEA - EXODUS 14**

Remember as the children of Israel left the bondage they were in by the hands of the Egyptians, and as they were on the move God had them rest in Pi Hahiroth. Now from a safety point of view, this was a bad idea. You see, there were mountains on either side of them and they also had the Red Sea in front of them. The only way out was the way you came in, but now that was going to be blocked off by the Egyptian army who was called to action by Pharaoh after he changed his mind about letting the children of Israel go free. He wanted his slaves back!

Now as the Egyptian army drew close, the children of Israel saw what was happening, and like men and women of faith, they responded many times as we do when we find ourselves in a hopeless situation and they said, “**. . . ‘Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?’ For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.’**”

Exodus 14:11-12. Now, from a human perspective they were right, there was no way out, they were dead! The problem for them is they negated the power of God, that God said He was going to bring them into the Promise Land and thus, He has to provide a way out of this hopeless situation, He would provide a miracle for them!

And we see Moses, their leader do the right thing and as Moses begins to pray God tells him, and I am paraphrasing, “Son, now is not the time to pray, now is the time to move!” Now that was a big problem, for where were they going to go? How can over 2 million Jews make it across the Red Sea? Well God had a plan. As Moses lifted up his rod and stretched out his hands over the Red Sea, the waters were divided and the children of Israel were able to cross on dry ground. And to hold off the Egyptians until they were able to cross, God sent a pillar of cloud to hamper their movement.

And finally, as the Egyptians came after them, as they too were passing through the Red Sea on dry ground, God took off the bolts that held their chariot wheels on, and they fell off. And at this point the Egyptians realized they were no match for God and they tried to high tail it out of there, but the waters came back upon them, destroying them all.

Now that was a miracle to say the least. But there are those out there that try to discredit this miracle and say that the children of Israel didn't cross at the Red Sea, but at the Sea of Reeds, which is very shallow. And if the wind is right, and it is strong enough, it could push that water away, all 6 inches or so of it, allowing the children of Israel to pass through. If you believe that then you also believe in miracles, for the entire Egyptian army drowned in 6 inches of water. I guess they forgot their water wings! I believe what God has said in Genesis 1:1 and thus, I have no problem with what God has done here, He is God and this was truly a miracle, there is no earthly explanation for this!



## **2. RAINING HAILSTONES AND THE SUN STANDING STILL - JOSHUA 10**

Another miracle in the Old Testament that we see is found in Joshua chapter 10. Here we see the five Amorite kings come against Gibeon, who had made a peace deal with Joshua and the children of Israel. And God tells Joshua, “**. . . ‘Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you.’**”

Joshua 10:8.

And the first miracle we see regarding this battle is God rained hailstones down upon the Amorites, killing them with these hailstones, more than Joshua and the children of Israel did with the sword. God was a good shot! And don't forget, none of the children of Israel were hit with these hailstones; this was a miracle, not just a hailstorm! God had guided these hailstones to the target He wanted and He was very accurate, 100% accurate with His shots!

But the story is not over. You see, as the day was passing by Joshua had not completely wiped them out, so he prayed that the sun would stand still, that it would not go down until they had completed their mission. Again, people laugh at this, but if you believe in Genesis 1:1, this is nothing for God. And keep this in mind. If there is a long day on this side of the earth, then there must be a long night on the opposite side of the earth. Is there any historical evidence for this event to show us this really took place? Yes there is!

Immanuel Velikovsky in his book, *Worlds In Collision* records that the Mayans have a record of a long night on the opposite side of the earth, just as you might expect. And this is not only seen in the Mayans historical record, but with other people around the world. God did a miracle with the hailstones and the sun standing still for almost a whole day! And once again there is no earthly explanation for this, it is a miracle!

### **3. ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL - I KINGS 18**

In I Kings chapter 18 we read of the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. King Ahab, the king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, was a wicked king, and along with his wife Jezebel, they led the people in Baal worship. They were the demonic duo of the Old Testament you might say! And Elijah comes on the scene and confronts Ahab, telling him to gather the prophets of Baal together on Mount Carmel, and when the day was over the real God would be seen, there would be no mistake about who the true and living God is!

Elijah made this deal with them in what was to take place and the deal went like this. Each group was to offer a sacrifice to their God and whoever's was accepted by fire consuming it, would win. The prophets of Baal went first. They chose a bull, cut it in pieces and placed it upon their altar. And for several hours they cried out to Baal. They even jumped up and down, trying to get Baal to see them, but nothing happened.

And I can relate to Elijah, he is my kind of man. You see, by noon Elijah was getting tired and bored of all they were doing, and he begins to mock their efforts, saying **“... Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.”** I Kings 18:27. I like that and it did get their attention. In fact, the words of Elijah drove them nuts and they began to cry out louder, they began to cut themselves until the time of the evening sacrifice, and still nothing. And by this time they were a bloody and beaten mess and their sacrifice remained on the altar, their god was silent!

Now it was Elijah's turn. He gathers the people around, prepares the altar and the sacrifice. Then he made a huge trench around the altar. He also had 4 water pots filled with water and poured them on the sacrifice and he did this three times. There was so much water that was poured that it filled the trench around the altar. And Elijah prays to God and **“Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, ‘The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!’”** I Kings 18:38-39.

This miracle pointed the children of Israel back to God, for they were wavering between the two, the true and living God and Baal. But this miracle showed them who was God! And there is once again no earthly explanation for this event; it was a miracle of God!

#### 4. THE FLOATING AX HEAD - II KINGS 6

The last one we are going to look at in the Old Testament is found in II Kings chapter 6. During this period of time we see the number of prophets growing and they needed a larger place to dwell in. So they decided to build a bigger place and they asked the prophet Elisha to help them in this work.

As they were cutting down the trees one of the ax heads fell into the water, and the problem for this man who lost this ax head is that this was not his, he borrowed it. Is this a big deal? It was a big deal! Ax heads were expensive and hard to come by. You could not run to Fleet Farm or Menards, not even Lowes to buy another one. And we read beginning in verse 6 of II Kings chapter 6, **“And the man of God said, ‘Where did it fall?’ And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw it in there; and he made the iron float. Therefore he said, ‘Pick it up for yourself.’ So he reached out his hand and took it.”** II Kings 6:6-7.

You may be thinking that this was not such a big deal, not such a big miracle, but it was if you lost that ax head you borrowed. And this just tells me that God is concerned about even the little things in our life, He even numbers the hairs of our head, which changes all the time! Again, to have an axe head float in the water is truly a miracle, it is beyond scientific explanation!

Now those are just a few of the many miracles that occurred in the Old Testament and I think you should be able to see that the gift of miracles was in operation even in the Old Testament, it wasn't just a New Testament work!

## GIFT OF MIRACLES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

### 1. THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000 - JOHN 6

The first miracle we are going to look at in the New Testament is found in John chapter 6. Here we see a great multitude follow Jesus to the Sea of Galilee, and He had compassion on them, knowing they did not bring enough food to eat. And Philip, when questioned by Jesus on what they could do told Jesus basically, “Where in the world could we get the money to buy that amount of food?” Keep in mind that there were some 5,000 men plus women and children following Jesus, maybe some 15,000 to 20,000 people! So even if you had a Piggly Wiggly, which they would not go to because it isn’t kosher, I don’t think they could supply enough food to feed that many people!

Now let’s begin reading in verse 8 of John chapter 6 where we are told, **“One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, ‘There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?’”** John 6:8-9. And Jesus took these two tiny fish and 5 crackers and having the people sit down He distributed them to all the people. We read beginning in verse 11, **“And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.’ Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, ‘This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.’”** John 6:11-14.

That truly was a miracle. God multiplied the food and the people were filled, in fact they were stuffed, they could eat no more and they even had leftovers, 12 baskets full! Awesome and yet some try to discredit this and they say that the miracle really was getting greedy people to share their food! You see, when they saw this young boy share his food, they all became guilty and they took out the food they had and shared it. That is the silliest explanation I have heard. If they all brought food why did they need to share and if only a few brought food, there would not have been enough to fill all of them up so they could eat no more and even have leftovers! And the reality of those that feel this way is they don't believe in Genesis 1:1, "**In the beginning God . . .**" If they did they would see no problem with God multiplying the food here in John chapter 6. This was a miracle of God; there is no earthly explanation for it!

## **2. SALVATION - MATTHEW 19**

Here is one that we might not think of being a miracle, but it is one of the greatest miracles of all and that is our salvation. Here we see God take these dead spiritual bodies and make them alive again in Christ! And folks, if we saw no other miracles than that of salvation, we should be satisfied. To me, as I have said, salvation is the greatest miracle!

Now, in Matthew chapter 19 we read of the story of the rich young ruler who was so close to heaven and yet he refused to give his life to Christ. His possessions hindered him. And it is out of that we see Jesus respond by saying, “... **‘Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.’** When His disciples heard it, they were greatly **astonished, saying, ‘Who then can be saved?’** But Jesus looked at them and said to them, **‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’**” Matthew 19:23 -26.

You see, salvation is impossible from a human perspective. We can do nothing to merit God’s favor, to climb our way into heaven. And yet, with God all things are possible, we can be saved, not by our works, but by the completed work of Christ on the cross of Calvary. The stairway to heaven is Christ!

I think Paul, in Ephesians chapter 2, gives us the best look at where we were outside of Christ, and what Christ has done for us, and where we stand now in Christ. He said beginning in verse 1 of Ephesians chapter 2, **“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”** Ephesians 2:1-10.

If I had to pick out the greatest miracle in the Bible, this would be it, our salvation. For without it we would still be dead in our trespasses and sins! But God has made us alive in Christ! There is no earthly explanation for this; it is a miracle of God!



### 3. PETER RELEASED FROM PRISON - ACTS 12

The last miracle we will look at in the New Testament, and there are many, is found in Acts chapter 12. In this portion of Scripture we see Herod coming against the Christians. He has James the brother of John killed by the sword and Peter is locked in prison, waiting for his turn. And Peter was guarded by four squads of soldiers who were to bring him out the next morning. He was not going to escape! In fact, he was going to be put to death just as James was!

So here is Peter sleeping and chained between two Roman soldiers with guards at the door, which tells me there is rest in Christ even during the most intense trials that may come our way. And beginning in verse 7 of Acts chapter 12 we read, **“Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, ‘Arise quickly!’ And his chains fell off his hands. Then the angel said to him, ‘Gird yourself and tie on your sandals’; and so he did. And he said to him, ‘Put on your garment and follow me.’ So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. And when Peter had come to himself, he said, ‘Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people.’”** Acts 12:7-11.

These Roman soldiers were the best of the best and if you fell asleep on duty, you could be put to death. But God causes the guards to go to sleep and these chains that were around Peter fell off. And we see Peter just walk by these sleeping guards as if he were a free man, and I guess he was, God freed him! This was an awesome miracle, so much so that Peter first thought he was just dreaming but it was very real and God set him free!

So we have looked at miracles in the Old Testament and the New Testament and before we look at miracles today, let me share this with you. You see, as we look at miracles we see two types. There are those that defy the laws of nature, like Jesus walking on water, Jesus turning water into wine, Jesus multiplying the food. Those defy the laws of nature. There is no earthly explanation for them.

Then there are those that work within the laws of nature. We see this with Jesus calming the storm. God used the natural in a supernatural way. We also see this with Elijah the prophet when he prophesied that it was not going to rain for 3 years and then after that time that it would rain again. Drought is common in that part of the world, but God told Elijah when it was going to stop raining and when it was going to start up again. He used the natural in a supernatural way! Now let's look at miracles in the church today!

## **MIRACLES IN THE CHURCH TODAY**

### **1. THE MULTIPLICATION OF FOOD IN MEXICO**

Several years ago my wife took our Youth Group on a mission's trip to Mexico. They partnered up with Youth For Truth and ministered to the poverty stricken areas, those that had nothing in these villages. And on one of their trips they were bringing bags of rice to the people and they expected about 50 to 75 people and thus, took the appropriate amount with them to this village.

Now when the rice was handed out it was only given to the women, not because they cooked the food, but because the men would take the rice and make an alcoholic beverage with it, leaving their family with no food. As they arrived there they encountered a problem. There were twice as many people as they expected and they only had food for about 75 people! So the kids went back and forth bringing out the rice bags and by the time they were done, all the people had food! That was a miracle, they had only brought enough food for, at the most 75 people and now they were able to hand out food to 150! And the beauty of this was not only the ministering to the people, but the kids saw the power of God, that He still does miracles, that He still multiplies food! This was a miracle; there was no earthly explanation for it!

## **2. YELL, “JESUS LOVES YOU” WITH YOUR HEAD IN A MAILBOX**

Now this is one of those that you just shake your head in amazement. One of the pastors at a pastor’s conference was sharing a story that happened in his church. There was a young man who just came to the faith, he was a new Christian and just had a zeal to serve the Lord, but again, he was very young in the faith.

One day he was driving through a very expensive area of California, an exclusive area, they are all expensive, and he felt the Lord telling him to stick his head in a mailbox and yell, “Jesus loves you!” Well, immediately he rebuked the devil for putting that foolish idea in his head but as he continued to drive he kept feeling the Lord was telling him to do this. And he kept struggling with this, thinking this is foolish, it is ridiculous, but he could not get it out of his mind.

Finally he slowed his car down and saw this big metal mail box, and stopped in front of it. He got out of his car, still feeling foolish, put his head in this big metal mailbox and yelled, “Jesus loves you!” at the top of his lungs. And then he ran back to his car to get out of there as fast as he could.

But before he could leave he saw this man running out of his house towards him and he felt foolish and sorry he had done this. The man came to the car and the young Christian apologized for what he did and the man stopped him. He said to this young Christian, “Right before you yelled that I was standing on a chair with a rope around my neck ready to hang myself. And before I did I just cried out to God and said that if He is real He needs to show me right now. And as soon as I said that I heard the words, ‘Jesus loves you!’ You saved my life!”

Now please, let me say this. I do not want to get calls from the Manitowoc police department saying that the people from Calvary Chapel are sticking their heads in mailboxes and yelling, “Jesus loves you!” unless the Lord is leading you to do that! This was a miracle of God! There is no way that this young Christian could just stop in front of this man’s house seconds before he commits suicide and say the words that would stop him! That is the gift of miracles, or the operation of the gift of miracles!

### **3. GOD CLOSED THE SWITCH**

The next one I want to share with you deals with God closing a switch. Listen to the story and you will see what I am talking about and this miracle of God. We are told,

A remarkable incident occurred some years ago when a Christian called upon God in a time of great danger. A 12-car passenger train was speeding along in eastern Missouri. On board were hundreds of happy children on their way to [a] Sunday School picnic. The sky was cloudless when the excursion began, but it wasn’t long before they ran into a severe thunderstorm. The heavy downpour caused the concerned engineer to slow down to about 35 miles an hour. As the train rounded a curve, the man saw that the switch just ahead had been left wide open. He jammed on the brakes, but he was sure they faced certain disaster.

“Stick with it!” he shouted to the fireman. “Hundreds of children are on board.” “I intend to!” came the reply. Then the fireman, who was a Christian, cried, “O God, help us!” His words were drowned out by a thunderclap as a bolt of lightning struck right in front of the engine.

The next thing they knew, they were safely past the danger point. After stopping the train, the men hurried back to find out what had happened. To their amazement they discovered that the lightning had struck the rails and closed the switch. This in turn kept them from being shunted onto a spur which would have caused certain derailment.

- Henry Bosch

You see, God used the natural, lightning, in a supernatural way and this miracle saved the lives of these children and the workers on the train! There is no earthly explanation for this, it was a miracle of God!

#### **4. THE MULTIPLICATION OF FOOD AT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

The last one I want to share with you this morning just happened at our graduation party for Vacation Bible School. We had bought food for about 80 people and had a little more, about 95 pieces of meat you might say or a about 1 piece for each person who attended as there were about 76 people. The amazing thing is that people were taking seconds and thirds, some had 3 or 4 burgers on one bun and we should have run out of food, but we had leftovers! Not only that, but the beans, you have to have beans for a western theme, we only had 3 or 4 small cans of beans and yet, the last person who came through the line took the last plate of beans, we had just enough and then we ran out. The soda, I don't get it, but we still have a full refrigerator full of soda, it was like no one was drinking and yet, they were, it was a hot day! I truly believe that this was a miracle of God!

Now the question for many today is this, “Why don’t we see more miracles today?” That is a great question because it seems like the Scriptures are full of miracles and yet today God doesn’t seem to be working miracles like He did back then. Lets look at a few reasons why this is so. And please understand that many times we don’t see miracles because we are not looking for them and we will talk about that next as one of the reasons!

## **WHY WE DON’T SEE MORE MIRACLES**

### **1. WE AREN’T WATCHING**

I think many times the reason we miss out on what God is doing is because we aren’t looking for what is happening around us and in our lives. God does the supernatural at times in a very natural way. The main one that I can think of, and the greatest miracle is our salvation! Also, I think when we get to heaven we will be blown away by the many miracles that occurred in our life. We will truly see all the things we missed because we were not looking, that God has spared us from so many dangerous situations by His mighty hand of protection that He has placed upon us.

Once again, at Vacation Bible School we saw two young people come to the Lord and I received a call from the aunt of one these young people and she was so thankful for what we did. It was the Lord, but she said that this young person’s father is Muslim and she grew up in a Muslim home and now she has come to the Lord and she is singing Christian songs! That is a miracle of God! Just keep watching and I think you will see God work the miraculous in your life.

## 2. WE SEEK IT FOR OUR OWN BENEFIT

Obviously when we seek to glorify self or use the gifts that God has given us for our own personal profit, that is wrong. Truly the greatest work that is done happens when those who love the Lord and are traveling down a path to tell others of Him, and God does a work through them. Signs and wonders will follow after those who believe! That truly is what Mark tells us, **“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.’”** Mark 16:15-18. You see, as you are serving the Lord the signs and wonders will follow after you, they will flow from your life; you do not follow after signs and wonders!

## 3. UNBELIEF

Unbelief is a hindrance for God to work. The tiniest faith opens the door for God to work. And the key is simple, **“Is anything too hard for the Lord?”** Genesis 18:14. Of course not! He can do anything and all He asks us to do is trust in Him, to have the faith of a tiny mustard seed, but that faith is in the creator of heaven and earth!



#### **4. WE SUBSTITUTE IT FOR NEGATING OUR OWN PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Too often we live recklessly and then ask God to act miraculously to get us out of the trouble we are in. God calls for us to walk worthy of the high calling by which we have been called. You can't spend all your rent money on satisfying your flesh and then call on God to bail you out. You are responsible for your walk. I hope that makes sense to you!

And so, as we have seen, this gift of miracles or operations of works of power is in operation today. And understand this, if it is truly a miracle, then there is no earthly explanation for it, it is a miracle! And as I have said, a miracle is something that is humanly impossible but the Holy Spirit works supernaturally in us and through us and as He does it meets the needs of the saints and points people to God!

In John chapter 11 the religious leaders are planning to kill Jesus. You see, this raising Lazarus from the dead drew many people to Jesus and they were very upset about that. And beginning in verse 45 of John chapter 11 we read, "**Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, 'What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him. . . .'**" John 11:45-48.

That is what it is all about. Not drawing attention to ourselves but to Jesus. As Jesus commissioned us in Matthew 28:18-20, **“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”**

God is still alive and well and He is working through His people using the gifts of miracles to meet the needs of the saints and to point people to God!

Let me leave you with this true story to show you that God is still in the business of miracles today. We are told, “

The faith that moves mountains is borne out by the church that was moved by the hand of God.

Such a church stands to this day in the village of Swan Quarter, North Carolina. Before it was built in 1874 the congregation eyed with longing a desirable plot of ground but was unable to purchase it for reasons deemed adequate by the owner of the land. The disappointed assemblage there-upon erected the structure on an alternate site – but could not forbear to cast longing glances at the original location.

Two years after the building was completed, on September 17, 1876, a storm of great violence struck the countryside. Pelting rain, a raging wind and roaring tide combined into a miraculous motive power. The edifice was lifted up by the elements as if it had been a scrap of paper. It was airborne a distance of 300 feet, and although its path was not straight, it found its mark with unerring accuracy.

The House of God came to rest upon the exact plot of ground which the worshippers had so ardently desired. The divine transfer awed and thrilled the village and even stilled the objections of the owners. The sacred edifice still stands on the plot ratified by the Hand of God. Its name has been changed from Methodist Protestant to the Church of Providence – and the site has long been acknowledged as Holy Ground.

- Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, 7606

Why do we think things are impossible with God? Yes, they may seem impossible from a human perspective, but God is the creator of the heavens and earth and nothing is too hard for Him! In fact, Paul tells us in Ephesians 3:20-21, “**Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.**” May we believe that God wants to work exceedingly abundantly above anything we could even imagine; He is the God of miracles even today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century! May we not forget that! The gift of miracles or the operations of works of power!