



**MIRACLES  
IN  
MARCH**

**A Devotional**

**JOYCE CORDER**

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**Joyce Corder**

The Church of God, God's Acres  
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# Miracles in March

This month we are going to look at the miracles mentioned in the Gospels which are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. By studying them our faith can be strengthened and we are encouraged to trust God in a greater way. Strong's concordance suggests the purpose of miracles is that men may know the power of the Lord and to witness Christ as the Messiah.

The word "miracle" has been cheapened in our world today. We think it is a miracle when we make it to Sunday school on time when we woke up late and stopped for coffee on the way. What we are talking about in these lessons are supernatural signs, tokens, and wonders. Webster's online dictionary defines it as, "An extra ordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs, an extremely outstanding or unusual event, thing or accomplishment."

I hope you will enjoy studying these lessons and that sometime you will experience divine intervention in your own life. There are miracles all around us. Older saints have stories of great miracles to tell; ask them to share them with you and when you pray, expect a miracle!

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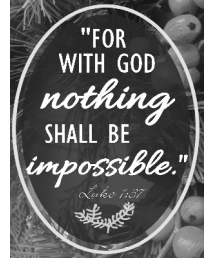
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## DAY 1

### Zacharias' Encounter With Gabriel

*Luke 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.*

**READ:** Luke 1:5-25, 37 & 57-80



To begin, we need to look at some history. Throughout the Old Testament, God promised a Ruler, King, Savior, and Deliverer. One of the more common prophecies is found in Isaiah 9:6, which says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." At this time, Israel had fallen into idolatry and was under Roman rule. They had a form of religion but not much power with God.

Zacharias was a priest of the course of Abia. In 1 Chronicles, Chapters 23-24, we read King David divided the tribe of Levi into groups and gave them duties in the temple. There were more Levites than necessary to carry out the duties of the temple, but David wanted nothing neglected. He set up a plan where each group served in the temple at a given time, doing a specific task so there would never be too many or too few priests to serve.

Zacharias was married to Elisabeth, who was also of the tribe of Levi. Luke 1:7 says they were "well stricken in years." Verse 6 tells us, "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." That is quite a testimony! Can people who know us say the same thing about our life? Are we living a pure, righteous, holy life? Elisabeth and Zacharias had no children, which was considered a reproach to the woman, but they remained faithful to their duties before the Lord, even into their old age.

In the morning or the evening, Zacharias' job was to burn incense in the temple, which represents the prayers of the people. A multitude of people were praying silently in the court, waiting for him to return, as was the custom, but he took longer than usual. The people wondered what had happened. When Zacharias finally came out, he could not talk, but the people could tell he was excited. Through hand motions, he tried to show them he had seen a vision, but he could not speak.

Anytime God sends a message to mankind, it is a miracle, a definite intervention in human affairs. At a time when God had not spoken to Israel through a priest or prophet for over four hundred years, Zacharias came face to face with the angel Gabriel. This angel had a specific message for Zacharias that would

affect the entire nation of Israel. The angel told him his prayer had been heard; Elisabeth would have a baby boy. He was to name him John. John was not to drink wine or strong drink. He would be filled with the Holy Ghost from birth. He would have the spirit and power of Elias, or Elijah, as we know him. He would turn many people to the Lord God, and he would prepare the way of the Lord the Savior. WOW! What a message!

Zacharias' human reasoning began to work, and he asked: "How can I know such a thing is true? I and my wife are old." We should not be too hard on Zacharias because we often desire a sign or proof of God's promises as well. The angel called this unbelief, and because of it, Zacharias could not talk until this prophecy was fulfilled. When God gives a promise, we should never be surprised when it comes to pass (but it seems like we are always amazed). Elisabeth had a baby boy, and when it was time to name him, everyone said his name should be Zacharias. Elisabeth said: "NO! His name is John." Her family could not understand, as no one in Zacharias' or Elisabeth's family had the name of John. So they gave Zacharias a writing tablet and said, "What do you want the baby's name to be?" He wrote, "His name is John." As soon as Zacharias wrote that, he could speak again, just as the angel said. The first words out of his mouth were praises to God.

So, the old couple had a baby, and his father could not speak until the child was named. Zacharias prophesied of the salvation of Israel. In Luke 1:65-66, people who lived in the hill country of Judaea heard of these miracles and asked, "What kind of child is this?" Miracles are not usually for just one person, they affect all who know about them in some way. In this case, the birth of Jesus was about to happen, and God needed to awaken the hearts and minds of Israel to receive their Savior.

Today's verse is short, but it will be very important to remember when you are in a trial. Without God, there are many impossible situations. But with God, we can have faith and confidence that Someone is in control who has all the power and wants us to survive and thrive. Just as God sent a message to Zacharias, He wants to speak to our hearts and give us hope in a hopeless situation. There are many wonderful truths in Luke, Chapter 1; I hope you will read it all.

#### PROMISES OF THE MESSIAH

**Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 59:20; Isaiah 7:14; Zechariah 9:9**

## DAY 2

### The Virgin Birth

*Luke 1:49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.*

**READ:** Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-55



Some people refuse to believe this Scripture because our human minds cannot imagine how this could have happened. In the Scripture of the first lesson, the angel said to Mary, "For with God NOTHING shall be impossible." I can believe it because I have found the rest of the Bible to be true. I have tried the promises and found them to be reliable. Our definition in the introduction to these lessons says a *miracle* is "a supernatural sign and an extraordinary event." It cannot be scientifically explained, but this is how God chose to accomplish His plan to redeem mankind.

Mary was going about her daily routine, just like Zacharias. She had been promised to Joseph, the carpenter, a descendent of King David. The angel Gabriel, who visited Zacharias in the temple at Jerusalem, visited Mary in the small town of Nazareth. Like Zacharias, Mary was troubled by the angel's presence and message. God will send His messengers to speak to us regardless of where we are, whether we are rich or poor, whether we live in the temple or in a cottage, and many times, His messages trouble our hearts. When the Spirit of God speaks, there is no confusion. His messages are clear and to the point, but being human, we fear we are unworthy of His trust. Like Mary, we need to say, "Be it unto me according to thy word." In other words, "I'll do whatever You ask; not my will but God's be done."

The angel told Zacharias their baby should be named John. The angel told Mary her baby should be named Jesus. When Mary asked, "How shall this be?" it was not in unbelief, like Zacharias, but she was asking, "What do you want me to do?" The angel answered, "The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." The word "power" in the Greek means "a miracle or miraculous power or a wonderful work." Matthew Henry wrote in his commentary on this passage, "Those in whom Christ is formed will show it: it will be found to be a work of God which he will own." When the Spirit and power of God move into a heart, there is a miraculous work started, and nothing will ever be the same.

Just because God moves into a situation does not mean the rest of the world



goes away and you are trouble-free. Mary had no idea how Joseph was going to react to the news of her pregnancy, but her trust was in God. You can read in Deuteronomy 22:23-24, that under the Law, Joseph could have had Mary stoned to death. Matthew 1:19 says he was "a just man." He did not have hate and revenge in his heart toward Mary, and he was willing to just break the agreement and send her away to live in solitude. Yet, God takes care of all the details. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and explained the plan. He told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife because God was working miracles. When God begins to work in our lives, we can trust every detail to Him. Although everything does not go smoothly, God's plan is always perfect.

Once you begin to trust God with the details of your life and find He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20), it will be easy for you to believe in the virgin birth. Walking with Christ and trusting His plan shows us that miracles are easy for Him. Then, as Philippians 3:20-21 says, we can look forward to the day when "our vile [mortal] body" will be made like Christ's glorified body, and we will live with Him eternally. After a life of trusting in God's miraculous ways, that does not seem too difficult to believe.

#### **CHRIST IS OF THE LINEAGE OF KING DAVID**

**Isaiah 11:1-2; Matthew 1:1**

## DAY 3

### The Star, Bethlehem, the Wise Men, and Deliverance From Herod



*Matthew 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.*

**READ:** Matthew, Chapter 2

There are more stars in the sky than we can count, so why do we feel there is anything miraculous about the star the astrologers from the east took note of? As astrologers, these men noted a new star, different from the ones they studied on a nightly basis. As descendants of Abraham, they would have had some knowledge of the Messianic prophecies. This star appeared as a new star. Then, after it led the wise men to Christ, we hear no more of it.

In Genesis 1:8, we read about the heavens being created. It says: "And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day." Then, we read in Genesis 1:14, "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years." The sun and moon still mark days, years, and seasons, but the verse also says, "Let them be for signs." The star marked the birth of the Savior of the world. The Gentiles knew the time of the birth of Messiah by studying the stars; the Jews knew the time by studying the prophecies. The Kingdom of God is a heavenly kingdom. So it seems only right that a heavenly body, a star, should announce it.

Next, let us look at the town of Bethlehem. It is referred to as Bethlehem Ephrata, or Bethlehemjudah, to differentiate it from another Bethlehem in another part of Israel. *Ephrata* means "fertile land." The word *Bethlehem* means "house of bread." The land was so fertile that grain grew well in this area and supplied much bread. Christ is "the living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:51). Thus, this was the perfect place for His birth. It is located just a few miles south of the city of Jerusalem. In 2 Samuel 23:14-15, King David expressed a desire for water from the clear, deep, cool water of Bethlehem's well. Christ spoke of "living water" (John 4:10-14) that would spring up into everlasting life. Christ not only fills the hungry soul but will satisfy the thirst of a soul that cries

out for a relationship with God.

The wise men were Gentiles, probably from Arabia or Persia. They were philosophers, priests, and astronomers. The common assumption is there were three, but the Bible does not tell us how many there were. They traveled somewhere around eight hundred to a thousand miles to find the King of the Jews. Job had lived in their area many years before, and these people had honored King David and King Solomon during their reigns. They were aware of the Jews' God and probably the promise of the Messiah. It was customary to bring gifts when visiting a king; the wise men brought valuable and useful gifts.

Frankincense and myrrh are both used as perfume and incense because of their nice smell. Today, we hear a lot about essential oils. These two are especially useful oils. Frankincense was used to anoint newborn babies because of its antiseptic and disinfectant qualities. It also helps with digestion and sleep as well as other problems. Myrrh was used by new mothers. It also is an antiseptic and analgesic that helps heal wounds. The gold could have been monetary, or it too can be used as a healing agent.

As we move on to the deliverance the Christ child had from the evil King Herod, I found it amazing that an intelligent ruler like Herod the Great, who had reigned for thirty-five years, was so easily tricked. God can reveal the birth of Christ to wise men hundreds of miles away by a star in the sky, send angels to sing to shepherds on the hillside, and yet hide it from the ones who are so close to it. He reveals the truth of salvation to whosoever He will and hides His mysteries "from the wise and prudent" (Matthew 11:25). Bethlehem was only a few miles away from Jerusalem, and Herod could have sent spies to follow the wise men and find the Christ child, but he did not. He asked the wise men to report back to him, and by God's design, they did not. God delivered His precious gift many times throughout Christ's life. Then when it was time, God allowed for His death so that we could have salvation from sin.

God takes care of the minute details. He can move the stars around and make history and prophecy come to pass. He can direct people from far and near and protect His people from danger. These are not just miracles in the past; He will do the same for us today. The day of miracles is not past because "Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8).

**ADDITIONAL READING:**

**Micah 5:2 — The Birthplace of Christ**

**John 6:51 — Christ as the Living Bread**

**John 4:10-14 — Christ as the Living Water**

**1 Corinthians 1:19 — Human Wisdom**

## DAY 4

### Peter's Mother-in-Law

*Psalm 145:8 The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.*



**READ:** Matthew 8:14-15; Mark 1:30-31; Luke 4:38-39

First, we need to remember the Gospels were written by four different Apostles. I doubt they were together when they wrote their accounts of the things that were said and done while they were with Christ. In this lesson, we will find some differences in details, but the miracle is the same.

After a busy day of teaching and healing, Peter invited Jesus to his house. When they arrived, they found Peter's mother-in-law very sick. Luke, called "the beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14), said it was a great fever. The word "anon" in Mark means they told Christ right away when He came into the house. There was serious concern for her. We can take a lesson from these early Apostles. We need to tell Christ about our loved ones' physical and spiritual needs, bringing them to His attention often and earnestly. We need to feel the concern for them and not just assume Jesus will take care of them without any effort on our part. Luke used the words, "They besought him for her." We need to do the same, have great concern, and beg Jesus to act on behalf of our loved ones.

In all the miracles, there is one common factor—the compassion of Christ. Webster's online dictionary uses words to define *compassion* such as "pity, concern, a sympathetic consciousness of other's distress with a desire to alleviate it." We need to cultivate compassion in our lives and put ourselves in another person's shoes, so to speak. Our world, generally speaking, is a selfish place that has little compassion for others. Christians should be like Christ, be aware of the problems around us, do whatever we can to change the situation, and then allow God to work through us to finish the work.

When Jesus came to the sick woman, He did not make a big show. He just touched her hand, and the fever left. When Jesus does anything, it is simple and complete. This is what we call "instantaneous healing"—when it happens quickly. Each healing we study will have its own unique story. That is because we are each unique individuals, and Christ works with us where we are and gives us individually what we need. There are people who want to make a show, entertainment, or sensationalism out of divine healing, but that is not what Jesus did.

Luke said Jesus "rebuked" the fever. He commanded it to leave. It was His word that sent away the fever. It is still His word today that has the power to change any situation, great or small. We cannot fathom how much power is available in His word. His word set the universe in order, spoke our world into being, created all living things, and brought salvation to lost souls. His word will save a soul or send a soul to hell.

Usually, a fever will leave a person weak and in need of time to recover, but look at what happened to this woman. She got up from her sick bed and "ministered" to them. She fixed them a place to sit down and rest and perhaps also made a meal. When Christ does anything, it is perfect! When Christ does something for us, our first response should be like Peter's mother-in-law—to get up and minister, or serve. We do not want to be like the selfish world we live in and just soak up all the blessings God gives us without any thought of repaying. We must look for ways to help others as we have been helped. Someone quoted a poem to me many years ago, but I do not know who wrote it. I think it fits our lesson today:

We are not storerooms but channels  
We are not cisterns but springs  
Passing our benefits onward  
Fitting our blessings with wings.

Author Unknown



**ADDITIONAL READING:**

**Psalm 86:15 — God is full of compassion  
Hebrews 4:15 — Christ is our High Priest  
who is touched by our infirmities**

## DAY 5

### Unbelief

*Matthew 13:58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*



**READ:** Matthew 13:54-58; John 12:37-38, 42-43

Unbelief and faith are opposites. Unbelief makes faith ineffective and causes us not to experience all the blessings God has for us. Faith will help us see beyond the literal barriers to the realm of the divine. Unbelief will blind us from seeing the power of God and stop us from taking any action that is not completely logical.

In our Scripture, the people could not see beyond Christ's natural lineage. They knew His father, mother, sisters, and brothers. They were not so much astonished at what He taught but that He could teach at all! They did acknowledge the mighty works and wise words, but they could not believe the miracles because all they could see was the natural human man.

Sometimes, all we can see are the circumstances, and we fail to recognize God can do anything. Ephesians 3:20-21 says: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." We have to get past our earthly, human thinking and get the mind of Christ. It is easy for us to say, "I believe God can do anything," but it is hard for us to say, "God can do something specific for me."

John 12:37 tells us the people saw the miracles Jesus did, yet they could not believe He was the Son of God. It takes more than seeing with your eyes. You have to be convinced in your heart and mind that Jesus is almighty. Verses 42-43 tell us many "rulers also believed on him," but they did not stand for or commit to Him (or as the Bible says "confess" Him) because "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." It is not intellectual knowledge but a heart trust that brings miracles into our lives.

Some people today want to say the day of miracles is past, that Jesus no longer works like that, and it was just for a specific time period. Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." He has not changed. He still has all the power and desires to save, heal, and change lives today. To be saved from sin, we must believe that He came and became the

sacrifice so we can be free. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

To please God, we must first have faith, believe that He is, that He exists, that He is able to forgive sin, and that He is all-powerful. Next, we must believe He is the rewarder, He has the abundance the Bible speaks of, He has the potential to fill all of our needs, and that He is not just willing but able to bestow on us the riches of His glory. Last, the Scripture says we must diligently seek Him. This is not just ho-hum, if it happens okay, and if it does not happen, okay. He must see fervent, unrelenting desire. When we seek God for salvation, healing, or a miracle of any kind, God wants to know how much we want it. James 5:16 says: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Psalms 103:2-5 reads, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." When you truly believe God, your soul will cry out like the psalmist who wrote, "Bless the LORD, O my soul." Something happens when your faith reaches out and touches an all-powerful God. Your sins are forgiven, your sicknesses are healed, your life is changed, and you are satisfied. Unbelief would like to steal all the good things God has for us to enjoy. Unbelief is definitely a tool of the devil.

#### ADDITIONAL READING:

**Romans 3:3-4; Matthew 17:19-20; Mark 6:5-6; Mark 16:14**

## DAY 6

### Divine Protection

*Matthew 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*



**READ:** Luke 4:28-30

We need to understand what was going on in this Scripture. Jesus made a trip to Nazareth, the city where He had grown up. When Sabbath came, He went to the synagogue, as usual. He stood up, indicating He would like to read from the Scriptures, and was handed the scroll with the writings of Isaiah. He read what we refer to today as Isaiah 61:1, and He brought it from ancient history to an up-to-date reality, saying, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21). Unbelief caused them to question His authority to speak such bold statements, and they looked only at His humanity, saying, "This is just Joseph's son." No doubt, they had heard about the miracles Jesus had done in other cities and wanted to see Him heal in their city too, but He saw their unbelief. They were looking for miracles, not to help the needy but to give them proof of His abilities. "If you can do these things, show us."

What really made them mad was his reference to 1 Kings 17:1-16. He reminded them there were widows in Israel during that famine, but the prophet went to a Gentile widow and performed a miracle for her. Next, he reminded them of the Syrian Naaman who was healed of leprosy. God will judge by strict rules, and He will bless whomever He will. Blessings are not earned; they are gifts. Just because they grew up in the same town as Jesus did not give them any advantage. At this point, they became furious. He had just told them the Scripture was fulfilled that said the brokenhearted would be healed, the captives delivered, and the blind receive sight. Yet, He would not heal any of them. They felt He was a fake.

When Jesus reminded them God had shown mercy on the Gentiles and left Israel to deal with their famine and leprosy, it was more than they could take. They pushed and pulled Him out of the city and up to the edge of the cliff. However, somewhere along the road, He just walked away from them! Did He strike them with blindness, as was done in Sodom (Genesis 19:11) or as Elijah did in 2 Kings 6:18? Did He become invisible as when He walked into the room where



the disciples were (John 20:19)? Did the mob become so worked up that they lost track of Him and threw someone else over the cliff? The Bible does not tell us; we just know it was a miracle.

It would be good to consider the way Jesus reacted to the rejection and violence. He did not try to defend Himself or reason with the people. He explained the Scripture and left it with them. There is no need for us to argue and get angry or show an ugly spirit when trying to witness to souls. They will either accept it or reject it; the rest is up to God. Our part is to tell what God has done for us. God knows the heart of mankind. Saul, later called Paul, did not accept Stephen's testimony when he first heard it, but it kept working on him until he was converted.

Being a witness to the Gospel will bring persecution. Not everyone will believe your testimony or give God the glory. God will not keep us from hard places or disasters, but He will guide us through them. Being a Christian does not mean we will never have a problem. As a matter of fact, it is when Christians go through misfortune that our light shines the brightest. When people can see the grace of God working in our lives, and we keep a sweet spirit about being misused or misrepresented, they will know we have something they need. We need to trust God's wisdom and ability to guide our lives, relax, and allow Him to be in control.

Psalms 91:11 says, "He shall give his angels charge over thee," but that does not mean we will never have a car accident, a house fire, or sickness. We need to follow the leading of God's Holy Spirit to keep us from making foolish mistakes and putting ourselves in harm's way. He said He would never give us more than He can deliver us from (1 Corinthians 10:13). He will guide us, and we will be better for the struggle. It was not time for Jesus to die, and so He just walked away. When God has work for us to do, nothing and no one can stop us. It is always a comforting thought to know God will never leave or forsake us, and as Psalm 121:8 says, "The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in."

#### ADDITIONAL READING:

**Genesis 19:11 — Sodom**

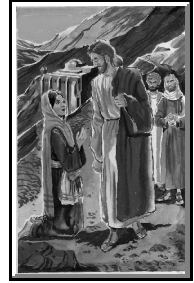
**2 Kings 6:18 — Elijah and the blind army**

**2 Kings 5:1 — Naaman the leper**

## DAY 7

### Unclean Spirits

*Luke 4:36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.*



**READ:** Mark 1:23-27; 7:25-30

Just as God is a Spirit, the devil also is a spirit. We do not hear much about devil possession anymore, but the devil is as real and active as he ever was; we just do not acknowledge it. One of the definitions of the word *unclean* in our Scripture is "morally lewd." We can see this spirit is loose in our world today. Be careful what you look at and what you meditate on because that spirit is looking for anyone who will give it a place in their heart. In Mark 1:23 and Luke 4:33, there was a man in the synagogue with an unclean spirit. Not everyone who goes to church is filled with the Spirit of Christ. We want sinners to come to church because it takes sinners to make saints, and some of those sinners have unclean devils that have to be cast out.

What do we know about the devil? He is a destroyer of all that is good. He "is a liar" and "a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8). The devils believe there is one God (James 2:19). The devil tempted even Jesus (Matthew 4:1). The devil oppresses (Acts 10:38). He is disruptive. Our Scripture reading says he cried out and caused a disturbance right in the synagogue. The devils know who Jesus is! Numerous times in the Gospels, the devils cried out, as they did in this Scripture, "We know who you are, the Holy One of God." They not only know Christ, but they fear Him because He has power over them to cast them out. Thank God for One who is stronger than the devil!

Matthew 15:22 and Mark 7:25 reveal being possessed by a devil was a fearful thing. Until Christ came, there was little hope for deliverance. Without Christ today, there is no hope for deliverance from sin and the devil. This mother cried to Jesus, "Have mercy on me." Mercy is undeserved favor. There is no one who deserves God's blessings, but this woman was not a Jew. She knew Jesus' power had only been shown to His nation up until this time. Her desire for deliverance was intense. Without His help, her daughter was doomed to a terrible life. She was "grievously vexed." Matthew 15:23 says the disciples asked Jesus to

send her away because "she crieth after us." The word "crieth" does not mean she whimpered and whined, but *Strong's Concordance* says it means she screamed and shrieked loudly. This woman needed help and persistently entreated Christ.

I wonder, how badly do we desire Christ's help? When we truly feel our need, we will not just say a quick, dry-eyed prayer, but we will earnestly seek Him. At first, Jesus did not acknowledge her; He kept on walking. But when He spoke to her, she came, worshiped Him, and begged for His help. Israel was referred to as *sheep*; anyone else was a *dog*. Dogs were the enemy of sheep and would do great damage to the flock. This woman worshiped Jesus and acknowledged Him as her master. Although she was a Greek, she would take any crumb, any mercy, He would drop for her. Many take God's blessings as though they are owed to them. She knew she was undeserving but was grateful for His moment of attention to her. Jesus said, "Great is thy faith." Her belief in Jesus' power and authority gave her the desire of her heart—the devil was gone.

Numerous places in the Gospels say Jesus cast out devils or unclean spirits. He has not changed. He still has the power to subdue the devil today. Whatever is troubling you or those you love, Jesus is still the answer if you will seek Him with your whole heart. Even a crumb from His table will be sufficient for your needs.

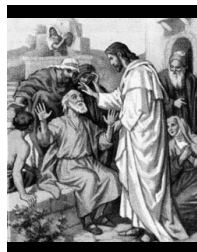
**ADDITIONAL READING:**

**Matthew 9:33; Luke 7:21; Matthew 17:14-21;  
1 John 3:8; Acts 10:38**

## DAY 8

### Jesus Healed All Manner of Diseases

*Matthew 14:36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.*



**READ:** Matthew 4:23-24; 14:34-36

When we are going through a trial of affliction, the devil always is around to say, "God can heal a lot of things but not this sickness!" Remember, the devil is a liar! When we say, "There is nothing too hard for God," we can back it up with Scripture. There are so many verses just in the Gospels that say He healed ALL. It is hard to know where to begin. Let us start with Matthew 4:23-24.

Notice that Jesus was teaching and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." When you hear the Word of God, you take faith in it, believe it, and claim it for your own. After He preached, He healed, not just the rich or the wise, not just the easy cases, or certain problems, but "All manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (Matthew 4:23). Verse 24 goes even further. It adds torments, possessed with devils, lunatic, and palsy. It says, frankly, "He healed them."

The word "sickness" takes in both infirmity and disease. "Disease" means "a chronic disorder or debilitating illness." Sickness is more of a common, passing health problem. "Torments" denotes being tortured. Sometimes we can be in constant pain and discomfort until we feel we cannot stand it anymore. God is in control of that. Today we would use the words "mentally disturbed or challenged" instead of crazy or lunatic, but He healed them too. Palsy had a paralyzing effect on its victims, but Jesus set them free. These are not light conditions, especially if you are a sufferer. Yet, they were no match for the power of healing Jesus possessed.

The next Scripture to consider is Matthew 14:34-36. The end of verse 36 drew me to this passage. It reads, "As many as touched were made perfectly whole." Back up to verse 35, which says they "had knowledge of him." They knew He was in town, and they also knew of His miracles. We need to be aware of His presence. Notice, in Mark 6:48, Jesus "would have passed by" His disciples struggling against strong winds, but they cried out, and He stopped to help

them. He expects us to ask Him for help. The second part of Matthew 14:35 says, "They sent out into all that country round about." We should share our blessings. Tell others of Christ's presence and power to save and heal. Another part of that verse says, they "brought unto him all that were diseased." We must get people to Jesus. These people were not backward in telling others about Jesus. Why do we hesitate to bring our friends and loved ones to the one who has all the power?

People asked if they could just touch the hem of his garment. According to Matthew Henry's commentary, it was customary to kiss the sleeve or hem of a dignitary's garment. People felt unworthy to shake his hand or physically touch his person; so to show their respect and honor, they would touch the hem of the garment. When they expressed their love and respect for Jesus and touched His garment, they were made "perfectly whole." In some cases, the word *perfect* means "complete or mature." Christ made them completely well; the problem was gone. All of Christ's work is perfect.

There is good news in Matthew 10:1. It says Jesus gave power to the disciples "to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." This power is not just for Jesus' day, but it is the same for us today.

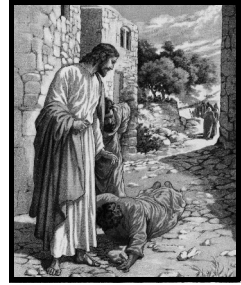
#### ADDITIONAL READING:

**Matthew 8:16; Matthew 12:14-15; Luke 4:40; Mark 6:54-56**

## DAY 9

### Jesus Touched the Untouchable!

*Mark 1:41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.*



**READ:** Matthew 8:2-3; Mark 1:40-42; Luke 5:12-13

This is one of my favorite miracles. When Jesus says, "I will" you can consider the miracle done. People will tell you they will do something for you and then forget about it completely and nothing ever happens but when Jesus makes a promise, you can believe it will happen.

Leprosy has been described as a skin disease that causes disfiguration, especially on the face, and loss of feeling. Leviticus 13:14 describes it as "raw flesh," or an open wound. *Adam Clark's Commentary* describes it as itchy, and painful, scales and scabs. It does not just sound awful, it was awful. According to Wikipedia, there was not an effective treatment for the disease until the 1940s era. In Bible times, it was thought to be highly contagious, and people with leprosy were required to live outside populated areas. The Jews had laws requiring lepers to alert everyone of their presence by calling loudly, "Unclean."

The life of a leper was very hard. Unable to work because they could not be among people and no one wanted anything they had touched, they had no income. Begging was not possible because no one would come close enough to give them money, and even if they had money, no one would touch it because they were afraid of what might come with it. The disease progressed until they were hideously disfigured. Leprosy was a slow, painful, lonesome death. No one wanted to be near them let alone touch them. Luke 5:12 says this man was "full of leprosy," but Jesus, having compassion on the leper reached out his hand and touched him. Jesus touched the untouchable, the unclean, the outcast, the one everybody had given up hope for. Jesus' compassion went beyond human reasoning and gave hope and healing.

This is a wonderful picture of a sinner who comes to Christ and humbly asks, "Will you heal my hideously disfigured, sinful soul?" And Jesus looks on the pitiful, hopeless condition and in great compassion says, "I will! Be clean." The leper and the sinner were immediately healed. The power in those words can still be felt today. There is power to heal leprosy, power to heal sin, power to give

new life to the hopeless. What an awesome savior and healer He is!

God made provision in the law for a leper who was healed or possibly misdiagnosed. The priest was to go out of the camp or city to meet the healed leper and check for the disease. If he is truly healed he needs to bring: two live birds, cedar wood, scarlet cord, and hyssop. According to *Adam Clark's Commentary*, the cedar wood was used for a handle; it was not easily corrupted and was a symbol of his healing. One of the birds was tied to the handle, tail down, so it could be dipped into the blood of the second bird that was to be killed. The live bird was held to the handle by the scarlet cord. The scarlet cord represented his being restored to a good complexion. Hyssop was used as an antiseptic and had a good smell, denoting the disease was completely gone and the stench had been removed. The priest was to put a small amount of spring water in a jar and kill the second bird over the water allowing the blood to be mixed with the water. The tail of the living bird and the hyssop were then dipped into the mixture of blood and water and sprinkled on the one that had been a leper. The living bird was then set free in an open field denoting that the leprosy was carried away and the leper could begin a normal life again.

When the blood of Christ is figuratively applied to our hearts, we are instantly healed of the leprosy of sin. It is gone just like the bird that flies across the field, never to return. We can return to the life God intended for us to live, in holy communion with Him. If we will only be like the leper and fall at Christ's feet and worship Him, beseeching His favor and believing His ability, we can have the same promise of healing. I am sure the leper never forgot that meeting with Jesus. His life changed from a slow, painful, death to life and hope. Jesus will do the same for anyone who will come to Him in faith requesting cleansing for a sin-sick soul, a touch from a compassionate Savior.

#### ADDITIONAL READING:

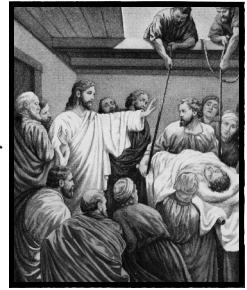
**Numbers 5:2-3**

**Leviticus 14 — The Law of Cleansing of a Leper**

## DAY 10

### Finding a Way to Jesus

*Matthew 9:6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.*



**READ:** Matthew 9:2-7; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:16-26

I would like to start today's lesson with Luke 5:16. It says, "And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed." Jesus knew the importance of being alone with God to receive guidance and renew His power with God. Just as the men in today's lesson had to find a way to Jesus, we have to overcome obstacles and press our way to Jesus. We will find the healing that we need, renew our power, and be prepared for whatever we are to face each day.

Between Mark and Luke, we learn on this occasion, there was an overflow crowd. Those closest to Jesus were the Pharisees and doctors of the law, not just from Capernaum but from Galilee, Judaea, and Jerusalem—an impressive crowd! Luke 5:17 says, "The power of the Lord was present to heal them." Wherever Jesus went, sick people were needing to be healed, but that was not what was mentioned in this verse. The self-righteous Pharisees and critical lawyers needed forgiveness of their sins, but they were not there for that reason. Nevertheless, the power of forgiveness was present to heal these sinners as well as the sick. Mark 2:2 tells us Jesus "preached the word" to all those distinguished guests.

While Jesus was inside preaching, outside many people were trying to hear Him, see Him, or get close enough to touch Him. Among the crowd was a man sick of palsy. The word *palsy* means "paralyzed." He could not get to Jesus on his own; he had to have help. Fortunately, there were four men; we call them friends (the commentator Matthew Henry, called them "charity, compassion, faith, and fervency") who were willing to try to get him to Jesus. Sinners today need help getting to Jesus. Do we have the love to help them? When we see them struggling along in life, do we have compassion for them? Do we have the faith to believe God can truly save people who have wrecked and ruined their lives? How fervent are we in getting souls to Christ? We need to look at our burden for others to see if the poor paralyzed world can count on our help in getting to the only One who can heal them.



Luke 5:18 says they brought the man in a bed (what we would call a cot) and looked for a way to get him close enough for Jesus to notice. They believed Jesus would have compassion on his pitiful situation and heal him. They tried the door, but there were too many hindrances there. Getting to Jesus is not always easy, but it is always worth the effort. The next place was the roof, which would have probably been flat and used as a cool retreat. There may have been outside stairs or a ladder to access the roof, but carrying a paralyzed man to the top could not have been an easy task. Sometimes, when things come easy, we do not appreciate them as we should. When we have to fight and struggle to attain a victory, we recognize the value of our accomplishments more. These four men finally were able to lower the paralyzed man down into the house where Jesus could see him.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all use the phrase "when he saw their faith." Faith was seen in their effort to get to Jesus. It would have been easy to give up and say, "He probably would not have healed him anyway; let us just go home." Faith holds on when circumstances seem the worst. To everyone's surprise, Jesus did not just heal the paralysis; He addressed the need of his soul. Jesus said, "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Until this time, men's sins could not be forgiven, just rolled over to the next year. Good news—salvation has come in the form of Jesus Christ! The paralyzed man was brought to Jesus because of his palsy, but Jesus saw an opportunity to bring a lesson on forgiveness of sin.

The Pharisees and lawyers were quick to question Jesus' authority to forgive sin. They felt it was blasphemy or an insult to God to claim to do what only God can. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)... Arise, and take up thy bed" (Mark 2:10-11). The paralyzed man stood up, picked up his own cot, and walked out of the house. His healing was a miracle they could see. Only God can heal; so they had to admit Jesus was equal to God the Father. Those poor old religious folks were so amazed, they said, "We have never seen anything like this before!" The commentator Barnes said, "It takes the power of God to heal, it takes the authority of God to forgive." Jesus had many reasons to heal people, this time it was to convince these unbelievers of His authority.

I am glad those four men took the time and effort to get the paralyzed man to Jesus so He could show us that healing the soul and the body are equally easy for Him. Thus, we should come to Christ ourselves and bring others with us.

#### ADDITIONAL READING:

2 Peter 3:9; John 3:16-17; 1 John 1:9

## DAY 11

### What Manner of Man Is This?

*Matthew 8:26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.*

**READ:** Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25



Just like in our lives, the day started fine, but everything changed quickly. Jesus preached to a multitude of people and decided to cross the lake in one of the boats (so far, so good). Jesus' day had been busy, as usual, and being a natural, human man, he was tired. He took advantage of the travel time to sleep, but a terrible storm changed things. Some of the disciples were fishermen and were used to being on the lakes and seas in bad weather but look at the way this storm is described in our Scriptures. Matthew calls it a great tempest that covered the boat with waves. Mark says it was a great storm of wind that beat the waves into the ship so that it was full. Luke goes on to say they were in jeopardy. This was not just a little thunderstorm!

With the boat full of water and the wind whipping the waves over it, they decided they had to wake Jesus. Matthew and Luke said: "We perish! We are doomed! There is no hope of reaching shore." Mark records it, "Master, don't you even care if we drown?" Matthew Henry, the commentator, pointed out that these men realized their helpless, hopeless state; they could not save themselves. They were earnestly pleading for their lives. When a sinner truly sees his situation, he will realize he cannot help himself. Even if he could stop sinning today, he cannot erase the sins of the past. He needs someone to save him. He must plead for his life. That is called an "effectual fervent prayer" (James 5:16), which is seeking the Lord with your whole heart. That is when Christ will arise and help.

Matthew Henry said, "He (Christ) does not chide them for disturbing him with their prayers, but for disturbing themselves with their fears." Christ desires to hear our troubles and trials; He wants to help us. He is just waiting for us to call on Him. The disciples were at their wit's end when they woke Jesus. Do we try to work out problems by ourselves before we call on Jesus? It was not easy for the disciples to get their eyes off the storm and onto Jesus when every minute or two they were being drenched with waves and the wind was whipping their clothes. When they were finally able to focus on Jesus and cry out for mercy,

everything changed.

When they had come to the end of their ability and called out to Jesus for help, He arose. When Christ stands up, the whole universe takes notice! All three accounts say He rebuked the wind and the sea, and two of the three say there was a great calm. It was not just the end of the storm, or the wind did not just stop blowing; it says a great calm. Jesus said, "Peace, be still." One of the definitions for the word *peace*, as it is used here, is "an involuntary stillness." When Jesus speaks "peace" to our troubled soul, it has no choice but to be still. Peace is that calm quiet that leaves no question as to who is in control. When Jesus speaks peace to our troubled souls, there will be a great calm that takes the turmoil out of troubled waters.

Jesus asked some important questions: "Why are ye fearful? How is it ye have little or no faith? Where is your faith?" Being human, we cannot see the end of a situation, and we rely on our human senses when we should rely on God. We can read about miracle after miracle in the Bible, we can hear multiple testimonies of how God helped other people. Yet, when asked if God can change our circumstances, we hesitate. The devil always makes our problems look insurmountable; that is his job. If we can take the time to focus on Jesus and beg for His help, He will arise and calm our storms and fears. Where is your faith? Can you really trust Jesus? Can you believe He can do anything? With just the little faith the disciples had, they came to Jesus pleading for their lives and He delivered them. Bring what you have to Him, and allow Him to show His power and strength in your life. Use what you have; it will always be enough, and faith will increase.

The disciples who once feared the storm now fear the Master. "What manner of man is this?" He was a natural, human, tired man who could sleep through a storm. He was God and creator of heaven and earth, sea and sky, the God who creates and controls the elements. He is the Savior and Redeemer of mankind who can keep us from perishing in a world of turmoil. He is all-powerful and yet loves and cares for you and me. What a wonderful friend is Jesus!

#### ADDITIONAL READING:

**Jeremiah 29:12-13; Jonah 1:15-16; Psalm 4:8; Proverbs 30:4-5**

## DAY 12

### Unworthy!

*Matthew 8:13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.*



**READ:** Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10

There appears to be a discrepancy between Matthew and Luke as to whether the centurion came himself or sent others. Commentators seem to think he would not have approached Christ himself, at least not initially, because he was neither a Jew nor a believer in Judaism, although he had been charitable to the Jews in building a synagogue. This does not disqualify Matthew's account. Possibly Matthew was an eyewitness, and Luke was told the story secondhand. Luke's report was to be sent to the Roman government; so it would include details that Matthew would not think important. The focus of our lesson today is not on the differences but on the fact that good works and social positions do not qualify us for God's blessings.

A centurion is a captain of one hundred soldiers. He also has officers who are higher ranking than him, whom he takes orders from. This centurion had wisdom; he had a synagogue built for the Jews, which put him in favor with them. He had a kind heart. Luke says his servant was dear to him so he sought for a way to help him in his terrible illness. He was humble. He did not say, "My servant is not worthy," but he said, "I am not worthy." Matthew Henry said in his commentary that the centurion acknowledged Christ's sovereignty by calling him Lord. He had respect and confidence in Christ, which was shown by his request for the healing of his servant. What he was saying was: "I know you have authority even greater than mine. I am not worthy of your favor. Your commands will be carried out whether you are present with my servant or not."

Christ's word was present in Creation, in recreation (or salvation), and it is also present in healing. All it takes is His word to change the worst circumstance. In Matthew 8:7, Jesus said, "I will come and heal him." Not "I will come and sympathize, or look at him," but a definite statement, "I will heal him!" There was no hesitation on Jesus' part, no question of whether He was worthy of this favor, just compassion and a willingness to heal. There is nothing anyone can do to earn blessings from God. We define grace as "unmerited favor" because no

one is worthy of anything God does; it is all freely given by a loving heavenly Father.

What makes us worthy of God's blessings? Nothing can make us worthy but the love of Christ. This centurion had good qualities, but he was a Gentile. Good qualities are nice, but they are not enough. Fame and fortune do not impress the Creator of all things. He does not need our money! Faith and humility got Jesus' attention. His simple trust, his belief that if Jesus said it, it would happen, made Jesus comment to those around Him, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Matthew Henry's commentary notes that the more humility a person has, the more faith they possess. When we feel we have no need, we will see no miracle. When we simply take God at His Word, believe what He says, and do not question His ability or authority, we will see His power.

John 1:11-12 says: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." "His own" were unworthy of His blessings, and the Roman soldier (a Gentile) was worthy because he could believe Christ would heal his servant. This Gentile received a blessing that many in Israel missed out on because of unbelief. In Matthew 8:11-12, we find a place for you and me to receive God's blessings. We might be from the East or the West, yet we can enter into the Kingdom of God while many in Israel will be lost because they will not accept Jesus as this centurion did—in simple faith. We try to make things so complicated when Christ has made it so simple; just trust what He says.

It is important to re-read Matthew 8:13 and Luke 7:9-10. Without Jesus seeing the servant or going to the centurion's house, the servant was instantly healed. Matthew says: "And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour." There is a chorus that says, "Only believe . . . all things are possible, only believe."

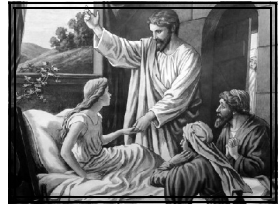
#### ADDITIONAL READING:

**Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11**

## DAY 13

### Jairus' Daughter

*Mark 5:36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.*



**READ:** Matthew 9:18-19, 23-25; Mark 5:22-24, 35-43; Luke 8:41-42, 49-56

The miracle of Jairus' daughter was interrupted by another healing along the way. We will look at that miracle in the next lesson. Jesus did not get in a hurry or get upset by interruptions. We get all out of sorts when our plans get delayed, but we need to remember, God does not work on a time clock. Who was Jairus? According to Mark, he was a ruler or elder of the synagogue. Possibly the person who appointed who would read in the congregation. He was part of the old Jewish religion, and yet he came to Christ for help in his time of need. He had only one child, a twelve-year-old daughter, and she was at the point of death.

Situations out of our control humble us and let us realize our helplessness. With all his prestige and position, Jairus could not stop the death of his daughter. When we have come to the end of our strength, it is natural to fall at Jesus' feet, worship Him, and beg for His help. Jairus' faith was not as strong as the centurion we studied in the previous lesson, but he had definite requests that supported his faith. He said if Jesus would come to his house and lay his hands on the daughter, she would live. Over and over, we see the compassion Jesus had for all who came humbly to him, seeking help. Mark says, "And Jesus went with him." Jairus did not have to make payment arrangements or an appointment for next month. When Jesus heard of the need, He arose and went with Jairus.

I am sure Jairus was in a great hurry, knowing how sick his daughter was. However, just as today, there were needs all around Jesus. As He was taking time with a poor sick woman, news came that the girl had died. Death is so final. The person bearing the news said, "Do not trouble the Master anymore; all hope is gone." As soon as Jesus heard the news, He encouraged Jairus, "Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole." Sometimes our faith wavers, but Jesus will send a song, a Scripture, an encouraging word, or a Gospel message to help our faith because He really wants to help us. Jesus sent the multitudes away; many times we have to be alone with Jesus to see our fragile faith rewarded.

When Jesus arrived at Jairus' house everything was in turmoil. The

messenger said, "She is dead," the people attending her said, "She is dead." No one said, "Maybe she is not dead yet." Everyone agreed—she was dead. When Jesus tried to give them hope, they mocked Him and laughed Him to scorn (in other words, made fun of Him). They had no doubt, she was dead. Since faith and unbelief cannot mix, Jesus told everyone except the Mother, the Father, Peter, James, and John to leave. Luke 8:54-55 explains the situation, Jesus simply took the child by the hand and said, "Maid, arise." Her spirit came again into her body, and she arose.

This is what happens to our soul. We are dead to God because of our sins. The world around us says there is no hope of finding spiritual life and peace with God. There is turmoil and wailing, no hope of a better life. Then Jesus comes and so gently says, "Arise." What a beautiful experience to have your sins forgiven and be raised to new life in Christ, "old things are passed away," and all is new (2 Corinthians 5:17). Just a little faith raised a child who was known to be dead. A little faith is all it takes to find salvation from your sins and the power to stand up and live a holy life. Jairus' daughter had no power in herself to change her situation—she was dead—but the power came from Jesus. We can try to do better, turn over a new leaf, and make resolutions and promises, but without the power of Christ, we can never be free from our sins. Just as Jairus knew Jesus was his daughter's only hope, we too know Jesus is the only name given under heaven whereby our sins can be forgiven (Acts 4:12). Jesus made it so simple. First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In John 8:11, Jesus told the sinful woman to go and sin no more. Without His power, we can never live holy, but with Him, we "can do all things" (Philippians 4:13).

Luke 8:56 says, "Her parents were astonished." Many times, when God answers our prayer, we too are astonished. We believe He can do anything; yet when He does what we asked, we cannot believe our eyes! That is especially true in salvation. We ask for forgiveness from sin and peace and joy within, yet when it comes, we are completely overwhelmed. Others looking on will see the change in our lives and ask, "How did this happen?" All we can tell them is, "Jesus touched me and made me alive." When things look hopeless, run to Jesus, fall at His feet, worship Him, state your situation, and listen for Him to say, "Be not afraid, only believe." There is great comfort in the Word of God!

#### **ADDITIONAL READING:**

**2 Corinthians 5:17; Acts 4:12; John 8:11; Philippians 4:13**

## DAY 14

### Touching Jesus



*Matthew 9:22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.*

**READ:** Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48

As Jesus was on His way to Jairus' house, the throng of people pressed in on Him. There were people all around Him when suddenly He stopped and turned around and asked, "Who touched Me?" The disciples must have wondered what was wrong with Him. Luke recorded Jesus' words, "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." The word *virtue* means "miraculous power." The commentator Matthew Henry noted that Christ's virtue was not diminished by its being used, just that He noticed it was tapped into. What an awesome thought that Jesus has unlimited power to perform miracles!

So, who touched Jesus and why? Luke says that when Jesus asked who it was, at first no one would admit to the action. Finally, a woman came fearful and trembling before Him. She not only admitted she had touched the border of His coat, but she told why, in front of that whole group of people.

For twelve long years, she had an issue of blood. According to Leviticus 15:25, her disease made her "unclean," unable to worship in the temple or be around certain people. So, coming behind Him and touching the edge of His coat was as far as she dared to go. Her disease was incurable. Some of the things physicians of that day would prescribe were very harsh and expensive for the common person. So the Scripture says, she suffered many things, spent all that she had, and only grew worse. What a sad condition! The commentator Hawker said a sinner who seeks help anywhere but from Christ only wastes time and money and grows worse. What a true statement! You can do good works, live a morally clean life, and be a good citizen and still not have the spiritual healing Christ so freely offers.

According to Matthew, this woman believed if she could just touch the hem of His robe she would be healed. Jesus said her faith made her whole. Her faith was coupled with her strong confidence in Jesus' power, and the work was done. When we come to Christ for any need, we must first believe He can fulfill our



needs and that He is willing to do it for us personally. Find the point of faith that says, "If I do this, He will do that." Mark 5:23 mentions another point, which says she told Him all the truth. We cannot exaggerate our needs or minimize the circumstances; we must tell all the truth. It was, no doubt, very hard for her to speak of her problem before the whole crowd of people, especially knowing she was considered unclean, but she told Christ the whole story. If we are going to get help from Christ, we too will have to be completely honest and open before Him. He already knows but wants us to admit our needs.

She had felt the healing touch in her body but when she had to admit she had touched Jesus' garment, she no doubt was fearful of His rebuke and possibly thought He would take the healing away and leave her in her dreadful condition. Having nothing left to lose, she confessed all. He did not scold or rebuke her in front of that whole crowd of people but called her "daughter," an endearing term that shows His love and compassion. When He said, "Be of good comfort," Jesus put her at ease, letting her know her faith in His power had changed her life, and He sent her away in peace, healed. This also is like a sinner coming to Christ. Knowing His rebuke and rejection of us would be just, we come trembling before Him, acknowledging our sins, telling Him *all* honestly and without reserve, regardless of who is around.

Just as with this woman, Christ does not shun us or turn us away because we are just too bad, but He comforts us, forgives us, heals our sick souls, and sends us on our way with peace. What a wonderful friend is Jesus who loved us enough to die for us while we were yet sinners! It is so important to touch Jesus, not physically like this woman did but through prayer we can be as close to Him as she was.

#### ADDITIONAL READING:

**Leviticus 15:25; Hebrews 11:6; Mark 6:56**

## DAY 15

### How to Feed 5,000+

*John 6:14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.*



**READ:** Matthew 14:14-21; Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:5-13

Have you ever wanted to get away from the merry-go-round routine that we all get into? Jesus took His disciples to a desert place on a mountain near the city of Bethsaida. He needed time to talk to them and instruct them, but when the people found out where He was, they flocked to Him. Matthew and Mark note that when Jesus saw the multitude, He had compassion on them. He taught them and healed their sick. When the evening was coming on, the disciples felt the people should be sent away so they would be able to buy food and find shelter for the night. This was a very logical notion, but Jesus sees things much differently than we do. He said to the disciples, "YOU give them something to eat!" John 6:6 tells us He said this to prove them because He already knew what He was going to do.

The disciples' answer was so practical: "All we can find is two fishes and five loaves; do you want us to go buy two hundred pennyworth of bread?" Possibly, they used that amount because that was all the cash they had with them. I am sure that did not seem like the best solution to them. They would have had to walk into town, buy as much bread as they could find, and then find a way to haul it up the mountain. A loaf of our bread may have twenty slices that would equal two hundred and fifty loaves they would have to buy and that would not feed the women and children!

Jesus said to them what He says to us today, "Bring what you have to Me." He does not ask for more or less, just what you have. If you have a little faith, He says, "Bring it to Me." If you have great riches, He says, "Bring it to Me." With Jesus' blessing, it will multiply. Anything you give to God will come back to you abundantly. That does not mean that if you put one dollar in the offering plate, you will receive a hundred dollars in the mail the next day. It means "God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Next, Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit in groups of fifty. Jesus believes in order, not chaos; He takes care of details. Have you ever looked at a

large crowd of people and wondered how many were there? Because of the groups, the disciples were able to accurately record the number of men that were fed, giving us the magnitude of this miracle.

Jesus looked up to Heaven and gave thanks. The commentator Adam Clark wrote that the father of a Jewish family would take the bread at mealtime and not bless the bread but bless the God who gave it! It is still a good idea to thank God for the food that is provided for us and give Him the glory and praise He deserves. We take our food for granted because we can obtain it so easily, but how would we feel if there was a disaster and food was scarce? Maybe we would be more thankful for what God provides. After Jesus blessed the food, He broke it into pieces. He then gave it to His disciples to give to the people. This is how He works yet today. He gives spiritual food and direction to His ministers, and they in turn give it to the people. The commentator Barnes noted that He who could take so little and make so much certainly had the power of Creation. When you cannot see a way out of your circumstance, bring it to Jesus, follow His direction, and He will take care of it. He can make a way when there is no way.

All four Gospel writers confirmed the multitude ate and were all full. Jesus does not do things halfway, but He fills the need completely. John 6:12 says, "When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." Adam Clark's commentary says after a meal the leftovers were for those who served. Barnes' commentary says Jewish travelers carried baskets with their provisions because, when in foreign lands, there was little or no hospitality for Jews. That is probably why they had twelve baskets. There were twelve Apostles, and there was enough left over to fill the needs of those Apostles who served. If you want God to bless you, serve others. When we focus on our own needs, things look hopeless, but when we begin to help others with their needs, our needs seem much smaller. You cannot outgive God. When you give Him what you have, He gives you what you need. When you give Him praise, He turns it into blessings!

John gives us a little more information. Verses 14-15 tell us this miracle convinced many that Jesus was "that prophet that should come into the world," the Messiah, the Savior of mankind. They were seeing only the natural, human side of things and totally missed the spiritual gift of salvation from sin for the soul, the eternal instead of the mortal. We also can get caught in this kind of thinking. We pray, "Lord, get me out of this situation, prosper me materially," when His real desire is to bless and save our souls and give us everlasting life, not just bread for today. Jesus had no desire to be a literal, earthly king because He already ruled and reigned over the whole universe. How petty it would seem

to Him to be king of just a few people here on earth! When God blesses you financially or materially, remember He has deeper blessings waiting.

**ADDITIONAL READING:**

**Philippians 4:19; 3 John 1:2; Matthew 15:32-38; Deuteronomy 6:10**

## DAY 16

### You Got Tax Money Where?

*2 Corinthians 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

**READ:** Matthew 17:24-27



First, we need to know a little about what was being asked. Matthew 17:24 says, "And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?" This was not a Roman tax or a Jewish tax; it was a voluntary donation to pay for the Temple expenses, such as the wood, flour, salt, and incense for some of the offerings. It also paid for the sacrificial animals that were offered daily. Matthew Henry's commentary says it was called a ransom for the soul. God gave the commandment in Exodus 30:11-16 for this offering to be taken, a half shekel per person age twenty and older.

Matthew 17:25 says Jesus "prevented" Peter; that means He "got ahead of him," or He did not wait for Peter to bring up the subject, He began to address the problem before Peter told Him there was a problem! We forget sometimes that Jesus knows the end from the beginning. Peter may have been trying to figure out a way to get that tribute paid for himself and Jesus, and he would have missed a blessing. Jesus already knows our needs, and He wants to fill them, but we get in His way. I wonder how many miracles we have missed because we did not give Jesus the opportunity to work.

The question Jesus asked was, "Who pays a custom, the king's children or strangers?" Peter knew the answer without hesitation, "strangers." If the king or his children paid taxes, it would come right back to them, they would be the ones to profit from it. When he spoke of strangers, he did not mean someone who is not a Jew but someone who is not of the king's household. Therefore, we can understand the king's children are not required to pay customs. Barnes' commentary brought up the point that since the tribute was for the service of the temple of God and Jesus is the Son of God, He would be exempt.

There are many reasons Jesus should not have been required to pay this tribute. In reality, He was the offering; He was the sacrificial lamb; He was the King of the Jews; He was the ruler of the temple; He was and still is the Son of

God! It was called a "ransom for the soul." Is not the sacrifice Jesus made on the Cross the ransom for our souls? Yet, He said, "Lest we should offend . . ."

The people of Jesus' day did not recognize Him as the Son of God. The rulers of the temple refused to acknowledge Him as the Messiah. If He had tried to explain who He was to them, it would have stirred up a big fuss. Instead, He chose to pay the tribute. We need to take a lesson too. We need to do our best to get along with others who do not believe as we do and be careful not to offend intentionally. The Gospel sometimes is offensive, but we should not be offensive. If Jesus had brought a lot of negative attention to the situation, He might have lost the confidence of people and not been able to influence them. We need to protect our influence in the community. We may have to suffer some wrongdoing to win a soul to Christ.

Jesus did not heal people for profit, as some do today; He healed because He had compassion for people who could not help themselves. Probably, some gave offerings of money, food, lodging, or other commodities, but for the most part, Jesus had little of this world's wealth. If we say Jesus knew there was a fish that had swallowed a coin, it would prove His omniscience (His all-knowing power). If we say Jesus created the coin in the fish's mouth, it proves His divine, creative power. Either way, it was a miracle! Jesus did not tell Peter to get the boat out and cast a net to find one fish with a coin and then sell the rest. He said, "Cast a hook," and the very first fish is going to pay the tribute. When He supplies a need, He does not make you a millionaire when all you need is rent money! The coin in the fish's mouth was the exact amount needed to pay for Peter and Jesus, no more, no less. Jesus could have sent Peter anywhere to find that coin, but He sent Him where he had experience—fishing! Jesus will take what we have and use it to His glory. If we have great talent, Jesus can use it if we submit it to Him. If all you have is one ability, give it to God, and He will multiply it.

Miracles come in many shapes and sizes, and many times they come from places we never imagined. Isaiah 55:8-9 says: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Allow God to work His miracles in and through your life.

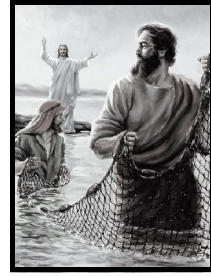
#### ADDITIONAL READING:

**Exodus 30:11-16; 1 Corinthians 9:20-23**

## DAY 17

### At Thy Word

*Luke 5:5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.*



**READ:** Luke 5:1-11

As I read this Scripture, I thought how wonderful it would be if people today were so interested in hearing the words of Jesus that they pressed the preacher to find a greater venue! The Word of God is still as quick (or alive and powerful) as it was back then. If we are going to see miracles yet today, we, like Jesus, are going to have to preach the Word. Romans 10:14 says, "How shall they hear without a preacher?" It is obedience to the Word that sets the captive free, heals the sick, and saves the lost. Listen to it, study it, but most of all, obey it.

It did not just happen that Peter's boat was tied right where Jesus needed it. It did not just happen that Peter was close by, washing his fishing nets. God has a plan that covers every detail. Jesus taught the people from Peter's ship. When the lesson was finished, Jesus said to Peter, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." A "draught" is a catch of fish or a "haul," which is a lot of fish. Jesus did not use the ship and take Peter's time without repaying him for the service. You can never give more to God than what He will repay you. You give Him your money, and He will "supply all your need according to his riches in glory" (Philippians 4:19). You give Him your life, and He will give you eternal life!

Peter, being an outspoken person, told it like it was: "We worked all night and caught nothing. We are fishermen, we know where to go to catch fish, and we know all the tricks of the trade. It has been a very frustrating night, no fish, no food, and no money. Those are the facts—nevertheless—although the sun is up, although we have tried everything we know, although the fish were not to be found a little while ago, at Thy word—because You said to do it—I will throw the net in the water."

Jesus wants us to trust Him, believe His word, and obey His commands. When God asked Moses to step into the water of the Red Sea, it did not make sense. When God told Moses to lift up the brass serpent so people would be healed of the snake bites, it did not seem logical. God's wisdom is so far above

our natural, human wisdom that there is no comparison. When God tells us to do something, there is a reason. He does not make silly demands. Jesus is the master and creator of all things; He knew exactly what was going to happen when the net went down. Peter just threw it overboard at Christ's command and caught more fish than his boat could hold.

Verse 8 says, "When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Peter was not saying, "Get away from me, I do not want anything to do with You," but he felt the power of Almighty God and felt his own sinfulness. When we come into the presence of God, we too feel our sin very keenly. That is called *conviction*. When we see our sins as God sees them, we realize our hopeless condition and our need of a Savior. Peter acknowledged his sinful life as we also must do at Jesus' feet.

Jesus' answer was, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." This was Peter's call to be an Apostle of Christ. In the Old Testament, a man could not see God and live. Peter knew he was in the presence of God and feared for his life. I doubt if Peter understood what it meant to "catch men," but he did know Jesus had just performed a miracle he could not deny. He felt the power of God, and he wanted more of it! Just as Peter let the net down at Jesus' word and caught fish, we can let the Gospel net down to everyone we meet. Things like, the love of God, the power of God, miracles, peace, joy, and goodness will lure souls into the Kingdom of God.

Verse 11 says, "They forsook all, and followed him." We too must forsake the world and a sinful life and follow Christ wherever He leads us. Forsaking all is not so hard when you see and feel the power of God. Giving up a dime is easy when you are offered ten dollars in trade. Peter's life as a "fisher of men" was probably more difficult than when he fished all night and caught nothing, but I am sure He would tell us that it was worth all the trials to be with Jesus.

#### ADDITIONAL READING:

**Matthew 4:18-20; John 20:30-31; Matthew 16:16-17; Romans 10:14**



## DAY 18

### The Withered Hand and the Withered Soul

*Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

**READ:** Matthew 12:8-15; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:5-11



Our lesson starts out wrong. The scribes and Pharisees were not at all concerned about the man who had the withered hand. They asked Jesus a question so they could accuse him before the people. They wanted to accuse Him of not keeping their interpretation of the law. They had no compassion for their fellow-man, just hate for Jesus who was making their hypocrisy and hunger for political power obvious to everyone. Their question was, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days?" (Matthew 12:10).

There were many laws concerning the Sabbath, some given by God, many enacted by the scribes. Gotquestions.org describes the scribes as "learned men whose business was to study the Law, transcribe it, and write commentaries on it." The scribes' transcripts of the Old Testament books of the Bible are being found yet in our day, and the accuracy of what has been passed down to us is amazing! For their diligence, we are thankful. Studying the law was good, and transcribing it was very good, but they got in trouble when they used their human thinking to interpret what God meant and how it was to be applied. The worst was when they thought God's Word needed to be improved upon. There are some people today who like to interpret God's Word by their standards and human thinking. This will get anyone in trouble because God specifically said in Deuteronomy 4:2, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

In Exodus, Chapter 20, we find what is called the "Ten Commandments." Verses 8 and 10 tell us to, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy . . . in it thou shalt not do any work." *Sabbath* in the Hebrew means "intermission." Sometimes, it is referred to as "a Sabbath of rest." God rested on the seventh day of Creation (Genesis 2:2-3). Exodus, Chapter 16, tells about God sending manna to feed Israel in the wilderness. If they gathered too much in a day, the next day it would be spoiled and stink. However, on the day before Sabbath, they were to gather twice as much, and it did not spoil. That was so they could take a break

from gathering for one day a week. When Israel chose to have kings rule over them, some kept the Sabbath days and some did not, which opened the door for the scribes and Pharisees to interpret the original commandments to suit the time they were living in. They were prone to stick to the letter of the law and ignore the spirit of it, or the reason for the law.

Luke 6:6 tells us Jesus went into the synagogue on the Sabbath to teach, and there was a man with a withered hand. It had not grown to a normal size, probably because of disease. It was shriveled, shrunken, dry, and decaying. The scribes and Pharisees knew when Jesus saw a sick person, He had compassion on them and generally healed them. Since it was the Sabbath, and no one was supposed to work then, they could call healing "work" and accuse Him of not resting on the Sabbath, which was unlawful according to their rules. Thus, that would make Jesus look like a bad person. Jesus knew exactly what they were thinking. He asked them: "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days or to do evil? To save life or to kill?" They had already decided if He healed the man, they were going to accuse Him of breaking the Jewish law, but they held their peace.

Matthew gives a little more insight. Jesus may have prefaced His question with thought-provoking questions, such as, "If you had one sheep and it fell into a pit on the Sabbath day, would you lift it out?" A sheep in trouble might die or become prey and be lost to his owner. It would need immediate attention. How much more important is a man than a sheep? Why did they not answer Jesus? Because they knew He was right, and it drove them crazy! Luke 6:11 says, "They were filled with madness." They did not even take notice the man's hand had been restored with just a word from Jesus and obedience from the man. In Luke 6:8, Jesus told the man, "Rise up, and stand forth." The man could have said, "I'm too backward, I don't want to be seen, I don't want to get in the middle of this argument" or many other excuses, but he did not. He was obedient to all the Master asked of him. Without obedience, he would not have been healed. We also have to obey completely to receive the blessings God has for us.

Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Christ is our rest, our Sabbath, or our relief from a sinful life. He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Law. We do not have to wait a whole week to find rest. He gives us peace and rest in our souls every day of the week, all year long.

The man in our lesson had a withered *hand*, but the scribes and Pharisees had withered *souls*. They had allowed their ambitions and hatred of Christ to dry up their compassion for their fellow man. Their desire to please God had shriveled into a misshapen idea of what they felt was right. Their shrunken love for God's

creation caused them to place heavy burdens on others while they did not even obey their own rules (Matthew 23:4-5). We need to be careful not to follow their example by allowing our human reasoning to interpret God's laws without the Spirit's guidance and wither in our souls.

**ADDITIONAL READING:**

**Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:27-28; Luke 14:1-5;  
Revelation 22:18; Exodus 20:8-11**

## DAY 19

### Blind Bartimaeus

*Luke 18:38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.*



**READ:** Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43

I am always amazed at how easily Jesus fills the needs of mankind! Just like in Creation, the word was spoken, and it came to pass. In this account, we see desire and faith move the hand of God.

Let us look at the discrepancies first. Matthew and Mark say they were leaving Jericho. Luke says they were coming near Jericho. Luke's expression generally means in the vicinity of Jericho. According to Barnes' commentary, they were not coming to or going from. Mark and Luke only mention Bartimaeus; Matthew mentions two blind men but does not give any names. Barnes' commentary notes there probably were two, but one was notable because of a wealthy father; thus, he was better known and mentioned by name. There are other small differences, but the outcome is definitely the same, Jesus gave them sight, and they followed Him.

The blind men heard Jesus was coming. They must have heard about His miracles from people who passed by on the highway where the blind sat to beg. God will make a way for every person to hear the Gospel, and Jesus will pass your way, maybe only once in a lifetime. What will you do? These blind men felt an urgency to get to Him. They could not travel to where He was, but He was coming to them on this day.

Their cry for help was desperate and persistent. They were told to be quiet, calm down, do not bother this important Man with their trivial problems. Perhaps, they were told, "You are just a beggar; leave Jesus alone!" This did not stop them, they cried more and louder. This was their only chance, and they could not let anyone take this opportunity from them! They cried out for mercy to "the Son of David," the Messiah, the Savior of Israel. This reminds me of when Jesus passed by my way. I felt the urgent need to find mercy for my sin-sick soul. The devil made sure there were things to hinder me from getting to Jesus, but when I realized there was no one else who could take the sin and guilt from my soul, I cried out for mercy to the Son of God, my Savior. He heard me, called me to Himself, and forgave my sin. He gave me spiritual eyesight so I could see life

through His eyes.

Our Scriptures say Jesus stopped. There were a great number of people with Him; yet, He heard the cry of these poor blind beggars. Mark says when they told Bartimaeus Jesus called for him, he "cast away his garment," or tossed his outer coat as if he would run in haste to Him. Jesus asked, "What do you want Me to do to you?" Bartimaeus was very focused, saying, "I want to be able to see." Without any hesitation, Jesus granted Bartimaeus' greatest desire, saying, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." All three writers say the healing was immediate.

Salvation from sin is immediate as well. We do not have to wait and struggle, try this and try that. Jesus already paid the price on Calvary. When a sinner cries out for mercy, it is an immediate change. It is not just a momentary change, but it is forever! These men did not become blind again after a day or two. When Jesus forgives our sins, they are gone forever! You can choose to sin again, but that would be as foolish as if the blind men decided they wanted to be blind again so they could sit, beg, and be at the mercy of those who passed by. Jesus gave them complete healing. Jesus not only forgives our sins but gives us the grace, or strength, to live a sinless life. When we convince Christ we are sorry for sinning against Him, we are sick of the way we are living, and we desire the change that only He can bring, His mercy floods our souls. His blood cleanses us from all sin. His love creates in us a new heart, and we become a new creature—one who follows Him wherever He leads us. From blind to seeing, from darkness to light, from dead in sin to alive in Christ—what a change!

Jesus said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." It was not just saying with their mouth, "I believe Jesus is the Son of God, our Messiah," but they put their faith, or belief, into action. Had their faith wavered, they would have been quieted by the masses of people, but they believed their salvation was in this Jesus who was about to pass by. They could not be quieted. Their whole heart, soul, mind, and strength stretched to their limits. Their desire was intense. They wanted what Jesus offered at any cost. When we come to Jesus for salvation, we too must desire what He offers more than anything else in the world. Our faith in Christ will make us whole, complete, forgiven, and ready to live a Christian life.

Just as the blind men followed Jesus after their healing, we will follow Him after salvation. Where He goes, we will go. We will follow His direction in our lives. The things we once could not see, by faith we can now see clearly. Praise God for the change Jesus brings to our life.

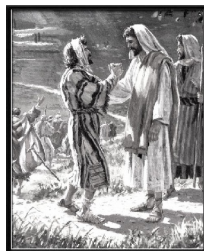
**ADDITIONAL READING:**

**Psalm 18:6; Psalm 40:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 8:12**

## DAY 20

### Where Are the Nine?

*Luke 17:19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.*



**READ:** Luke 17:11-19

In lesson nine, we described leprosy as raw flesh, an open wound, and a disfigured body. Matthew Henry's commentary mentioned the Jews felt it was a punishment from God because of a particular sin. Because the dreaded disease was considered very contagious, anyone who was thought to be infected was isolated and had to cry "unclean," whenever other people were around. Since lepers were not allowed to shelter in a city or have contact with healthy people, they banded together for protection and companionship. Thus, ten lepers met Jesus.

As in many other lessons, these people cried out for mercy, pity, and compassion to the one they called "Master." They knew whom they were addressing. The Scripture says they called Him by name, "Jesus, Master." In this case, Jesus did not approach them, touch them, or immediately heal them as at other times, nor did He tell them they were or would be healed. Jesus just gave the command, "Go shew yourselves unto the priests." The only time a leper could go to the priest after he was diagnosed with leprosy was to show that the leprosy was gone. This took some faith on their part because when they left Jesus, they still had the symptoms of the disease. It was not until they were on their way that they noticed the healing. If we are to gain mercy and compassion from the Lord, we too must obey, completely, whether we understand or not, just simply obey.

Luke 17:15 says, "And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back [to Jesus], and with a loud voice glorified God." Verse 13 says the ten had "lifted up their voices" to ask for mercy; now this one cries "with a loud voice," giving thanks. Our praise should be as fervent as our request. He fell on his face at Christ's feet, humbly acknowledging the power and authority that had changed his life. The last part of verse 16 says, "And he was a Samaritan." Let us look at that statement.

The Jews and the Samaritans hated each other. Long before Jesus was born, the kingdom of Israel was divided. The northern kingdom was Israel, and the southern kingdom was Judah. The capital of Israel became Samaria. Israel built their own temples and made their own priests so the people would not go to

worship in Jerusalem, the capital of Judah. In the course of time, Israel was conquered by Assyria, and those who were not taken captive lived with the Gentile colonists who were brought in to "resettle" the area. The colonists brought pagan idols with them, and the Jews began to worship the idols alongside the true God. They also began to intermarry with the Gentiles, which was forbidden by Jewish law.

Many years later, Judah was also captured (by Babylon), and the people were taken captive. After 70 years, 43,000 (called the remnant) were permitted to return and rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra, Chapters 1-2). The Samaritans opposed the Jews' rebuilding of Jerusalem because of the Israel/Judah split. The Judean Jews did not like the Samaritans' mixed marriages and idolatry and considered them "backslidden, lower class," not worthy to be called Jews. So, they had no dealings with each other if they could help it.

Christ did not hesitate to heal, regardless of race. God loves the Jews, Gentiles, Samaritans, Americans, Germans, Syrians, Russians, Chinese—all nations. Acts 10:34 says, "God is no respecter of persons." The disciples did not understand that until after Christ had died and rose from the grave. Then, the Holy Spirit gave them understanding. Christ gave all healing because He had compassion on them and they obeyed His command. He told the Samaritan, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." *Strong's Concordance* defines the word *whole* in this verse as "to save, deliver, protect, heal, and preserve." I believe this Samaritan received a greater blessing than the others because he took the time to give glory to God.

Where are the nine? They were rushing on to their restored life, glad to be healed, but neglecting the deeper meanings of life and healing, living on the surface, and taking things for granted. We must take time to give the glory God deserves, dig deeper into His love and mercy, and find the faith that makes us whole.

#### ADDITIONAL READING:

**Exodus 15:26; 2 Samuel 2:8-10; Act 10:34;  
2 Kings 17:24-33; John 4:20-24; 1 Samuel 15:22**

## DAY 21

### According to Your Faith

*Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

**READ:** Matthew 9:27-35; Mark 8:22-26



Here are more accounts of Jesus' healing power. Jesus treated every case individually. In Matthew, Jesus was in Capernaum and had just been laughed at because He said the ruler's daughter was not dead but sleeping. When the blind men followed Him, it seemed He was ignoring them, but Jesus hears every cry for mercy, and when the time is right, He will address the problem.

When Jesus went into the house, the blind men followed Him, and in the privacy of the home, He asked the men, "Do you believe I have the power to heal your eyes?" Matthew Henry's commentary points out that they had faith in His office by calling Him the Son of David; they had faith in His mercy by requesting it; but Jesus wanted to know if they had faith in His power to perform this healing. There was a lot of unbelief in Capernaum. Jesus had done many miracles there; yet still, they did not believe He was the Son of God. We have to be completely convinced Jesus can fulfill our request and rest in His wisdom as to how and when He will move on our behalf. No one likes to wait, but when the answer to our prayer comes, in His time, we appreciate it even more than if it were instantaneous.

When the blind men answered Jesus' question with "Yes, we believe You can have mercy on us," Jesus opened His storehouse of blessings and said, "According to your faith be it unto you." If you can believe it, He can perform it! Their eyes were opened; so we know they meant what they said, and His power was sufficient.

As the two, once-blind men left, a man who could not talk was brought in. This miracle is only two verses long, but a man's whole life was changed. This man was possessed by a devil. When the devil was cast out, so was the infirmity. When the multitude began to be affected by these miracles, false religion cast doubt in people's minds. Matthew 9:35 shows how Christ handled persecution and opposition. He just kept doing what was right. It says, "Jesus went about all the cities . . . healing every sickness and every disease among the people." We must not allow hardships to stop our witness and keep us from working as God



wants us to.

Moving on to Mark 8:22, we read where Christ was in Bethsaida. Like Capernaum, it was mentioned in Matthew 11:20-21 as an unbelieving city. Mark 8:22 says "they" brought a blind man and asked Jesus to touch him. We do not know who "they" were, but this man was different from Bartimaeus who could not be silenced. The fact that he was "brought" to Jesus makes me feel his faith was weak; he was not sure of Jesus' power or mercy. In verse 23, Jesus led him by the hand, out of the unbelieving town, away from all the influences that would make him question Christ's compassion. Maybe as they walked, they talked about the things that troubled this man's faith and confidence.

The devil loves to send negative people around that hinder our faith, but when we talk to Jesus, He calms those fears and encourages our hearts to trust His love for us. I believe Jesus was strengthening this blind man's faith. Jesus spit on his eyes and laid hands on him. He could have just spoken a word, and complete healing would have been given, but He did more than heal his eyes. Jesus healed his unbelief and strengthened his faith. Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" Can you imagine the blind man's excitement when he saw men as trees? We see it as incomplete healing; he saw it as hope, possibility, more than he had been seeing! The second time Jesus laid His hands on his eyes, faith and confidence grabbed hold of mercy and power. Jesus made him "look up." We need to stop looking around at the unbelieving world, at discouraging situations, and "look up" to God who has the power to change lives, heal bodies, and restore hope and confidence. When Jesus sent him on his way, He admonished him to not go back into the unbelieving town or tell the citizens, possibly because they would not believe him and that would have hindered his faith.

As your faith is, you too can feel the power and compassion of Christ in your life. Use what faith you have, and He will encourage it to grow and become stronger. Then, you can see the vast extent of His storehouse of blessings and unlimited power in your life.

#### **ADDITIONAL READING:**

**Matthew 11:20-24; Psalm 146:8**

## DAY 22

### Overboard Faith

*Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*



**READ:** Matthew 14:25-33, Mark 6:45-51, John 6:14-21

John mentions the people wanted to make Jesus king. Jesus knew it was not God's plan for Him to be an earthly king; so, He sent the disciples away by ship and dismissed the crowd. Then, He went to a mountain alone to pray. From the height of the mountain, Jesus could see the difficulties His disciples were having. From Heaven, He sees the problems you and I have, and He will come to us, as He did with the disciples. How sweet to know He is watching out for us.

Adam Clark's commentary says the sea, which is called the Sea of Galilee, Genesaret, and Tiberias, is approximately six miles broad and sixteen miles long. The disciples may have been about four miles from shore, and the wind was blowing strong against them. Matthew and Mark said it was the fourth watch, John just said it was dark. The Romans introduced dividing the day and night into twelve-hour segments, and a watch was three hours. The first watch started at six p.m. Thus, the fourth watch was from three a.m. until six a.m.

The disciples were no doubt tired; they were rowing hard trying to make land. It was dark and windy, and something was gliding on top of the water. They were scared! They thought it must be a spirit or ghost. Mark says in verse 48 that Jesus would have passed by them, but they cried out. I wonder how many times, when we are tired, afraid, and troubled, Jesus was so close. Yet, we did not cry out to Him, and He passed by, uninvited into our boat. When you are toiling hard against the winds of adversity, cry out to Jesus. Do not let Him pass by. When the disciples cried out in fear, Jesus put their minds at ease, "It is I; be not afraid."

Matthew is the only writer to tell us about Peter. Our dear Brother Peter, always questioning, always challenging, always the first to speak! We need to remember that the disciples did not have LED lanterns; so they could not clearly see. The wind was strong; so they could not clearly hear Christ's voice. Peter either wanted reassurance that it was Christ or wanted to be close to Him in this time of difficulty. Either way, when Peter requested an invitation to come to Him, Jesus said simply, "Come." When we desire to be closer to our Savior and feel His reassuring presence, He will always say, "Come."

Peter slipped over the side of the boat, and the Scripture does not tell us how far he walked on top of the water before a blast of wind hit him square in the face. He saw the waves crashing around him, reality kicked in, fear took over, and he began to sink. Fear is certainly an enemy that can steal our miracle. Peter overcame fear with a desperate cry, "Lord, save me!" Immediately, Jesus stretched out His hand of love, mercy, and compassion, caught him, and took him safely to the boat. And the wind ceased. Peter had little faith, but it was enough. The commentator Matthew Henry had an interesting thought, stating, "Through the strength of Christ we are borne up above the world, enabled to trample upon it, kept from sinking into it, from being overwhelmed by it, obtain a victory over it, by faith in Christ's victory, and with him are crucified to it."

We might be tempted to criticize Peter for his lack of faith in the very presence of Jesus, but he was the only one who had enough faith to get out of the boat! He had little faith, but he acted on it. He used what he had, and Jesus supplied what he lacked. Jesus asked, "Why did you doubt?" The disciples had just witnessed a little bit of food being multiplied and feeding thousands. But Peter had never walked on water. He had confidence Jesus could save him from drowning because he cried out to him, but his humanity could not see how. We struggle, strain, and sink in despair, trying to work out all the details of our problems while Christ stands by waiting for us to cry out for help.

Christ is always working to increase our faith and trust in Him. In these lessons, we have seen Him heal instantly, heal with a word or a touch, require some action to obtain healing, and question the sick ones. He is always working to show His love, compassion, and power so others will believe. It is good for us to keep a record, whether mentally or written, of the miracles He has performed in our lives. When the devil brings doubts and accusations to our minds during a trial, we can look back or look around at others who have been touched by God's hand and be encouraged. We can ask ourselves, "Why should I doubt the power and love of God?"

In Matthew 14:34-36, we see there were many more miracles performed that were not recorded in God's Word. Verse 36 says, "As many as touched were made perfectly whole." May our desire to touch Jesus with our need be so strong, we will be willing to step out of the safety of our boat and walk on the sea of faith.

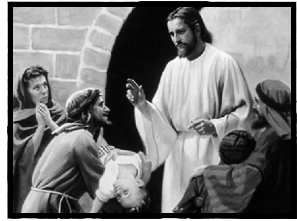
#### **ADDITIONAL READING:**

**Matthew 6:30; Mark 11:23; Psalm 18:2-3**

## DAY 23

### Some Things Come Only by Fasting

*Mark 9:23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.*



**READ:** Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:38-42

What a sad situation. A man's only son is "sore vexed," falls into fire and water, acts crazy, cannot speak, foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth. A spirit tears him, makes him cry out, and will not leave him alone. This father sounds desperate to me.

Luke tells us Jesus, Peter, James, and John went to a mountain to pray, and the Apostles witnessed Moses and Elias (or Elijah) talking to Jesus. When they returned, they found the scribes questioning some of Jesus' disciples. When Jesus asked what they were talking about, a man stepped forward and begged Jesus to help his child. He had come to the disciples, but they could not cast out this devilish spirit. This father, at his wit's end, begged Jesus in Mark 9:22, "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." He had come to the disciples with hope, but that hope was shaken and dwindling. Jesus' response is a favorite Scripture we rely on yet today, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." We, like this poor father, cry out, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Barnes' commentary noted that this father's faith would not increase Jesus' power to heal but would make it right for Jesus to exert the power toward his need.

In many of these lessons, we have learned Jesus will not work overtop of unbelief, but His compassion is strong; He desires to help the helpless. Jesus rebukes the unbelief in the generation, possibly scolding the scribes who had been questioning the disciples. He called them "faithless" and "perverse." The Greek word for *faithless* means "actively disbelieving," and *perverse* is described by Barnes' commentary as "twisted and having opinions turned or perverted from the truth." Jesus took issue with the child's father because of his unbelief. This man showed us the right way to deal with unbelief; he humbly acknowledged it and asked for Christ's help to gain the victory over his shortcomings. Finally, in Matthew 17:20, He told the disciples their failure was in their faith. The Greek word here for *unbelief* means "a lack of faith or belief." It is just a little different from verse 17 ("faithless"), which means "resisting a belief." Jesus explained to

them, it is not how great your faith is, but it is the fact that you have faith. Faith as tiny as a mustard seed is still faith and can grow, like the mustard seed, into a great flourishing bush or tree. The end of that verse is quite a promise. It says, "And nothing shall be impossible unto you." In all three accounts, Jesus rebuked the foul, unclean devil. The devil has no might against the Word of God. He must leave, and he did. The child was healed.

Matthew and Mark mention prayer and fasting as a means to cast out a foul spirit like the one that possessed this child. It is very natural for a Christian to pray about everything because that is the source of our power, but fasting many times is overlooked. Fasting very simply is abstinence. Dieting is not what this Scripture is talking about. Psalm 35:13 talks about humbling the soul. In Esther 4:3, fasting is accompanied by great mourning. When your need is so great and you realize your only hope is divine intervention, you will gladly deprive yourself of physical needs and apply your soul to prayer—earnest, agonizing prayer. Prayer and fasting work together. When the soul is burdened down in sorrow, the body will easily give up food. When the flesh is forced to withdraw from the natural habits, the soul will be humbled and cry out to God. Faith and power are renewed through prayer and fasting, and many great miracles have been witnessed. Luke 9:43 says, "And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God."

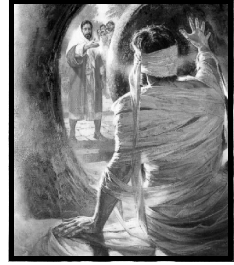
Second Chronicles 7:14 says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Fasting will humble us and turn our hearts and minds toward God. It will remind us to pray and seek God's face, or seek for His will, His way, and His power. Fasting will put us in a place to hear from God, to understand our shortcomings, to be corrected by Him, and to be moved to do His will. Fasting and prayer combined will give us the very power of God, and we can witness miracles even today. We too will be amazed at the mighty power of God.

#### **ADDITIONAL READING:**

**Hebrews 12:2; Daniel 6:18; Psalm 35:13; Esther 4:3**

**This Sickness Is for the Glory of God**

*John 11:4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*



**READ:** John 11:1-47

There was a certain man named Lazarus of Bethany who was sick. He had two sisters, Mary and Martha, and he was a friend of Jesus. They knew well about the miracles Jesus had performed because He had spent time in their home. So, it was natural for them to send word to Jesus of Lazarus' need for healing. When Jesus got the message, He said a very strange thing, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." When we glorify God, we give Him praise, worship, and honor. We magnify or show the greatness of His works. Jesus must have trusted this family to allow them to go through this severe trial. He knew what a wonderful end it would have, but they did not; they simply trusted Him.

When Jesus told the disciples He needed to go to Bethany (close to Jerusalem), they were hesitant. In John 10:31-33, the Apostle related the instance where people tried to stone Christ. The Pharisees were constantly trying to catch Him in something so they could have an excuse to imprison or kill Him, but it was not yet time. The disciples were aware of the dangers to themselves as well as to Christ and did not see how any good could come from another encounter with the religious leaders of Jerusalem. Matthew Henry pointed out that Jesus did not say, "You go comfort Martha and Mary, and I will hide here," but He said, "Let US go." Jesus will lead us and go with us even into the dark places in life.

When Jesus told the disciples of Lazarus' death, they felt the sorrow that comes at such times. If Jesus had been with Lazarus before, the disciples would not have understood why Jesus did not instantly heal him. Jesus kept them away so that they might witness His resurrecting power. How many times we misunderstand Jesus' words to us and His motives. He told the disciples that Lazarus "sleepeth" and He needed to go wake him up. They thought that was a good thing. Jesus had to bluntly say, "He is dead!" We think a problem is awful when God sees it as an opportunity to show His power and glory. We view a situation as okay when God sees it will hinder many souls. Often, we worry about things, but

Jesus is already working a miracle for the glory of God.

When Jesus and the disciples were close to Bethany, they learned that Lazarus had been in the grave for four days. The custom in that region and at that time seems to have been to bury on the same day of the death or at least very soon after. This did not take Jesus by surprise, but it looked like a hopeless situation to everyone else. Jesus is not just the power of the resurrection; He IS the resurrection and the life (John 11:25). In this Scripture, He is the physical resurrection. In Ephesians 2:5-6, He is the spiritual resurrection raising us from sin, which makes us dead to Christ and resurrects us to a new, sinless life in Him.

When Martha heard Jesus was coming, she ran to meet Him and expressed her faith, saying: "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee... I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." Jesus stretched her faith, saying: "Thy brother shall rise again... I am resurrection and I am life. Do you believe?" Belief in Jesus brings hope. Hope stirs you to action. Martha went to get Mary, who was sitting in the house mourning.

Martha whispered to Mary secretly about Jesus coming, no doubt so the visiting Jews would not hear. Mary was stirred to action. She got up and went to where Jesus was waiting, with her Jewish friends following her. She said the same thing Martha had said, "If you had been here my brother would not have died." She expressed her reverence for Christ by falling down at His feet, even in her sorrow. Christ did not try to explain the resurrection to her in the presence of unbelieving people, but no doubt He was grieved in His heart by their unbelief.

They all went with Jesus to the grave, but when He told them to take away the stone, Martha pointed out that Lazarus had been dead for four days. Decomposition had no doubt started! Jesus reminded her of His words, "If you believe, you should see the glory of God." Martha's faith caused the stone to be moved, Jesus spoke to His Father so the people would see the glory of God. Then He called Lazarus by his name, and Lazarus came, hopping out of that grave, all tied up in grave dressings. Jesus said, "Loose him, and let him go." We also were dead in trespasses and sin, tied up in the dead things of this old world, but Jesus called us by name and said, "Let them go!" We were changed from death to life, from grave clothes to a robe of righteousness, from sinners to saints of God. Oh, the glory of Christ's resurrecting power!

#### ADDITIONAL READING:

**John 12:1-10, 17; John 9:3-5; John 10:31-33; Ephesians 2:1**

## DAY 25

### I Say Unto Thee, Arise!

*Psalm 40:11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.*



**READ:** Luke 7:11-17

After Jesus healed the centurion's servant in Capernaum, He traveled to a town called Nain. As He approached the city gate, a funeral procession was coming out. A widow was on her way to bury her only son. Since her husband was deceased, she would have been dependent on the mercy of her nearest relative. This was another sad and hopeless situation. The Scripture says, "Much people of the city was with her." They were doing all they could to ease her pain, but they could not change her circumstances.

As Jesus stood politely with His disciples and the crowd who traveled with Him, the group of people attending the funeral began to pass. Jesus saw the poor mother sobbing out her sorrow at her loss. She did not run to Him as Martha did, possibly she did not even see or recognize Him, but His compassion would not let Him stand idly by. What love we see in this account, what consolation and comfort. We can feel that same comfort today when we go through the loss of a loved one or are in an overwhelming situation. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit, called the Comforter, and He brings a peace that passes all of our human understanding.

My imagination can see Jesus ever so gently speak to her, "Weep not," or in our words, "Please, don't cry; I can help you." Jesus walked right up to the casket, or bier, and touched it. I am sure the Jews who were with Him were appalled. In Leviticus, the Law plainly says touching anything dead makes a person unclean, and specific ceremonies had to be performed to make the person clean again. Jesus did not worry about such things because He is the giver of life. He is the sacrifice that makes men clean. The procession came to a stop, and Jesus spoke to the dead man, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." Now, I could talk to a dead person all day and tell them exactly what to do without any success, but Jesus IS the resurrection and the life; when He speaks things happen! He had to specifically say, "Young man," or every grave in Nain would have opened. As soon as the young man sat up, he began to speak. The Bible does not tell us what he said, but can you imagine him trying to explain what a beautiful place he had seen and



the glory he had experienced? Jesus brought him to his mother, who was no doubt too amazed to say much more than thank you.

There were many witnesses to this miracle, and they could not deny the power of God. They recognized the fact that Christ was a great prophet and that God had visited them. That was one story that was told and retold to everyone who would listen.

Let us think for a few minutes about the hopelessness of our sinful life. We were dead in trespasses and sin (Colossians 2:13). Death is separation, and when we sin, we are separated from Christ for He will not dwell where sin is. We could not help ourselves, nor could any of our friends or loved ones help us. We were doomed to eternal destruction, and then Jesus came! He wrapped His arms of love and mercy around us, forgave us of our past sins, and raised us up to new life, a pure and holy life. We started praising God for deliverance, talking of His great love, forgiveness, resurrecting power, and the change He brought in our lives. Christ leads us to our mother, the church, where we will be loved and nurtured, fed the pure Word of God. The church rejoices that a sinner has come home. What a beautiful picture! We also can say, "God hath visited his people."

As the people around us witness the power of Christ to change our lives, it is my hope that we will repeat the story of our conversion just as Paul rehearsed his conversion at every opportunity he had (Acts 26:15). When we find a good bargain or a good restaurant, we tell our friends about it. We need to be quick to tell others of the greatest bargain of them all when we traded our rags for His riches, our sin for His holiness. It is our greatest desire that our friends and family would hear Jesus say, "Arise!"

#### ADDITIONAL READING:

**1 Thessalonians 4:13; John 14:26; Numbers 19:11; Ephesians 2:5-6**

**Go and Tell Them What  
the Lord Has Done**

*Luke 8:39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.*



**READ:** Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:27-39; Matthew 8:28-34 refers to two fierce men.

Being a disciple of Christ is certainly exciting! In Mark 4:35, Jesus said, "Let us go across the lake." That sounds like a pleasant diversion. Jesus went to rest, and they sailed along comfortably for a while. But then they had to battle their way through a terrible windstorm. Jesus calmed everything down, and they made it to the other side of the lake, only to be met by a devil-possessed madman! And they thought it would be a fun day!

No doubt, he was scarred from the chains he had torn from his wrists and bleeding from the stones with which he would cut himself. I can imagine, he was dirty, naked, and wild-looking, but his heart was crying out for a Savior. He saw Jesus coming and ran and worshiped him. James 2:19 says, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." The legion of devils knew they were in trouble when they saw Jesus coming.

The man was so possessed by the unclean spirits that even though his heart was crying out for help, the spirits used his voice to ask Jesus not to bother them. When Jesus asked the spirit its name, it said, "My name is Legion: for we are many." A Roman legion of soldiers could consist of three thousand to six thousand foot soldiers plus horsemen; so the term *legion* came to mean a large number without specifying an exact amount. The spirits had bound this poor man so he could not speak for himself. He was completely without the strength to overcome them. Yet, we see this legion of unclean spirits begging Jesus for favors. The devil is certainly stronger than us, but he is no match for Jesus.

These unclean spirits besought Jesus to allow them to go into the swine that was nearby instead of out of the country or into the deep. They were at Jesus' mercy. Whatever He said, they had to obey. It is interesting that they chose the animal that this Grecian area chose to use as a sacrificial animal. The herd was large and probably worth a lot of money because they could be sold to the

heathen worshipers. Jesus said, Go! and the spirits had to depart out of the man.

Those poor pigs! When the devils entered into them, they went crazy! I can imagine them squealing at the top of their voice, running, stumbling, dashing into and over each other, straight downhill, and into the lake, killing themselves. Even God's animals cannot stand the devil! Keepers were caring for the pigs, and they were going to have to explain the loss of two thousand pigs. They must have been close enough to witness Jesus and Legion because they ran into town and told all they knew. This stirred up the city and the whole countryside so much that they went out to see for themselves.

What a change! All the people knew about the wild man in the tombs, and I am sure they avoided him. The officials tried to restrain him with no success. Now as the nearby residents rushed to see what was going on, they found the crazy man in his right mind, cleaned up, dressed up, calmly sitting, and talking with Jesus. That is what salvation will do for a person—clean them up, dress them up, and give them a desire to be with Jesus.

I would think the citizens would have considered Jesus an asset to the community, but the Bible says they were afraid. Luke says the whole multitude of the country asked Him to leave. He did not argue that He had just helped them with a menacing madman. He did not ask them why He should leave when they did not even know Him. He just turned and started to leave. If you ask Jesus to leave, He will.

As Jesus was getting into the boat to go back across the lake, the man who had been so bound by spirits asked if he could please go with them. When you meet Jesus and He delivers you from your sinful life, you do not want to be separated from Him ever again. But Jesus had other plans for this man. He said, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." Jesus needed a witness in this area. He will tell us the same thing: "Go and tell what the Lord has done for you." We are to be a witness to the people we associate with. When something exciting happens to us, we tell everyone because we are excited. When Jesus delivers us from sin, that is exciting! Do not be afraid to tell it.

Mark tells us he published his story in all of Decapolis. Decapolis was a group of ten cities, *Deca* means "ten," and *polis* means "cities." The cities' names were: Abila, Damascus, Dion, Hippos, Pella, Philadelphia, Raphana, Scythopolis, Gerasa, and Gadara. Matthew, Chapter 8, says He came to the country of the Gergesenes and was met by two devil-possessed people. I cannot tell you positively that this was the same account, but there are many similarities. First, Gergese was part of Decapolis. The devils spoke the same things. There was a

herd of swine nearby. The swine reacted the same way, and the townspeople asked Jesus to leave. One of the commentators suggested there could have been two in the other Scriptures but one was more notable than the other; thus, only one was mentioned. Either way, what an outstanding miracle! Jesus still breaks the chains of sin and vice today and still tells us, "Go and tell what the Lord has done for you."

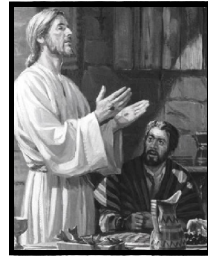
**ADDITIONAL READING:**

**Mark 16:15; John 20:21**

## DAY 27

### HE IS ALIVE!

*Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*



**READ:** Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20

Most people have heard of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, but I would like to point out a few special moments that had eternal effects. So many miracles, such amazing deliverance! We will start in Luke 24:44-48. "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." In John 19:30, as Christ was hanging on the Cross, He said, "It is finished." He had fulfilled all the words spoken in the Old Testament, and the plan of redemption was ready to be ushered in. Even before the world was formed, this time was on record. What a wonderful Redeemer!

One of my favorite parts of the Bible is when the veil in the Old Testament temple was torn into two parts at Jesus' death. Josephus, the Jewish historian of Jesus' day, recorded that the veil was approximately sixty feet high and four inches thick. It was replaced regularly; so it is not like it rotted and fell apart. It was made of fine twined linen; it was strong and beautiful. It separated the Ark of the Covenant (where the presence of God was) from the rest of the Temple and the people. Only the high priest was to go into the Holy of Holies, once a year, to offer a sacrifice for his sin and the sins of the people. Thus, the sins were ceremonially rolled over to the next year. But when Jesus died, the sacrifice for sin was forever made, and the veil that kept people separated from God was torn from the top to the bottom. No human could have done that! The old Jewish ceremonies were no longer necessary because Christ is the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). That was not just for the Jewish nation, but Luke 24:47 says, "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached . . . among all nations." That takes in the whole world. "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). Jesus' sacrificial death made a way that I, a Gentile, could come into the presence of the holy God.

Back in Genesis 3:24, after Adam and Eve had sinned, it says that God drove them out of the Garden of Eden and placed Cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. Jesus Christ is the

way and the tree of life. Salvation brings eternal life (Romans 6:23). There was a way back from sin to living in the presence of God again, a Garden of Eden experience.

The next thing that interested me was the statement in Matthew 27:65, which reads, "Make it as sure as ye can." When you read verses 62-66, you find the Pharisees worried about the disciples stealing the body of Jesus and then saying He rose from the dead. This would have made all their hopes of destroying this new way void. The Pharisees remembered Jesus said He would rise again, but the disciples did not! Pilate, who could find no fault in Jesus, was not so sure they could keep Christ in the grave if He chose to come out! Sometimes it seems that sinners can accept what God says easier than those who are close to Him.

The Roman soldiers verified to Pilate that Jesus was dead, and the Jews agreed to the fact. He was buried alone in a new tomb, and the Jews themselves set the watch and placed the seal. Barnes' commentary says, "His very enemies, therefore, took every possible precaution to place his resurrection beyond the possibility of suspicion of fraud and imposture, and those precautions were the very means of furnishing the most striking proof that his death, burial, and resurrection were not impositions, but most affecting, awful, and yet cheering realities."

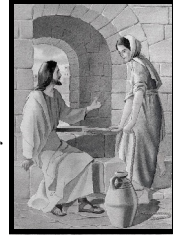
Last, let us consider John 20:19-29. Jesus appeared to the disciples, but Thomas was not with them. When they told him they had seen Jesus, he refused to believe it. He was so strong in his unbelief, he said, "Unless I see and touch the nail scars in his hands put my hand into the gouge the sword left, I will not believe!" But when Jesus appeared and called Thomas to touch the nail prints in His hands and put his hand into the wounded side, Thomas did not need any more proof than Jesus' presence. He answered, "My Lord and my God." Verse 29 is for you and me, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." I have never seen the physical form of Jesus, but I have felt His sweet presence and power. I can say from my heart that Jesus, my Lord and my Savior is risen from the dead and is alive today—saving, healing, comforting, and delivering. What an amazing Savior!

#### ADDITIONAL READING:

**Hebrews 10:10-12; Psalm 69:19-21;  
Psalm 118:22-23; Isaiah 11:10; Isaiah 53:7**

## The Greatest Miracle

*Matthew 11:29-30 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*



**READ:** John 4:3-34

The miracles of healing are wonderful, especially when they happen to you, but the greatest of all miracles is when Jesus saves souls from sin and sets them on the narrow way, puts a new song in their hearts, changes a person full of sin and sinful habits into a holy child of God. Luke 19:10 says, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

The Scripture in John is about a woman of Samaria whom Jesus talked to at the well. He pointed out her sins to her and then showed her the way of salvation. We must realize that we are a sinner in the eyes of God before we will seek a way out of our sins. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Jesus, the Savior, went looking for this lost soul. John 4:4 says "He must needs go through Samaria." He will send His sweet Holy Spirit to speak to every soul and invite them into the family of God. He does not leave us in sin but lifts us up and out of the mire we have gotten ourselves into and sets us on the Rock, Christ Jesus, high above sin. Matthew 1:21 tells us, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people FROM their sins." He gives us the power to live a holy life and be a witness to others.

In Psalm 51:1-2, King David had sinned and came face to face with it. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." We need to cry out to God for His mercy and forgiveness. Only the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse us from our sin (Acts 4:12). David had to acknowledge his sin, and so do we (Luke 18:13). We must be sick of our sins and ready and willing to forsake all sin by the power the Holy Spirit (1 John 1:9). Then, we must believe that He can cleanse us from our unrighteousness. God sent His Son to bring eternal life to whosoever will believe (John 3:16). I am so thankful that when I believed He would take my sin, He rewarded me with His wonderful salvation (Hebrews

11:6)! In John 4:10, Jesus told the Samaritan woman, "If you would ask I would give you living water." That gift from God of living waters springing up within our soul gives freedom from sin and cleansing from our past, the power to avoid sin in the future, and a joy that bubbles up and out to others.

Every child of God has a testimony of how God delivered them. John 4:39-42 tells us some believed because of the woman's testimony, but they came to Jesus and believed because they found the Savior for themselves. I thought it would be good to include one example of a current life change. The devil would like to make the Bible seem out of date, but Hebrews 13:8 tells us, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Just as he saved the woman at the well in the Bible times, He saved Sister Karen Wilks in our time. Just as Paul gave his testimony of conversion in the Book of Acts, I have asked Sister Wilks to give her testimony in this devotional as an example to you of how Jesus changes lives and how your testimony can be a blessing to others.

### **The Testimony of Sister Karen Wilks (of the Newark, Ohio, Congregation)**

As the song goes, "*I can see far down the mountain where I wondered many years.*" ("Is Not This the Land of Beulah?" *Evening Light Songs*, page 300, Faith Publishing House). I was brought up in the Church of God by my godly mother. My father was not saved, but I am so thankful my mother stood true all through the years. If it was not for her faithfulness, I would not be saved now, I am sure. As a teenager, I thought I knew a better way, and I started down that slippery slope. Undoubtedly, it was the worst decision I ever made. I believed the many lies of the devil, and all of them came to naught. My dreams went pop, pop, pop. The devil cannot cause any of your dreams to come true.

I was born in Ashland, Kentucky, but I spent most of my young years in the Georgetown district of Washington, D.C. When I was older, I knew that town and could go all over the place. It was back when you could go to the Capitol, the White House, and just about any place you wanted to go. Later, we moved to Rockville, Maryland, a suburb of D.C., and I graduated from high school there.

About two weeks after I graduated, I went to work for the CIA, and I worked for them for eighteen years. In March of the year following graduation, I left with my parents and brother on a luxury liner going to Greece. I was seasick all the way there (so much for the luxury liner). In the 1950's, Greece had beautiful pristine beaches. The water was blue and beautiful. The weather was warm with lots of sun. You would find me at the beaches on the weekends; it was beautiful!

While I was there, I traveled with my parents. I went to Corinth, and the only



way to get up to Corinth was a little rinky-dink road. You had to get on a donkey, and up you went, higher and higher up a high hill to the top. I thought, "I sure hope that donkey knows what he's doing!" If we had fallen, I guess we would not have lived to tell about it. It was steep and it was high.

We lived in Athens for quite a while. There we saw the Parthenon that was built on the Acropolis. We visited Mars' hill and a lot of places in Greece. While there, I was able to buy good jewelry, and I fell in love with jewelry. I was able to buy dinner rings with beautiful stones in them, bracelets, necklaces, 14 and 24 karat gold, but I did not wear earrings. I did not like them. I got so I would not wear anything unless it was the good stuff. I became more and more worldly as I bought all these jewels.

After two years, my family left for home on the luxury liner, but I was not going back that way and be sick again! I decided I was going to tour Europe. And I did. I visited Rome and Venice and rode in the gondolas. Then, I toured all over Italy, then on to Paris, France, the city of lights. I saw the Mona Lisa and went up in the Eiffel Tower. (After I was saved, I thought, "I would rather have the smile of Jesus than see the Mona Lisa!") I saw the beautiful palaces in France. I went on to Switzerland and saw the Alps and the beautiful country. I toured Germany and Amsterdam, Holland and Denmark, Norway and London, England. I saw the crown jewels, Big Ben, and many other sights of Europe. On and on I went in my sinful way. Then, it was time to fly home.

The world was getting a greater hold on my life as I went on my way. Sin does not get better; it gets worse. It holds you tight and binds you and blinds you, but on I traveled, searching but not finding. All the sights of the world and all the things you could buy did not satisfy my soul. There was a void within. The things of this world cannot satisfy your soul.

Time passed on, and my dad was sent to Japan for two years. The family went with him, but I chose not to go. I got an apartment in Bethesda, Maryland, with two other girls. Wanda worked for the CIA, as I did, and we became very good friends. We did everything together, but none of those things brought lasting happiness. We had good times, but there was no lasting pleasure.

While my parents were in Japan, I was able to fly out to stay with them for a while. Then I visited my aunt and uncle in Hawaii. I have seen a lot of the world. Always buying jewelry was my thing, but it left me empty. I thought: "Rich people have everything they want. They can buy anything they want, go anywhere they want to go, but they are empty." That is why sometimes rich people commit suicide.

Something happened that changed my life forever. My father was sent to

Vietnam, and I moved back home. My mother was so upset that he was going to Vietnam, and I felt so sorry for her that I told her I would take her to church the following Sunday. It was a fifty-mile trip one way. That Sunday morning I was so tired because I liked to dance, and I had been out dancing the night away. I told Mother, "You nudge me if I fall asleep in church!" I had absolutely no intentions of ever getting saved, but that morning, God saw a poor sinner girl driving down the road, and He had other plans.

I do not know how long it had been since I had been to church, but when I entered that building and the congregation began to sing, the Spirit of God began talking to me. I had been out on the road of sin for a long time. God had great mercy, and His Spirit began dealing with me. At first, I resisted His Spirit. Aren't we thankful God does not take our first, second, and third "No"? I continued to sit there, and the conviction became worse and worse. I was resisting, and they kept on singing.

Sometimes, we do not know what is going on inside of a person. As I sat there resisting the Spirit of God, I showed no signs of conviction. At first, not even my mother who was sitting beside me knew I was under conviction. God did not take my "No!" Thank God for His great mercy. As I sat there, tears began welling up in my eyes. It was hard to pretend that nothing was going on. A trio began singing. Later, I learned the name of the song was, "I Made a Place in My Heart for the Lord." I did not know what song it was at the time because I was under such conviction. What an appropriate song, but I did not hear the words that Sunday morning because the conviction was so heavy. I am just thankful that God is so merciful. As I sat there, I heard a voice within me. Although I had been out in sin a long time, I knew that voice, and it said, "Get in, or get out!" That got my attention.

I had a choice to make. I could either go to the altar, or I could go out the door, but I could not just sit there because the conviction was too great. For once in my life, I made a good decision! I took off for the altar like a streak, my high heels clickety clicking down the aisle, my frosted, bobbed hair, jewelry, and all. Needless to say, there was no preaching that morning. I was at the altar for quite some time because I had to know I was forgiven. When the door of my prison-house opened up by love and mercy, it was glorious! It was like dark shackles fell off my eyes, and there was Jesus! An inexpressible love filled my whole being. Without a doubt, I knew I was forgiven. I was clean on the inside and out for the first time in many, many years. All I ever hoped for, all I ever wanted, I found that morning in Jesus Christ. March 13, 1966, is a day I will never forget. I got up from that altar a new creature; it truly was a miracle!

My dear friend told me later, "Karen, I thought you were hopeless!" But no one is hopeless. I found Jesus that day, and I felt like I could just fly away. The days of partying, dancing, and collecting jewelry were over. I got rid of my beautiful dinner rings, bracelets, necklaces, and Mikimoto pearls because I found something better than gold. I found the real treasure. I found what my heart was truly looking for. All the traveling and sightseeing did not satisfy. The jewels, popularity, dating, wining and dining, and dancing do not satisfy. The devil cannot do anything that will satisfy the soul, he just tells lies.

I could not believe how good this was when I really got saved. It is a wonderful thing! The love that I felt was beyond my expectations. I can never express what I felt. Jesus was not there as a visible person, but I knew He met me there at the altar. What a miracle! I left the old life behind and never looked back. I have had my ups and downs through the years. I have had to ask for forgiveness. I have had heartaches. I have had good times, but I can say that after I got saved, I never wanted to go out in sin again! Never! Sin cannot satisfy. Sin takes you down, down, down. Whether you live what the world calls "the good life" or whether you go to drugs and drinking, it all takes you down and holds you captive. Sin leaves scars and regrets because sin is a tyrant.

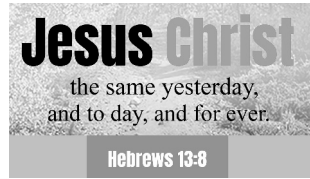
Since my conversion, the Lord and I have traveled many miles together. As I look back, I would not take anything for my journey. It is worth it all to be His child. He is a dear Friend. He can do for you what no other can do. He can work out your life. Thank the Lord for His great mercy and wonderful, wonderful salvation! It does not get old. It is the most wonderful gift you will ever receive. I am thankful for God's goodness and all He has done for me. Had I chosen to go out the church door instead of to the altar, I feel I would probably never have gotten saved. Choices and eternal decisions are made. Do not go back to sin, even though there are hard places in life; make good choices. It is worth it all. I am so thankful that day I made the best choice anyone could ever make, and that is to follow Jesus. It has been a good life—the best life!

#### ADDITIONAL READING:

**Psalm 51; Matthew 19:16-22; John 8:3-12;  
Luke 18:13-14; 2 Peter 3:9; Acts 26:12-19**

## He Is Just the Same Today

*Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*



We have read of many wonderful miracles in the Gospels, but some people will tell you the day of miracles is past, that it was just for a specific time and nothing like that happens today. We read in Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." That means Jesus will never change. If you can believe He could forgive sin when He was here on earth, you can also believe He can still save a soul from sin today. If you believe He healed the sick in Bible times, you can believe He can heal the sick today. At the beginning of this book, I said, "I hope . . . sometime in your life you will experience divine intervention in your own life." Jesus is just the same today as He was when He walked the earth. His power is still the same; His desire to help those in need is as real as it was then. Sister Susan Hogan is a witness of God's healing power in her life.

### **The Testimony of Sister Susan Hogan (of the Newark, Ohio, congregation)**

In the fall of 1996, our family moved to Ohio. It took another fourteen months for my husband's work transfer to come through before he could move to Ohio to be with us. He traveled every weekend to Ohio to see us and to be in church services. Because of the financial burden of two residences, I found it necessary to get a job and help with the finances. At that time, I was home-schooling our children; therefore I had to work at night. Early in 1997, I began getting very sick and losing weight. My employer said I had to get a physical because of the type of work I was doing. So, I made an appointment with a local family doctor. He took some X-rays and did a few tests. When I went back for the results, the doctor informed me that I had liver cancer, and he referred me to a specialist.

I did not want to put any more burden on my husband; so I told no one of my condition. I just took it to God in prayer. I really cannot put into words what happened to me. All I can say is that a deep-settled peace came over me, and I knew God was going to take care of my family. I made the appointment with the specialist, and after he took x-rays and did some tests, he concurred with the

family doctor that I indeed had liver cancer. He told me to come back the next week, and he would tell me what to expect in the coming months. When I returned home, I called the local funeral director to see how much it would cost for a funeral. The deep-settled peace continued.

Sunday came, and my family and I went to services. I still had not told anyone of my physical condition. I was too afraid that someone would tell my husband, and he already had enough burdens on him with working all week and driving back and forth to Ohio. We had a wonderful Sunday morning service and altar call. At the end of the service, many went to the altar to get prayed for. I remained in my seat thinking: "I don't need to be prayed for. I am going to my Heavenly home." So, I continued to sit there and watch others get prayed for. Suddenly, I heard a voice in back of me say, "Susan, go up to the altar and get prayed for; I am going to heal you." I turned around to see who was talking to me. There was no one there. I shook my head thinking I was hearing things. I continued to sit in my seat. In what seemed just a few seconds, I heard that voice again say to me, "Susan, go up to the altar and get prayed for; I am going to heal you."

There was no mistaking that voice. I knew exactly who was speaking to me. I was kind of in a daze because I had already prepared myself to soon be leaving this world, but something in me wanted to be obedient to that voice. I stood up and walked to the altar. As I sat on the altar, the brethren came down and asked if I needed prayer. All I could do was shake my head up and down affirming that I did. They anointed and prayed for me, and then I went back to my seat.

My appointment with the specialist was on Wednesday morning. He again took more x-rays and tests. He went out of the room and was gone for a long time. Suddenly, he opened the door and inquired as to my first and last name, and I verified that it was me. He said he would be back, went out, and closed the door behind him. He was gone for quite a while. The next thing I knew, he came back in the room seemingly mad about the current test he had made. He informed me that the cancer showed on the family doctor's results and on his results last week, but there was no sign of the cancer on the current test. They did not know what happened to it or where it went. He said I was fine and could leave.

I knew God had healed me. So I began to relate to him what took place Sunday. He became very angry and said I could leave and I could leave now! As I walked passed him to leave, I asked him this question, "Don't you believe your own tests?" Over the years I have had to have other tests done. One nurse kept taking blood from me. Because she was taking so much blood from me, I asked her, "Am I donating, and you forgot to tell me?"

She said, "We are trying to find the cancer, and we can't find it." I said to her, "Now do you believe me? You see when I filled out the doctor's papers, they asked if I had ever had cancer. I wrote down that I had liver cancer, but God healed me. This is something that a lot of medical people do not accept. That is why I asked her, "Do you believe me now?"

I am happy to say that today I am still cancer-free. Praise the Lord forever!

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My family and I went to Michigan for our family reunion in 2019. It took five hours to get there. It was decided that the reunion would be at a nearby park. When we arrived, the only seating was hard benches. After being there for five hours, I noticed I was having trouble walking. It was another five hours before we made it back to Ohio. When we got home, I was having severe pains in my back and shooting pains in my legs.

When I awoke the next morning, I could not walk without holding on to the furniture, doorways, and walls, and I could not lift my feet. I just had to shuffle them, and I could not keep my balance unless I held on to something. I spent a few days in bed hoping that the pains would ease up. They did not. I learned that I had nerve damage for which there is no medical cure. I spent five weeks at home because I was not able to walk down the steps to get out of the house. I was getting down because I was not able to get out to go to church.

My husband spent weeks building a front porch ramp and a sidewalk in hopes I would be able to go to church. I have an aide who comes into the home twice a month. She sold me her deceased mother's motorized scooter, plus she gave me a wheelchair. Needless to say, this made me very happy for, at last, I was able to use the motorized chair to get to the car and then use the wheelchair at church. The saints at church were very kind and helpful in pushing me in my wheelchair to get me to Sunday school and the services.

Our pastor, Brother Roger Decker, felt led to have a revival with Brother David Watson doing the preaching. On Tuesday night of the revival, Brother Watson brought a very inspired message on healing. At the end of the service, I felt very impressed to go to the altar to be prayed for. So I asked my husband to put me in my wheelchair and take me to the altar. Brother Watson anointed five other sisters and me and prayed. The service ended, and my husband and I left to go home. He wheeled me into the house in my wheelchair. I was tired so I went to bed.

When I awoke, it was 3:30 a.m. Without thinking, I got up out of bed,

walked down the hallway into the living room, and then walked into the kitchen to get a drink of water. All of a sudden, I realized that I had walked through the house and did not have to hold on to anything. I rejoiced because I knew God had healed me! The next night, my husband and I got ready to go to the revival. My husband asked, "Do you want to take your wheelchair?"

I said, "No."

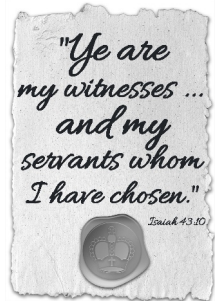
He said, "Why don't you take it just in case you get tired and need to sit down." So I agreed. When we got to church, my husband asked me, "Do you want me to drop you off at the door or park the car?" I said, "Park the car." He brought the wheelchair around to me, but instead of getting in it, I put my Bible, purse, and lap blanket in it, and pushed it in the door and down to my seat. Needless to say, many were amazed to see me pushing my wheelchair into church.

The next night of the revival, I left my wheelchair home and walked down to my seat. Praise the Lord! The motorized scooter and the wheelchair now sit in our garage unused. There is nothing too hard for God!

## DAY 30

### Ye Are Witnesses

*Isaiah 43:10 Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.*



**READ:** Matthew 11:1-6

### **The Testimony of Bill Corder Told by Joyce Corder (of the Newark, Ohio, congregation)**

Brother Haylock brought a message entitled "Nothing Just Happens," and that prompted the writing of this testimony.

My husband, Bill Corder, and I were visiting family in New Mexico and decided to go to the Grand Canyon. While at the Grand Canyon, Bill complained of shortness of breath, but we attributed it to the higher altitude. There was a place where Bill stepped off the path and took a picture straight down into the canyon. There was not any railing at that spot, and I have often thought, "What if the heart attack had happened then?" We would never have gotten him out in time, but nothing just happens.

When we left the Grand Canyon, we took route 191 North through Utah. We stopped for the night in Blanding, Utah. The next morning, while loading the car, Bill had the first pain in his back. We thought he had hurt his back lifting the heavy suitcases. We had prayer, God eased the pain, and Bill drove on to his sister and brother-in-law's house in Loveland, Colorado. When I researched medical care in the Blanding, Utah, area, I discovered a hospital just two blocks away from our motel, but in their advertisement, they stated they could diagnose heart attacks but would transport patients to another facility two hours away! Nothing just happens!

After we arrived in Colorado, the pain in Bill's back returned, and looking for relief from the back pain, his sister and I went into town with him to a chiropractor. After the appointment, he drove us back home. He said he had a headache and was going to lie down for a while in the bedroom at the back of the house. Instead of lying down, he just happened to walk back to within ten feet of where his sister and I were and he dropped to the floor. His face was purple, and



he was convulsing by the time I got to him. Nothing just happens!

His sister called 911, and the squad arrived in three minutes. We did not know how they arrived so quickly when we were shown where the firehouse was located, which was about twenty minutes away. When the EMT arrived, Bill was in full cardiac arrest. When they took over, I sat on the couch and prayed. It was not a long prayer, but it was certainly out loud and earnest. The cardiologist just happened to be walking through the emergency department when the call came that the squad was bringing a cardiac arrest patient. By the time his sister and I arrived at the hospital, Bill was already prepped and ready for surgery. The cardiologist told me, "We will do all we can to fix his heart, but what happens with his brain is up to him." When I saw him last, he was totally incapable of ANYTHING! I knew whatever happened with his brain was in God's hands. But nothing just happens! Within sixty-one minutes, he had four stents in the main artery down the left side of his heart. There were three blockages in the artery: one of them was one hundred percent, and the other two were significantly blocked. We truly appreciate all the medical professionals did; everyone was very kind to us, and they did their best to help us.

With this type of heart attack, known as the widow-maker, only approximately five to twelve percent of patients survive. Of that five percent, two percent live a reasonably normal life. Our niece, who is a nurse, said if a person who had this kind of attack can stand alone, they have had a good day! The community hospital he was taken to said this was the worst case they would take. He would have had to be transported to another facility if he needed open heart surgery, which would have taken more time. Nothing just happens!

As soon as the stents were in place (not open heart but catheterization), they began what is known as "cool down." They reduce the body temperature to approximately thirty-three degrees centigrade (ninety-one degrees Fahrenheit). They held that temperature for several hours, then they brought it slowly back to normal. This is to help the brain function and allow all the systems of the body to resynchronize with each other. This took twenty-four hours, during which time he looked dead, he felt dead, and he acted dead.

It was during that time I began to sort through all that had happened. From noon to midnight had been a blur of activity. After wrestling with God for a while, I was finally able to say, "God, he is in your hands and I trust You." The peace that came with that surrender is beyond my ability to explain. It was certainly peace that passes all understanding. After that, I was able to sleep.

I still did not know what was going to happen. Looking back, somehow I knew when he left the house he was going to live, but I did not know how well.

I just knew I would take care of him, and God would give us the grace for whatever we had to face each day. Our children drove twenty-two hours to be with us. They arrived as the hospital staff were beginning the warm-up process. Our daughter slipped her hand in Bill's, and our son held his hand on the other side of the bed. He squeezed their hands; this was the first sign of life. We were told the warm-up process would take five to eight hours; so our son and his wife went to rest and get cleaned up.

Almost as soon as they began lowering the sedative, Bill started fighting the breathing tube. So they took it out. He opened his eyes and started looking around. Next, he started recognizing people in the room. Then he started asking questions: "Where am I? Why am I here? Why are the kids here? What happened?" He was talking and trying hard to reason it all out! When our son and his wife returned to the hospital two hours later, he recognized them. They were amazed and delighted. Nothing just happens!

The EMTs who had transported Bill to the hospital stopped to visit. They told our son, and those with him, that Bill was very lucky to be alive. They also said they do not get to see many positive results from their efforts, and that was the reason for the visit. I know I could never thank them enough for their quick response and the way they worked so efficiently to help save Bill's life.

Bill continued to improve and soon began walking around the room. He had the attack around 12:30 p.m. on Thursday and was dismissed from the hospital to go back to his sister's house on Monday. One week after he was dismissed from the hospital, he was released by the doctor to go home (approximately 1450 miles). He drove the whole way home, with rest stops, of course! Nothing just happens!

Normal heart function is fifty to seventy percent. Right after the surgery, Bill's heart function was approximately twenty-five percent. The doctor told me heart muscle does not rebuild itself like other muscles; so they made arrangements for him to be fitted with a "jacket" that would shock his heart in case it stopped again. Just before he was dismissed from the hospital, they took another test, and his heart function was forty to forty-five percent. He did not need the "jacket." Nothing just happens!

Bill has returned to his normal life, doing everything he was doing before the heart attack. We believe it was a miracle, and we thank God for His goodness and mercy to us! MANY prayers were going up to God on our behalf, and we thank everyone who showed love and concern for us. God has everything under control, and NOTHING just happens.

We made a trip back to Colorado the next year, and Bill's brother-in-law

called him "the walking dead man." It was a witness to the power of God. In 2021, he had a stress test, and the attending physician commented, "If we did not know your history, we would not be able to tell anything had happened to you!" I believe his heart function at that time was fifty-three percent, which is normal. He is alive today because of God's mercy and healing power. All praise is due to God! Brother Emerson Wilson used to say, "Man practices medicine; God does cures."

**ADDITIONAL READING:**

**Mark 16:20; Luke 24:48**

**DAY 31**

**What He Has Done For Others,  
He Will Do for You**



*Romans 2:11 For there is no respect of persons with God.*

**READ:** Joshua 23:14

God made promises, called covenants, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When Israel was in Egyptian bondage, God promised them the land of milk and honey. God did many signs and wonders along their journey to the Promised Land. Joshua led them into that sweet place, divided the land to them, and conquered nations mightier than them by the word and power of God. Now Joshua was ready to die, and Joshua 23:14 was his parting speech. God keeps His promises and works miracles; we can trust God's Word!

We too can say that not one promise God has made has failed, but we have to trust Him and wait for His perfect timing. Brother Fred Barrows proved God many times. He went to his heavenly reward on January 29, 2024, at the age of eighty-five years, trusting God to the end. We sincerely miss his encouraging words, instructing us to keep trusting God, and his wonderful, loving outreach to all. This was the testimony he left for us:

**The Testimony of Brother Fred Barrows (of the Newark, Ohio, congregation)**

When I was approximately sixteen, a friend of mine called me and said: "Hey, I am going to Newark to see my girlfriend. Do you want to ride along?" I said, "Yeah." So I rode along with him. His girlfriend lived on Cedar Street, and he went into the house while I stayed in the car. As I was sitting there, looking at the road, I was wondering, "What is up this road and over the hill?" Little did I know that it was the Church of God at God's Acres!

From my very earliest recollection, there has always been something within me that was pulling, but I did not know what it was. My brothers Carl and Bob would take me to church in different places. I was in and out of the Salvation Army and the Methodist church, but my first real experience of salvation was when I was in my early teens in a Nazarene church. I also sporadically attended a Church of God movement church in Columbus, Ohio.

It was not until 1960 that Carl brought me to the Church of God, God's

Acres, in Newark. In May 1961, Dad died, and Mom died in August. In December of 1961, I got my draft papers, and I was in the military until 1965. During my service time, God kept dealing with me. I attended a Church of God movement church in Georgia. About eighteen months before I was due to get out of the service, I started praying for God to show me if I was supposed to move to Newark, stay in Columbus, Ohio, or where I should live. Before going into the service, I worked for Pittsburg Plate Glass Company in Columbus, Ohio. After my discharge, I discovered they had not held my job for me. However, they offered me a similar job in Newark, Ohio! That was my answer.

After my discharge, due to some unfortunate situations, I started drinking. I can still remember the night I was sitting on a barstool, and I picked up a drink. I do not think I ever put that last drink to my lips because I heard the question in my mind, "Where would you be if God would call you tonight?" I set the drink down, reached into my pocket, and paid my bill. I told the Lord, "I'll be in Newark on Sunday if You will let me live." And I was. I sat in the very last row of the church on Sixth Street. I was saved the first service of the June camp meeting in 1965.

After I got saved, I met and married Tresia Caudill. We were at her parent's house in the country. Her stepbrother wanted to go horseback riding, and they happened to have a couple of horses. I was on one of them, and he was on the other. My father-in-law used to put the field out in shares, which means a person buys and plants the corn, and when it is harvested, they pay the landowner a percent of the profit. As we were riding down alongside the cornfield, the fella that was doing the planting and harvesting happened to be in the field, and we did not realize it. He must have heard us for he stepped out of the tall corn and said, "Hey, how ya doin'?" It spooked my horse. My horse took a trip to the left, and I kept going to the right. I fell off, but the way I hit the ground knocked my back out of place. I was actually walking crooked.

We had a little Volkswagen, and the next morning, I had to pick my legs up with my hands to get in the car. We were worshipping at the church located at Sixth and Locust Streets, in Newark, Ohio. After that Sunday morning service was over, I went forward and asked Brother Wilson if he would pray for me because I was walking crooked. When I sat down on the altar, Brother Wilson and a couple of the other brothers laid hands on me, and Brother Wilson prayed. When he finished praying, I stood up as straight as I can today. God instantly healed me of that condition. So, this was one of the first miraculous instant healings for me. It was not a gradual healing, but it was instantaneous. I sat down crooked; I stood up straight.

Back when Tresia was expecting our son, Joel, it was during the 1978 blizzard that she went from morning sickness to a flu virus to pneumonia. She could hardly move, and her lung collapsed. Someone said, "If she was my wife, I would take her to the hospital." I asked Tresia, "What do you want to do?" She said, "I want to trust God." I said, "If that is what you want to do, that is what we will do." I slept on the floor, and she laid on the couch. God brought her through that, and she never had to go to the hospital. We have tried to live the message that we heard.

Another time when God healed me, I had a terrible sore throat for several days. I was sitting at the table one morning, trying to eat a bowl of oatmeal, and it was really a struggle to get that spoonful of oats down my throat. As I sat there at the table that morning, I just kind of mentioned to the Lord, "I sure would appreciate You moving on me and helping this sore throat to go away." I just left it that way. I went ahead and struggled with the bowl of oatmeal. When I got up from the table, I walked into the family room and went to sit down in the chair. Normally you bend over to sit down; so when I bent over, that condition in my throat broke. God took it away; it was gone. Naturally, I thanked God for the way He moved on me.

There was a period in my life when I was without employment. I ended up losing our house; there were approximately two-and-a-half years before it would have been paid off. The bank worked with us, but ultimately we had to foreclose. Well, that was pretty devastating, but as these events began to progress, we got to a place where—with no money coming in—we ran out of food. My wife canned everything she could get her hands on, but all the food was gone in the house. We could not walk down to the basement and find a jar of green beans or something else off of the shelf. It was gone. It was the same with sugar, flour, and other staples. She came to me and said: "Fred, there is nothing more in the house to fix; it is all gone. I have nothing to work with." So Tresia and I got on our knees at the couch and prayed, asking God to help us. We did not know where or how this was going to work out. I can still remember, before we got off of our knees, there was a knock on our door. Someone brought us some groceries. It was a miraculous thing.

Brother Wilson asked if I would consider becoming the editor of *The Gospel Trumpeter*. I had worked at a newspaper, but I worked in advertising. English was not my best subject; in fact, it was probably my worst subject! Brother Wilson said, "Well, God will help you." It took me three months before I actually told him I would take the job. That was March of 1976. I had great fears. The brother who was the editor before me had years of college education, and all I

had was a high school education. It was miraculous how God could take my inability and help me make each move that I needed to make. I remember there was a report that had to go to the post office, and nobody had shown me how to do it. The very first time I did it, I knew absolutely nothing about that report. It was like God said, "This goes here, and this goes here, and this figure goes here." It was amazing, and it worked. It was accepted by the post office. It was like I was individually, divinely trained. God was always right there to help with the problems that would arise, which I am thankful for.

Another time God miraculously healed me was when I developed a very bad case of gout, possibly in 1984 or 1985. I can remember on a Saturday night the pain was so intense that I really felt like I was ready to lose my mind. I did not want to take anything for it, but at the urging of a neighbor, I took a Tylenol. That did help the pain, but I felt condemned because I did not just trust the Lord and muscle it out until God moved on me. My wife would read different things; she would go to the library and look up what was good for gout. These articles said that when you once have gout, you never get rid of it; it is there permanently. You can take things and maybe ease it, but it will be there from then on. Well, I was prayed for several different times, but when the symptoms came back, the pain came back. I would always give in to that pain.

One Sunday night, I went into the church building, and Brother Eddie Evans said to me, "Brother Freddie, how are you doing tonight?" I said, "Brother Evans, I am really hurting." He said, "Well, let's pray." I could feel God move on me, and I was in good shape. But by Monday, it all came back again. Tresia and I had to go to the old Super Duper Market to pick up some groceries the next Wednesday night, and Brother Eddie Evans walked in. He said, "How are you doing Brother Freddie?" I said: "Man, I am hurting. I know you prayed for me, and I felt like God moved on me." He said, "Son, you have got to learn how to go against the symptoms." Well, that night when I went home after getting the groceries, I asked the Lord, to forgive me for doubting, saying, "Will You forgive me, Lord, for giving in to the symptoms?"

I was working at the print shop at that time. My office was on the first floor in the old nursery. All the work was done downstairs. That meant I had to walk down the steps to get to the workroom or walk up the steps to get to my office. Since it was very painful to walk down the steps in the normal way, I started down the steps sideways like I had been doing. The thought came to my mind, "Well, are you going to trust God or not?" I thought for a moment, then I said: "Lord, I am going to walk down these steps whether I have pain or not. I am going to walk down the way I am supposed to walk." So, I straightened up and

walked down the steps, one step at a time like you do. The pain was pretty intense, but I made it down the steps, up the steps, and down the steps. That went on for a few weeks, and I said, "Lord, I am going to trust You." As I walked up and down those steps, day after day, the pain started letting up. God had actually healed me. Now, that was not an instantaneous healing. That was one of those times when they prayed for you and like the Scripture says, "they shall recover" (Mark 16:18). I did recover, but maybe two or three months later, those symptoms suddenly popped up again. I asked the Lord, "Lord, I believe that You healed me; will You give me the grace to resist those symptoms?" And He did. And today in 2022, I still do not have any gout. I am thankful, God has really been good to me along that line.

Brother Decker and I have traveled quite extensively to different places, but there was a period in my life, seventeen or eighteen years ago, when a big bump appeared on my arm. I do not know whether there was something that bit me or what it was, but I still have the scar today. I went all the way to Africa and came back. I think I went to Montana, and maybe on to Oregon, and that bump was still there. I would wash it with soap and water and put peroxide on it every day. At that time, it was not open, it was just a bump. Then all of a sudden it broke open. And when it broke, it was probably about the size of a half dollar and very ugly. The poison or whatever it was in there began coming out. And of course, then the peroxide also helped to dry that up. When it broke it started healing, and God did that. There again is something He healed gradually. It was not instantaneous.

God has had mercy on me and has taken care of me. He is everything I need and more. I want to remember what God has done in the past. Nobody likes to suffer, but when we look at the Master and look at what He suffered, we have suffered nothing in comparison to Him. He did it for us. Many others have suffered for the Gospel's sake. If it was not for those people standing true, where would we be today? God does not want us to fall. He wants us to live for Him and be an example and a witness. My advice would be to be true to God and stand on your convictions, even though it is not always easy. It will be worth it after a while.

I relied on God during the times mentioned here. Why should I change my mind now? At eighty-four years old, how much longer am I going to live? God has to have some type of vehicle to take us out of this life. We do not know how it will be. I am not Elijah whom God took up in a whirlwind. I am not Enoch who walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. When I think back on how God has helped me and brought me down through the years, why should I not trust Him now?



**ADDITIONAL READING:**

**Genesis 28:15; Matthew 28:20**

## **About the Author**

Joyce Corder and her husband, Bill, live in Newark, Ohio. They have two children and seven grandchildren. She and her husband currently teach the Senior Young People's Sunday School Class at the Church of God, God's Acres. Joyce and Bill were youth leaders for twenty-five years and continue to have a burden for young people. Joyce was active in a children's Sunday school bus ministry and nursing home visitation, taking youth to sing for and visit with older people in the community. The Lord laid a burden on her heart to write devotionals for young Christians who desire to know more about God and the Bible but do not know where to begin. Her intention is to teach daily Christian values and ignite greater interest in a deeper study of the Word of God.

# MIRACLES IN MARCH

The word "miracle" has been cheapened in our world today. We think it is a miracle when we make it to Sunday school on time when we woke up late and stopped for coffee on the way. What we are talking about in these lessons are supernatural signs, tokens, and wonders. I hope you will enjoy studying these lessons and that sometime you will experience divine intervention in your own life. There are miracles all around us.

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