

LESSON ESSENTIALS

WHO IS JESUS?

LESSON 3: THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

What is the most amazing thing you've ever seen? Would you say it was a miracle? The word "miracle" gets used very casually these days. What makes something a true miracle? One dictionary definition of miracle is as follows: *an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs; an extremely outstanding or unusual event, thing, or accomplishment.* To have the hand of God intervene in your life circumstances would be an incredibly impactful life event that would leave you changed forever. What do you think you could learn from such an experience?

Jesus did perform many, many miracles. From healing physical ailments to calming raging storms, Jesus proved he could do it all. But He did not intend for His miracles to be an attention-getting device for Himself or mere entertainment. What was the purpose of Jesus' miracles? What should our response be to them?

“When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.” (Mark 6:34-35)

Understanding who Jesus is becomes clearer as we read the accounts of the miracles He did during His ministry on earth. The types of miracles were varied. He gave sight to the blind, He healed the paralyzed, He restored life to the dead, He calmed the storms, He fed the hungry, and much more. The apostle John concludes his book this way: “Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” While we may wonder at what other miracles Jesus performed, there were certainly more than enough miraculous occurrences, that were recorded in the Bible, to give us a more complete perspective on who Jesus is.

First, we see that Jesus’ miracles showed His character. Many of the miracle accounts include the phrase “moved with compassion” before narrating what Jesus did. For example, in Mark 6 we read the story of the “Feeding of the Five Thousand.” You may remember that the crowds had been following Jesus and listening to His teaching all day. Both Jesus and the disciples were tired and tried to get away to rest. But the crowds followed Jesus again, and “when he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.” (Mark 6:34-35) He could have sent them away, but He had compassion on them. They needed teaching. So He put aside His fatigue and taught them more. Suddenly it was dinner time, and the disciples suggested the people be sent home to find food or that the disciples be sent to buy them food. Knowing that neither of those were truly options, Jesus demonstrates His power and compassion by multiplying the loaves and fish of a little boy in the crowd. Jesus could have sent them away hungry.

Or He could have told them to just get over it and tolerate their hunger. But He had compassion on them, and that character trait led Him to act on their behalf and to perform this miracle for them.

Second, the miracles of Jesus show His divinity. Maybe everyone should have recognized that Jesus was the Son of God from the prophecies in the Scriptures that He fulfilled, but they didn’t. Many of them needed a sign or a miracle so that they could believe in His divinity. Jesus understands this about the people. At the miraculous raising of Lazarus, Jesus prays to His Heavenly Father saying, “I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.” (John 11:42) He wanted the people to see the miracle so that

they could see His power and believe that the Father had sent the Son to earth to fulfill His purposes.

Finally, Jesus shows His authority even over creation. The disciples also needed to see this power and this ability to work miracles. Again, we see the disciples and Jesus tired after a long day of teaching and healings. When evening had come, Jesus suggested that they cross the sea to find a quiet place. While Jesus fell asleep in the back of the boat, a storm arose, causing waves to nearly fill the boat. The disciples were terrified, “and they woke him and said to him, ‘Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?’ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, ‘Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?’ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?’” (Mark 4:35-41) The disciples had obviously seen Jesus perform many miracles by this point. Yet, they still were shocked that Jesus had authority over even creation.

In all of these, Jesus uses His miracles as signs of the lesser to prove the greater. He could have been lying about His divinity, His compassion, or His authority and no one could have proved Him wrong. However, by doing these wondrous deeds that everyone could see and not disprove, He proved that He was not lying about anything He had said. The book of Luke recounts the story of the paralyzed man’s friends who brought him to Jesus by lowering him through the roof. “And when he saw their faith, he said, ‘Man, your sins are forgiven you.’ And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, ‘Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?’ When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, ‘Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’—he said to the man who was paralyzed— ‘I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.’ And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen extraordinary things today.” (Luke 5: 18-26) He knew that He had forgiven the man’s sins. He knew that that was the greatest need the man had. But to show all those who doubted His divinity, He also healed the man in a way that everyone could see to add irrefutable proof that He was, indeed, who He said He was.

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What a marvelous way to get to know Jesus: by studying His miracles! Like John, we could say at the end of this lesson that there is so much more to say about what we can learn from studying the miracles, but this lesson cannot hold it all. For now, let's rejoice in His compassion, His divinity, and His authority and let's be grateful for the gift of Jesus' miracles so that we could get to know Him more.

IN REVIEW

- Jesus teaches us about His character in His miracles. His compassion drives Him to intervene in the lives of people.
- The miracles reinforce how Jesus wants us to believe in His Father and in His Father's mission in sending Jesus.
- By studying Jesus miracles, we can learn more about our Saviour, Jesus.

HAVE YOUR SAY

- Think of your own life. Given the definition at the beginning of this lesson, and considering what we've learned about the types of miracles Jesus did, do you think that you've seen any miracles?
- Would seeing a miracle increase your faith? Why or why not?
- Spend some time praying that the Lord would help you to have great faith without needing a sign or miracle to prove what the Bible so clearly states.
- Now spend some time responding to what you've learned about Jesus through His miracles, praising Him for who He is, and trusting Him with all the details of your life, because He is clearly able to do marvellous things!

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