



Beyond the Miracles of Jesus

During His life, Jesus performed some incredible miracles, some of which we are blessed to be able to read about and study. He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, fed the hungry, and even raised the dead. When we study the life of Jesus we quickly learn that He has power over everything!

The simplified vision and mission of Pathway is to live and love like Jesus. It comes from our greatest commands to love God with all that we are and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. His new commandment is to love as He loved. What we as a church have to realize is that while we may not be able to perform miracles the same way Jesus did (maybe we can with faith the size of a mustard seed!) that does not stop us from being able to love the same way that He did.

As we study these miracles we want to look at the obvious lesson in seeing what God has the power to overcome. But we also want to take time to look beyond the miracle itself to see what Jesus communicated while He performed the miracles. His actions in healing, His words, His timing, and His heart all communicate intimate love for the person that was standing in front of Him. Our goal this series is to learn from each miracle to better understand how we can love people everyday like Jesus loved.

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Beyond the Miracles of Jesus:

Water to Wine: John 2:1-11 (NET)

Turning Water into Wine

1 Now on the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine ran out, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no wine left." 4 Jesus replied, "Woman, why are you saying this to me? My time has not yet come." 5 His mother told the servants, "Whatever he tells you, do it."

6 Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washing, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7 Jesus told the servants, "Fill the water jars with water." So they filled them up to the very top. 8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the head steward," and they did. 9 When the head steward tasted the water that had been turned to wine, not knowing where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), he called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the cheaper wine when the guests are drunk. You have kept the good wine until now!" 11 Jesus did this as the first of his miraculous signs, in Cana of Galilee. In this way he revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

• With each miracle, we want to understand what is clear and obvious in the text, and then we want to reread each story to see if there are things to be understood that might not be easily seen. What do you see and understand from a straightforward reading of this story?

Here are some basic observations:

(v1-3) A wedding in this time was a multi-day community celebration. Jesus was invited, which in some ways shows that he was a part of the social community Cana. Failing to provide for the guests would have led to social disgrace, which in a small town, could be a lasting mark on the newlyweds. "The loss would not only have been shame and social disgrace, however, but also financial, since grooms had a legal responsibility to provide a suitable feast for their guests." (Constable's Comm.). And there was Mary, who was aware of the need and presented it to Jesus.

(v4-5) Jesus' response, "Woman, why are you saying this to me? My time has not yet come." was not as disrespectful as it sounds to western ears. "'Woman' (*gynai*) was a polite form of address. Jesus used it when he spoke to his mother from the cross (19:26) and also when he spoke to Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection (20:15)." (Expositor's Bible Comm.) His question did not shock Mary either, so most scholars assume the question, a somewhat used idiom throughout the Bible, was an acknowledgement of the problem but showed some separation from acting out of obligation to the couple or to his mother. The time for His work had not yet come, and yet as he addressed this "woman," Jesus is beginning to act on the timing and will of God, not His "mother." Mary respects that response, does not continue to nag Jesus, but in faith gives an order to the servants to listen to Him if He does act in some way.

(v6-8) Ceremonial cleanliness was of high priority for the Jews. They had to cleanse themselves of anything that would make them ritually unclean, so they needed to wash often. People would not normally drink from these pots. A minimum “120 gallons. . . if, as was frequently customary, the wine was further diluted by three parts of water to one of wine, there would have been enough to last for several days.” (Expositor’s Bible Comm.)

(v9-10) Water was drawn and brought to the director of the entertainment (Strong’s Conc.) who immediately praised the quality of the wine being given at this point in the party, when normally a lesser quality would be offered after the guests would not be as aware of what they were drinking.

(v11) This was the first miracle of Jesus, His glory was revealed, and his disciples believed.

• With these things in mind, reread the passage. Consider perspectives and angles you may not have noticed before. Consider the faith of Mary, the witnesses to the miracle, the couple at the wedding. Do you notice anything different now?

1) Mary’s Submission: Even the mother of Jesus submitted to the Messiah. She had faith, but trusted that He would work in His timing. But she did not just wait idly, she prepared for what she could by lending the servants, trusting that Jesus would work.

2) The Witnesses/Disciples: They were able to watch this miracle happen. We do not know when the water turned to wine, but we do know that the servants filled the stone pots with water, drew some out and brought it to the head steward. This was the first miracle and through it the disciples believed in Him. When witnessing something incredible, their faith grew.

3) The Couple: Unlike the disciples, they had no idea what happened. As far as we know, they never even knew that they had a problem, and in assuming so, they would not know that a miracle helped them save face.

• Looking Beyond the Miracle to Love like Jesus: While we may not be able to perform this miracle the way Jesus did, we are called by His new commandment to love as He loved. So what can we learn and apply to our lives? (Discuss your thoughts first)

Jesus did a few things that we can apply to our interactions in faith with the world. He trusted God’s timing and was not pressured to do something because He was told to, even if it was by someone He respected like His own mother. What is even more incredible is that He met the needs of a couple who might not ever have realized that they had needs. And this is not the only time He has done that. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He paid for our sins before we even understood what sin was.

• Share and Pray: What are things that you do to meet the needs of others that they do not realize? What is God calling you to do beyond your norm, to meet the need of someone in your life? Share together, come up with a plan, and pray for God to use it.

Beyond the Miracles of Jesus:

Jesus Drives Out an Evil Spirit: Mark 1:21-28, Luke 4:31-37 (NET)

Mark 1:21-28

Jesus' Authority

21 Then they went to Capernaum. When the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people there were amazed by his teaching, because he taught them like one who had authority, not like the experts in the law. 23 Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, 24 "Leave us alone, Jesus the Nazarene! Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are - the Holy One of God!" 25 But Jesus rebuked him: "Silence! Come out of him!" 26 After throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him. 27 They were all amazed so that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He even commands the unclean spirits and they obey him." 28 So the news about him spread quickly throughout all the region around Galilee.

Luke 4:31-36

31 So he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he began to teach the people. 32 They were amazed at his teaching, because he spoke with authority. 33 Now in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, 34 "Ha! Leave us alone, Jesus the Nazarene! Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are - the Holy One of God." 35 But Jesus rebuked him: "Silence! Come out of him!" Then, after the demon threw the man down in their midst, he came out of him without hurting him. 36 They were all amazed and began to say to one another, "What's happening here? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!" 37 So the news about him spread into all areas of the region.

• With each miracle, we want to understand what is clear and obvious in the text, and then we want to reread each story to see if there are things to be understood that might not be easily seen. What do you see and understand from a straightforward reading of this story?

Here are some basic observations (using the Mark passage for verse reference):

(21-22) Jesus taught with authority. This is seen in both the way that he teaches and the response of the people. His teaching must have been different than what people were used to hearing.

(23-25) A man with an evil spirit recognized Jesus and used the same idiom that Jesus used when talking to His mother before turning water to wine. "What to me and to you?" or in this verse "What to us and to you?" was a saying that implied something along the lines of "What do we have in common?" "We have nothing to do with each other" or more aggressively "Mind your own business!" (NET Study Notes) Here, this evil spirit wants nothing to do with Jesus, whom he recognizes as the Holy One. Jesus silences the spirit and commands Him to come out with the same authority that he taught with.

(26-28) The spirit has to listen to the commands of God, so he leaves, throwing the man down in convulsions on its way out. The witnesses see that Jesus has authority when He speaks, not just to teach but to command the spirits.

• With these things in mind, reread the passage. Consider perspectives and angles you may not have noticed before. Consider the perspective of the people, and see if you can spot any key differences/additions between the parallel passages. Do you notice anything different now?

1) The reaction of the people: It would be easy for us to gloss over what it would be like as a witness. “Yes, the people were amazed at seeing Jesus, blah blah blah,” because we assume that everyone that saw Jesus would be amazed! We find one key addition from Mark that Luke did not have. The people saw that He taught with authority, not like the experts in the law. The words of Jesus had impact because He was not just teaching previous teachings. “Jesus proclaimed revelation directly from God, rather than just interpreting the former revelations that God had given to others, and reiterating the traditional rabbinic interpretations of the law.” (Constable’s Comm) This was not just another message, another sabbath at the synagogue, learning the same teaching that generation shared with generation. At the end of these miracle narratives, the people were not just impressed with Jesus’ ability to cast out evil spirits, they were still amazed at the way that he spoke with authority!

2) The man that was healed: The man healed does not have any lines in this play. But there is a key point brought up in Luke about this miracle. He was thrown down, the spirit came out, and he was unharmed. The spirit obviously tried something on its way out throwing the man down into convulsions and tossing him down, but the man was unharmed. Jesus knew the importance of healing this man, of commanding this evil spirit, but He did it in a way that protected the man. He fought the spirit while protecting the person.

• Looking Beyond the Miracle to Love like Jesus: While we may not be able to perform this miracle the way Jesus did, we are called by His new commandment to love as He loved. So what can we learn and apply to our lives? (Discuss your thoughts first)

This story may have a lot of things that we cannot all relate to. Teaching in place of the experts, casting out (or even encountering) an evil spirit, being the Holy One, to name a few. But we have the ability to teach the gospel, a beautiful message of reconciliation, to bring God’s people safely back to Him! (2 Cor 5:18-21) There are many times that we can speak with authority against evil but end up hurting the people we are speaking to. There are many times we work too hard to protect someone that we lose the authority of the message we bring. To live and love like Jesus we need to both speak with His truth against the evil while protecting the person that we hope to save.

• Share and Pray: Have there been times that you spoke with power but hurt someone so they walked away? Have there been times you have been too afraid to hurt someone so you did not speak the truth God put on your heart? Is God calling you to live like Jesus and love someone in both of these ways right now?

Beyond the Miracles of Jesus:

Official's Son at Capernaum: John 4:46-54 (NET)

Healing the Royal Official's Son

46 Now he came again to Cana in Galilee where he had made the water wine. In Capernaum there was a certain royal official whose son was sick. 47 When he heard that Jesus had come back from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and begged him to come down and heal his son, who was about to die. 48 So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders you will never believe!" 49 "Sir," the official said to him, "come down before my child dies." 50 Jesus told him, "Go home; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and set off for home.

51 While he was on his way down, his slaves met him and told him that his son was going to live. 52 So he asked them the time when his condition began to improve, and they told him, "Yesterday at one o'clock in the afternoon the fever left him." 53 Then the father realized that it was the very time Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live," and he himself believed along with his entire household. 54 Jesus did this as his second miraculous sign when he returned from Judea to Galilee.

• With each miracle, we want to understand what is clear and obvious in the text, and then we want to reread each story to see if there are things to be understood that might not be easily seen. What do you see and understand from a straightforward reading of this story?

Here are some basic observations:

(46-47) John writes to remind us that Jesus' return to Cana is also a return to the location of his first miracle. This official, most likely a servant of Herod Antipas, was so desperate for his son to be healed that he travelled a full day by foot, around 20 miles starting at sea level, to find Jesus. He specifically sought out Jesus to help heal his son. This is an act of a desperate father, begging a healer to return back to his home.

(48-49) Jesus addresses "You people," meaning that he was talking both to the official and the thoughts of the general public around him, claiming that their belief is based on witnessing miracles. This man obviously believed that Jesus could heal, or else he would not have made this long journey. But he believed that Jesus had to be with his son to heal him.

(50-51) Jesus called for a bigger faith. Trust my words that I will heal your son and go home. Even before he returned, some of his servants came to tell him that his son was healed!

(52-54) The big reveal of God's power. The moment Jesus spoke to the official is the moment that his son was healed. He asked when "his condition began to improve" assuming a slow recovery out of his sickness, but the report came back that at 1pm, he recovered from his fever at once. The realization of the timing and the power of Jesus' promise grew the official's faith, and impacted his entire household. "His faith grew from 'crisis faith' (v. 47), to 'confident faith' (v. 50), to 'confirmed faith' (v. 53), to 'contagious faith' (v. 53)." (Constable's Comm.)

- **With these things in mind, reread the passage. Consider perspectives and angles you may not have noticed before. Consider the faith of the official. Do you notice anything different now?**

Jesus rebuked the mindset of the people. “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will never believe.” The official wanted to see his son miraculously healed. Jesus put the challenge out for this man to have faith. Return home, without seeing the miracle, and trust that I will keep my word when I promise that your son will live. “If the father refused to return to Capernaum without taking Jesus with him, he would show that he did not believe Jesus' word and would consequently receive no benefit because of his distrust. On the other hand, if he followed Jesus' order, he would be returning to the dying boy with no outward assurance that the lad would recover. He was forced to make the difficult choice between insisting on evidence and thus showing disbelief and of exercising faith without any tangible proof to encourage him.” (Expositor's Comm.) When we know what Jesus says but we do not see the effects right away, will we trust him? Will we believe that Jesus follows through on His word? He can be trusted because what He says He will do, He will do.

A man was desperate enough to walk for a day to meet Jesus to ask for healing. Then to walk away from the healer, in faith, trusting that in a short promise that his son will live with no visual confirmations. An immediate, slow, maybe even discouraging walk home follows. But God shows his faithfulness in keeping His promise and in taking time to review the progression of our life, we see that God works and puts things together. Have you ever experienced God working, either noticing in the moment or in hindsight that every detail was worked out by God? Have you shared that with others as a testimony to God's glory? The faith of the official's entire household changed: do the effects in your life affect those around you?

- **Looking Beyond the Miracle to Love like Jesus: While we may not be able to perform this miracle the way Jesus did, we are called by His new commandment to love as He loved. So what can we learn and apply to our lives? (Discuss your thoughts first)**

We can learn from the trust and faith of the official, but we have to notice that his faith grew because of God's faithfulness. Jesus made a promise and He kept His word. The consistency of Jesus' words and His love are things that believers can depend on. As extensions of His love, can people depend on us in the same way? We may not be able to promise healing from a distance, but when we tell someone we are going to do something, be somewhere, even if we say that we are going to keep covering their needs in prayer, do we follow through? Many times people can become disappointed by believers or a church that says one thing but does not follow through with its actions. Learning to live and love like Jesus means that we become intentional in what we say and how we act to follow through.

- **Share and Pray: Have you ever made a promise and failed to keep it in a way that hurt someone? What things has God put on your heart to speak and live out? Make plans to put your words into actions, even set a date and time for an accountability partner to check in with you.**



Beyond the Miracles of Jesus:

Jesus heals many: Matt 8:14-17, Mark 1:29-34, Luke 4:38-41 (NET)

Scripture

Matthew 8:14-17

Healings at Peter's House

14 Now when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying down, sick with a fever. 15 He touched her hand, and the fever left her. Then she got up and began to serve them. 16 When it was evening, many demon-possessed people were brought to him. He drove out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick. 17 In this way what was spoken by Isaiah the prophet was fulfilled:

"He took our weaknesses and carried our diseases."

Mark 1:29-34

Healings at Simon's House

29 Now as soon as they left the synagogue, they entered Simon and Andrew's house, with James and John. 30 Simon's mother-in-law was lying down, sick with a fever, so they spoke to Jesus at once about her. 31 He came and raised her up by gently taking her hand. Then the fever left her and she began to serve them. 32 When it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and demon-possessed. 33 The whole town gathered by the door. 34 So he healed many who were sick with various diseases and drove out many demons. But he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

Luke 4:38-41

38 After Jesus left the synagogue, he entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. 39 So he stood over her, commanded the fever, and it left her. Immediately she got up and began to serve them.

40 As the sun was setting, all those who had any relatives sick with various diseases brought them to Jesus. He placed his hands on every one of them and healed them. 41 Demons also came out of many, crying out, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

• With each miracle, we want to understand what is clear and obvious in the text, and then we want to reread each story to see if there are things to be understood that might not be easily seen. What do you see and understand from a straightforward reading of this story?

Here are some basic observations (instead of verse by verse, we will separate by discussing the two different healing stories):

(Simon Peter's Mother in Law): How often do we think about Simon Peter having a family? That should make us consider how great his call to discipleship must have been. In Jewish culture, high fever was considered a disease. The disciples presented a request to Jesus after watching Him heal others. In the Matthew and Luke accounts, Jesus touched her

before her healing. “His touch did not defile to healer, it healed the defiled.” (Constable’s Comm.) The fact that she could get up right away to serve shows that she was fully healed in an instant.

(Jesus Heals Many): The detail of the timing in these stories is important. When it was evening, after sunset, people brought their sick and possessed to Jesus. The sun setting signaled the end of the sabbath so people could travel further distances after their day of rest. They adhered to their cultural laws, then sought help for their needy as soon as they were allowed. While Luke’s account does not mention any touch to heal Simon’s mother in law, it is the only version that includes touching the many that come to the door of Simon’s home to be healed. Matthew’s account says the healings were done with “a word.” Jesus probably used both methods. Many were sick and demon possessed, showing the power and authority of Jesus over both physical and spiritual ailments. Matthew makes a connection to Messianic prophecy from Isaiah 53 to his readers.

• With these things in mind, reread the passage. Consider perspectives and angles you may not have noticed before. Consider the faith of the disciples and Simon’s mother, and all the people coming to be healed. Do you notice anything different now?

After seeing Jesus do work in His early ministry, the disciples bring forward a request to Jesus. They have seen Him turn water to wine, and heal a demon possessed man. Now they make a request for their own family, which precedes what the rest of the town is thinking as they wait for the sun to set.

Simon’s mother in law moves from being bedridden with a “high fever” to serving God in an instant! This not only shows the power of Jesus to heal so quickly, but also the response to being healed. We move from the burdens of our issues and disease to serving and responding to the healing grace of Jesus.

Those that are coming to this house for healing are coming at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. No one other than the demons really know who Jesus is yet, but they heard that there is someone that can help and so they go. Much like the father of the official to find healing for his son, when you are desperate for a solution, you do not hesitate to move. Even with just a little evidence of who Jesus was, people travelled some distances (waiting to the end of the sabbath) to find healing. That little bit a faith, enough to drive them to the power of Jesus, was what initiated their healing.

• Looking Beyond the Miracle to Love like Jesus: While we may not be able to perform this miracle the way Jesus did, we are called by His new commandment to love as He loved. So what can we learn and apply to our lives? (Discuss your thoughts first)

While the way the stories are written in the Bible are not meant to be exhaustively detailed recordings of every event and word said, the authors wrote every bit of conversation that was important. We know what Jesus said to the demons, but the lack of anything said otherwise during these healings communicates something beautiful in the love of Jesus. Who came down to the house? Many who were demon possessed and any who had relatives who were sick. That is an incredibly broad description. They approached Jesus at the door, and he



met them and healed them. There is no sermon, no recorded dialogue teaching about the importance of faith (like with the official's son and people dependant on witnessing the miracle). The people had enough faith to bring their sick to Jesus, and Jesus healed all of them. It did not matter where they came from, who they were, or even what their ailment was. He touched them, spoke words of healing, and met their needs.

"He does not demand that people believe he is the anointed one (none do) or even believe in the Jewish God. He does not require a person to be morally good... Jesus does not expect to gain personally from healing, for he never asks anyone he heals to follow him. Usually he orders them, often harshly, to keep quiet or go home." (Constable's Comm.)

When we help others, do we hesitate if they are different from us? Do we wait for them to become one of us before we sacrificially meet their needs? Can we live and love like Jesus, if someone comes to us or asks us for help, can we simply open the door, reach out and love them?

• Share and Pray: Has anyone that was very different than you asked for help where you hesitated because of who they were? Have you ever helped someone without hesitation? Is God calling you to love someone the way Jesus did right now? Pray together for these opportunities.