



MATTHEW

FROM 10,000 FEET

(Week 2) -

THE MIRACLE

This Week: Matthew records how Jesus chose twelve disciples and sent them out on a mission to announce that the kingdom of God has come. But their proclamation of the kingdom didn't just come with words, it came with the power and authority of the King Himself.

1 Corinthians 2:4

4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

You see, it's one thing to go, "Hey, guys, the kingdom is here!"

"Oh, okay. That's nice. No go away, crazy person."

It's another thing to say, "The kingdom of God is here..." And then have the invisible hand of the King reach down and turn someone's life upside down, which in God's economy is right side up.

You'll notice as we go through these chapters of Matthew that not everyone was keen on the Kingdom coming.

Big idea: The Jesus who *did* miracles does miracles.

The proclamation of the kingdom still comes with miraculous power — because the Jesus who did miracles does miracles because He is alive. He is a risen King.

Now, if you've grown up in western culture more than likely you struggle with the idea of miracles today. Let me take a moment to address that, because as Paul contended, we want to "destroy arguments and every

lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God."

The culture we live in today has an extreme hubris because of science. We have an overwhelming arrogance that we can know more than we can actually know and more than we actually do know, based upon a faulty view of science. Look at how it's portrayed in television and movies. If you want to know why someone did something, well, you just cut open their brain and there is the reason.

Religion is presented in the most patronizing way with statements like, "People need myths to make sense of life."

Living in such a culture, we often have a distorted view of miracles. So, let's define what the Bible means by miracle.

I'm paraphrasing Professor Michael Horton here, but — We often distinguish between natural and supernatural events, as if God isn't actively involved unless there's a miracle. The God of the Bible is involved at every single moment of every single day. The only question is, "How is He involved at the moment?"

This isn't to say everything is a miracle, but by their very nature miracles are special occurrences of God's obvious intervention in a life. Miracles don't happen every day. That's why they're miracles. That's why they're extraordinary. They are something extra ordinary in the ordinary reign of God upon His creation.

In the same way that revival is the manifestation of God's undeniable presence, a miracle is the manifestation of God's undeniable intervention in a person's life.

Miracles serve to get people's attention that God is alive and that He is communicating with us. Miracles verified the gospel in the day of Jesus. They confirmed God's message and His messengers.

Nicodemus said to Jesus, "We know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him."

Then Paul writes, "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works." (1 Cor. 12:12)

They confirmed God's message and His messengers. They serve that same purpose today.

Now I submit to you, the reason we don't see miracles happen at the same rate they did in the gospel accounts is that these accounts were written in days of heightened spiritual activity, meaning during a time of unprecedented revival. This is God in the flesh launching His public ministry. This is not same old same old.

There are times when the hand of God is unusually active in the life of the church, but those times are left to His sovereign grace.

Now there are examples all throughout church history, but a recent example is now referred to as the Jesus Movement of the late 60s and early 70s. Many of you came to faith during that period of American religious history. It was a time of heightened spiritual activity among young people in this country. During such times you always find more testimony of miraculous happenings.

But the gospel is about the continual verification of one specific miracle — the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And I say it is a verifiable miracle because that's the way the Bible presents it.

Acts 17:31

31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

So, the church is here to proclaim this one single miracle every Sunday, a miracle that can be proven every Sunday when people meet the risen Christ. It's the miracle of God's communication.

“A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.” John 3:27

Now, if you're still not convinced, here's a quick apologetic regarding this idea that the Bible presents the resurrection as a verifiable miracle. The gospel of John gives us a way of verification. He writes:

John 7:17

17 Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching

comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

You engage with this book and you will find that Christ is living. But Jesus didn't come so that you would live a certain way. He came that you might have life. You cannot live at all until you have life. And the gospel contends that no matter what strides you make morally, you do not have life until you turn to the author of life — Jesus Christ.

Parallel #4 and #5 to the life of Moses - In Egypt, God's people are rescued from slavery and given the Law. Soon after the covenant ceremony, the people fall into idol worship breaking God's covenant. In contrast to their breaking of the covenant, Jesus goes down to the Jordan river to be baptized by John to show His commitment to God's covenant with Israel. (Chapter 3)

The generation that broke covenant with God is not allowed to enter into the Promised Land. Later, after that generation dies, the next generation crosses the Jordan River with Joshua and enters the promised land.

Jesus is inviting God's people to a new beginning with their God through the gospel. Just as the Jews could not enter the promised land with Moses (the Law), but they entered it with Joshua. The name Joshua means "God our Savior." It's the same today. You cannot enter the promised land through the Law, but only by the gospel, only by grace.

Big idea: The Jesus who *did* miracles does miracles.

MATTHEW 8 - 10

- After concluding His great teaching on the kingdom (The Sermon on the Mount), the next section of Matthew shows Jesus bringing the reality of the kingdom into the lives of people.
- Matthew has arranged nine incidents of Jesus bringing the power of His kingdom into the lives of hurting, broken people.
- There are three groups of three stories and they're all about people who are sick or have broken bodies or are in danger and Jesus heals them by these acts of grace and power.

- Now, between these two triads of stories we find two parallel stories about Jesus's call to follow Him. Matthew's making a point here. The only way we can actually experience the power of God's kingdom in Christ is by following Jesus. (Same point as John 17:7)
- After Jesus demonstrates the power of His kingdom, He sends out His twelve chosen disciples to do what He has been doing — healing the sick, casting out demons and proclaiming the kingdom of God.
- This leads into chapter 10 where Jesus tells His disciples how they should handle themselves on this mission He is sending them on.
- They will find many among the children of Israel who will accept Jesus as Messiah, but there will also be many, especially the powerful, who will reject and persecute them. The powerful reject Jesus and His disciples because by becoming followers of Jesus they stand to lose a lot.

Big idea: The Jesus who *did* miracles does miracles. And if you think back to how you thought and acted before you became a Christian, then you know what a miracle it is that you're even a Christian. Salvation is a miracle because it's a supernatural act.

CHAPTER 8

[LEPER] Sends proof to the priests through a healed leper, showing that His power is according to the word. (Word & power)

[CENTURION] Rebukes Israel by saying this Gentile centurion has greater faith than any of God's people. The centurion's servant is healed by the word of Jesus. Again, word & power.

[HEALS SICK WOMAN] He fulfills the word spoken by Isaiah by healing people of sicknesses. His miracles confirm His gospel — word & power.

Matthew 8:19-22

19 And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." 20 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

[FOLLOW ME] Jesus's response to this scribe is not very comforting. This is almost the exact opposite of how the gospel is often presented to people today. "Do you want peace and stability? Well, Jesus will make you feel like an exile wherever you live." Sounds like Jesus needs a marketing class.

21 Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." 22 And Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

"Let me give a nice funeral for my parents." "If you want to follow Me, I'm leaving now. You can either follow Me or throw a nice party for some dead people." Does Jesus need some lessons in bedside manner? No, Jesus was showing both these men their hearts. Jesus will show you your true heart. He'll show you what you love. He'll show you what you're committed to — Himself or lesser things. It's this idea — tell me what you want and I'll show you who you are.

If you truly want to be genuine, Jesus will cut right through to the fake you that you hide behind.

He's going to crush that fake you.

He's telling these guys — you don't get to see the power of God with a divided heart. You don't get to see miracles on your terms.

We will not see the power of God with a casual Christianity.

[CALMS THE SEA] This speaks to His divinity. Who commands the sea, but God alone? (“Why do you have such little faith in Me?”)

[DEMONIZED MEN] Jesus casts demons out of two men. The people of the town come out — not to thank him for showing mercy to these men — but to ask him to leave. Some people are frightened by the miracles of Jesus. I think people today are often freaked out by signs of the supernatural.

CHAPTER 9

[PARALYZED MAN] Jesus shows He has authority to forgive sins.

Now, this might be one of the reasons some people freak out about the miracles of Jesus. It shows there is someone in the universe

greater than they are and therefore someone they are accountable to for their lives.

Every sin demands a penalty. Since God is the author of life, to rebel against God is to invite the ultimate penalty, which is death. In order to escape that penalty a fitting atonement has to be made. Atonement simply means “Christ died for us.” The miracle of the resurrection confirms that doctrine.

So, every miracle Jesus does backs up His word — word and power.

[FOLLOW ME] Jesus calls Matthew and stresses that He came for the unrighteous, not the righteous.

[DEAD GIRL] He raises someone's daughter from the dead.

[BLIND MEN] Jesus opens the eyes of two blind men.

[MUTE] Jesus opens the mouth of someone who is mute.

And every one of those incidents can be used as an analogy for the gospel itself. When you were dead in your trespasses and sins He made you alive with Christ. The scales have to fall from your eyes before you see that Christ is who He said He is. And if you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is risen from the dead you will be saved.

Everything up to this point can be summarized by what Matthew writes at the end of chapter 9:

Matthew 9:35-38

35 And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.

Proclamation and power. This is what the church should always be praying for, this is what we should long for, but much of the church today has become too comfortable and satisfied with latest business methods and best marketing practices to grow the church.

36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. **37** Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is

plentiful, but the laborers are few; **38** therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

CHAPTER 10

Jesus tells His disciples to pray for laborers to be sent out into the harvest and then says, “Guess what? I’m answering your prayer with you. You’re the laborers. Congratulations!”

Jesus sends them to the children of Israel first.

Then Jesus teaches them about how they should handle themselves on this mission He is sending them on.

Up to this point, He could basically ask them, “What situation haven’t I handled? Demons. Gone. Sicknes. Healed. Storm. Shut down. Okay, so your faith is all built up right? Now, I’m sending you to people. But don’t fear them, because I can handle can any situation.”

Then He gives them this little reminder:

Matthew 10:24-33

24 “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. **25** It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the

house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

26 “So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. **27** What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. **28** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Do not fear speaking out about Christ. He assures us over and over again that we should not fear speaking out.

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. **30** But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. **31** Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. **32** So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, **33** but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

He assures them that they are valued. Later, His death will demonstrate that in an even more substantial way. “Greater love has no one than this... So, don’t be afraid to speak the truth about Me.”

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says that evangelism isn’t the fulfillment of a duty, but it’s the overflow of our very relationship with Christ.

This last week Thom Rainer had a blog about NINE CHANGES WE MUST MAKE OR DIE.

We must start doing. Most of us like the idea of evangelism more than we like doing evangelism. Try a simple prayer and ask God to give you gospel opportunities. You may be surprised how He will use you.

We must become houses of prayer. Stated simply, we are doing too much in our own power. We are really busy, but we are not doing the business of God.

Listen to the things Jesus says in these three chapters to people:

“I will; be clean.”

“I will come and heal him.”

“Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.”

“Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?”

“Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.”

“Follow me.”

“For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

“Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.”

“According to your faith be it done to you.”

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”

“Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.”

“Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”

“Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

Those are amazing words. Those are the kind of words that have to be backed up with more than wishful thinking.

Who else in the history of the world could get away with saying that? And not only saying it,

but to have countless people take Him up on it? If I said, “Hey, guys, lose everything for me and it’ll be the best thing you ever did,” this church would be empty before the service was over. But Jesus said it then, He says it now and somehow He gets away with it. How is that? There’s still a miracle testifying that His words are true – He has risen from the dead. Don’t believe me? Just ask Him.