

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (May 19, 2024)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

Do you believe in miracles? Have you experienced a miracle? We live in a world that pretends it's all science, all business, all facts and figures, all about what we can touch, taste, hear, smell and see, hard realities, tough luck ... but not far below the surface, often rising to the surface, is a plea for the miraculous.

When trouble comes, most pray for a miracle. When the diagnosis catches us by surprise, we pray. When we are feeling hopeless, friendless, directionless, most of us pray for Divine help, a miracle. Surveys of religion in America reveal that 55% pray daily, 22% weekly or monthly. Even some who identify as atheists pray occasionally. That surprised me ... and then it didn't.

There comes a point, will come a point, usually many points, in the life of every person past, present, and future, when this world and what it offers is not enough. We know deep down we need more. Gizmos and doohickeys, technology and hard currency, are not enough.

We need a miracle. And that's just what the Christian faith declares we have been given. God miraculously broke through the mundane and revealed Himself, His power, and His love. That is a much bigger miracle than we had imagined possible. And much more important. I believe miracles, healings, supernatural events, happen today. Not all my Christian friends agree with me on this. I believe we (Christians and non-Christians) are the beneficiaries of countless miracles each day, mostly unnoticed, often taken for granted, usually overlooked. And then there are "stop the press, hard to miss, overwhelming" miracles. Both kinds take our breath away, renew our souls, provide a glimpse of God's power and love.

In today's passage from the book of Acts we read about two dramatic miracles, and the effect they had on two individuals, and on their entire communities.

When we pray for a miracle are we prepared for what will happen? God always gives, is always present, always breaks through, when we pray for a miracle. Keep praying ... and then pay attention!

The Holy Spirit Working Through Peter (Acts 9: 31-43) ESV

³¹ So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

³² Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. ³³ There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. ³⁴ And Peter

said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. ³⁵ And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

³⁶ Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. ³⁷ In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. ³⁸ Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, "Please come to us without delay." ³⁹ So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. ⁴⁰ ***But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed;*** and turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. ⁴¹ And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. ⁴² And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³ And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner."

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What does this passage tell us about how miracles happen?
2. What was the response to these two God miracles?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3. What does, "walking in the fear of the Lord" mean? v.31
4. What does, "he (Peter) put them all outside" mean? v.40

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

5. If you could pray and receive one miracle, what would it be?
6. Have you experienced/seen a miracle from God? Share.
7. Do miracles happen today? How and why do they happen?
8. Why don't miracles, dramatic ones, happen more often? Why can't we, as Christians, count on miracles happening when and where we want, whenever we pray for them?
9. What miracle do you need in your life today? Pray.
10. Who do you need to pray for? Pray for them this week.

As you spend time praying, remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God to make you aware of miracles in your everyday life. Ask God to help you know how, when, and what, to pray. Ask God to grant you the greatest miracle, a life with Him. He will, because He loves you.