

The Miracle You Never Saw Coming

What are we to make of these instances where we had faith like a mustard seed to see a mountain move, but it didn't budge?

Is that in the Bible? The answer is mostly no, but also yes.

This conversation between Jesus and his apostle disciple, little James, is in fact nowhere in the scripture. However, the concept is thoroughly biblical. Genesis to Revelation, the theme of power out of pain and strength out of weakness, is all over the place.

Jesus did have a disciple named James.

Two, actually. We know that the James in this scene is the James mentioned in **Luke 6:15**. This is where Jesus was picking choosing His apostles after spending time in prayer and choses James the son of Alphaeus.

It's the same James referenced in **Mark 15:40**. *"Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome."*

He's given this nickname to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee, one of the two sons of thunder. Then you have James the Less. The word for less can be translated as young or little.

"Little James" is actually quite faithful to the text.

Was he handicapped or in some way disabled? That's not in the Bible. That is the creative imagination bucket. It does illustrate a beautiful and important concept. Awareness of life with disability is important.

One of the powerful things about this scene that helps us to see life through the eyes of someone who has a physical setback or ailment.

While not in the Bible, this is something I believe God wants all of us to care deeply about as we think about the last, the least of these, and the often overlooked.

In this scene, Jesus is sending out the disciples to go out 2 by 2.

This is wise in many ways. It provides both encouragement and accountability. Being together and having each other's back.

That is something that very much did happen. James the Less did get sent out on a trip. We don't know who his buddy was per se.

Matthew 10:1 *"When he, Jesus, had called his 12 disciples to him, he gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease."*

James would have been sent out with this crew. In this scene, the tension is powerful. The idea of someone is being called to participate in a healing that they themselves hadn't experienced.

God working through me, but He hadn't worked for me.

Can God be glorified by a trial that for whatever reason, he allows to remain?

Paul, the apostle, who had a famous thorn in the flesh.

"I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me."
Galatians 4:15

"See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!"

Galatians 6:11

He talks about it in **2 Corinthians 12:7-10**.

"A messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it would depart from me. And he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you. My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, most gladly, I will rather boast in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities and reproaches and needs and persecutions and distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

Paul is watched God's power flow through him mightily. Yet he talks about an area of his life that despite his prayers remains unhealed. He is living out what Jesus and little James were talking about in the scene. The greater story of being trusted with a trial.

I want to give you three facts from Scripture we need to know in order to survive Saturday.

1) _____ is a problem.

Matthew 5:45 *"He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."*

2 Timothy 3:12 *"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."*

John 15:18 *"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first."*

2) Pain has a _____.

Pain's problem is Jesus. He is working all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purposes. That includes your pain.

Pain has a short shelf life. The truth is that pain is not going to last forever. What God wants to do through pain is going to last forever.

2 Corinthians 4:17,18 *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."*

God is going to work to cause every hard, every evil, every brutal thing to accomplish what He wants to do through it so that His will is done and not the enemy's.

The New Testament says if we're born again, we're in Christ positionally. If we are in Christ, for it to get to us, it has to go through Him first.

Remember, God's sovereignty: everything that happens to us, God either allowed or caused to happen.

C.S. Lewis said, *"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains. Pain is God's megaphone to rouse a deaf world."*

These are the benefits of difficult seasons, like the one in the show James the Less is written to have wrestled with.

3) Pain is not _____ problem.

1 Corinthians 6:20 *"For you were bought at a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." You are not your own anymore."*

Jesus bled and died for you and rose from the dead, so He could buy you back to God. You are not your own. You don't belong to you. That means your pain doesn't belong to you. In this life, you can say, *"God, this pain – it's your pain. It's up to you to do something with it."*

What is the miracle you never saw coming?

I believe it's the one that happens inside you when God doesn't do for you what you ask Him to.

I believe in those moments if we could hear Him, He is saying, the mountain is about to move. Only this isn't going to be the mountain of Me taking a trial away. It's going to be the mountain moving of Me sustaining you in a trial that in My sovereignty, I've chosen to allow to remain.

You see, in God's providence, He can redeem what in His sovereignty He could have prevented.

Peace that passes understanding is God bypassing my mind and sustained me in what I would never have imagined I could have continued to praise Him in the midst of.

It's not as appealing, but sustaining grace is every bit as miraculous as the signs and wonders that we crave.

If God ever withholds something you want, it's because He wants to do for you and through you and around you something you don't even have the faith to ask for.

Sunday is coming. To quote the episode, "Remember, you will be healed. It's only a matter of time."