



THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

The Miracles of Jesus

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INTRODUCTION

The lessons of this quarter are based upon the recorded miracles which Jesus performed. Nicodemus was attracted to Jesus and convinced of His godliness by miracles which are not recorded in the Gospels. The Gospel of John contains seven signs (miracles) which the author uses to prove the divinity of Christ. We are told by John that Jesus also performed many other signs which are not recorded in his book. The miracles of Jesus were not an end in themselves. They reflected glory on God and validated the ministry of Jesus. They also inspired faith in some of those who witnessed them.

The Lord promised that "these signs" would follow the ministry of those that believe. He even assured the disciples that greater things would be accomplished when He had ascended to the Father. Since Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever, we have every right to expect miracles to the glory of God. The apostles prayed after Pentecost that God would confirm their preaching of His word by signs and wonders. Let us pray and have faith for God-glorifying miracles which inspire faith in our glorified Lord.

These lessons were written for the Emmanuel Pentecostal Sunday School by the pastor, Robert D. Kalis. This series is now complete. The titles are listed below and are available to any and all:

The Men and Women of Genesis	The Miracles of Jesus
Lessons From Exodus	The Parables of Jesus
The Ten Commandments	The Personal Ministry of Jesus
Wilderness Examples	According to Luke- I & II
Possessing the Land of Promise	We Beheld His Glory (John I)
The Days of the Judges	Full of Grace & Truth(John II)
Israel's Early Kings	Holy Ghost Acts - I & II
Lessons From the Kings	Matthew: The King & His Kingdom-I & II
The Captivity and Return	

JESUS' FIRST MIRACLE

Read: John 2:1-11; Matthew 19:8-15

Memory Verse: Then answered Jesus and said unto them, verily verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. (John 5:19)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *JESUS sanctified marriage by performing His first miracle at a wedding.*
2. *The drink that Jesus made at the wedding feast was delicious and certainly a non-intoxicating beverage representing the new wine of the new covenant.*
3. *It is most beneficial to us to follow the advice of Mary to the servants: "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."*
4. *The purpose of the miracle was to inspire faith in Jesus.*

I -- JESUS AT THE WEDDING: The traditional marriage ceremony reminds us that Jesus sanctified marriage by performing His first miracle at a wedding feast. Though Jesus Himself did not marry, he did not demand that His followers imitate Him in this matter. He did advise against divorce for every cause other than adultery. The disciples concluded that then it might be better for a man not to marry. Jesus said that everyone was not able to "receive this saying." He indicated that those who remained unmarried (or continent in marriage) for the kingdom of heaven's sake, are highly regarded by God (see Matt. 19:8-12). Immediately after this interesting exchange between Jesus and His disciples, the Lord took little children (the fruit of marriage) into His arms and blessed them and said, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14). We must conclude then that the Lord approved marriage and also continence according to the individual's calling.

This wedding was in Cana of Galilee. Just before the record of this wedding we are introduced to Nathaniel. Jesus convinced him of His divinity by one Word. Later, we are casually informed that Nathaniel was from Cana (see John 21:2). It is quite

possible that the marriage in Cana was that of Nathaniel. There is no way to be sure. Some think that the bridegroom was John (because of his reticence to use his own name in his gospel).

At any rate, Jesus and His disciples were invited to the affair. Mary, Jesus' mother was there also, but no mention is made of Joseph. He probably had died since no mention is made of him in the Gospels other than that Jesus was his son (Luke 4:22 & John 6:42). How good to have Jesus at the wedding. A marriage ought to be a joyous time, and it ought to be a holy and sacred occasion also. How we begin a new phase of our lives determines to a large degree how that phase will develop. The wedding of a believer ought to be made exceedingly joyful and sacred by the manifested Presence of the Lord Jesus.

II -- WHAT JESUS DID AT THE WEDDING: It was there at the wedding feast that Jesus performed His first miracle. All other stories of miracles performed by Jesus as a boy are pure fantasy. This was the first and it occurred after He had been anointed by the Holy Spirit at His baptism. Let us begin by stating that Jesus was certainly not rude to His mother, and that He did not use His divine creative power to make an intoxicating drink. Fermented wine is a type of fallen creation. The new (unfermented) wine of the kingdom is the blood of redemption. The word "wine" is used in the New Testament for both fermented and unfermented, or new, wine. Abbott explains in his *Dictionary of Religious Knowledge*: "It is tolerably clear that the word wine does not necessarily imply fermented liquor. It signifies only a production of the vine." It is inconceivable that Jesus should use His power to create a thing that is corrupt and evil and which can exclude from the kingdom of heaven.

What Jesus said to His mother literally translated is: "What to me and to thee?" The guests had been drinking alcoholic wine. They drank more than they should have and the supply was exhausted. Mary came to Jesus with the implied suggestion that He make some. It was against this implied proposal and not against the person of His mother that Jesus' remark was directed. "What concern is that of ours," is what Jesus' remark amounts to. And when He said "mine hour is not yet come," He had in mind the hour when the heavenly wine would flow from His body on the cross.

The Old Testament was, in part, a covenant of water and washings, of external things. The New Testament was altogether a covenant of redeeming blood, of life, a spiritual thing. Jesus, here at the very beginning of His earthly ministry gave a symbol of the New Covenant which was to supersede the old. So He changed the water in the stone jars into the blood of the grape. These jars contained somewhere between 108 to 162 gallons. What a drunken orgy might have resulted had the miraculous wine been

intoxicating. Unthinkable!

Ernest Gordon, author of "Layman's Greek New Testament" records in another of his works: "It is inconceivable that our Lord's first miracle after the reception of the Spirit should have been to make intoxicants, ever the great opponent of the life of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18), or that the wine He prepared for the feast was fermented, that is, decayed.

"Alcohol is the true aqua mortis (liquid death). The Lord of Life would not in any way have associated Himself with it. That would have been to ruin the great symbol of the Communion. "Ye do show **the Lord's** death," said Paul. The Lord's death differed from all other deaths in that His holy flesh did not see corruption. His body never became a corpse (Acts 2:27-31)." His conclusion is that fermented wine, which is a dead and decaying substance is a totally improper representation for the Communion Cup.

He concludes regarding this first miracle. "Could the Creator when He came in the flesh have made a destructive drink? There are two instances of His creative activity in His human life: when he created wine at Cana and when He created bread and fish in feeding the multitudes. Did He create moldy bread? Did He create rotten fish? Did He create fermented wine? It is unbelievable!"

III -- WHATSOEVER HE SAITH: One of the men who was used greatly in the area of Divine healing often advised the seekers that: "The secret of deliverance is instant obedience." This advice was based on careful observation of many cases. It is scriptural, for we learn from John that Jesus will manifest Himself where His commandments are obeyed (John 14:21, 23). Mary advised the servants at the wedding to do whatever Jesus suggested. This resulted in their witnessing the historic and miraculous transformation of water into wine. We would do well to act upon the leading of the Spirit. To lead out in prayer, to testify in or out of meeting, to read a scripture or obey any prompting of the Spirit will bring a manifestation of the presence of the Lord. It is in His presence that the miracles of the Kingdom are wrought. Don't hesitate to obey. **Whatsoever He saith unto you, DO IT!**

IV -- THE RESULT OF THE MIRACLE: Jesus obviously did not perform a miracle to satisfy the inordinate appetite for intoxicating drink. He did a miraculous work of creation to introduce the symbol of the New Covenant: the life giving juice of the fruit of the vine representing the blood of the everlasting covenant. He manifested His glory by this miracle and caused the disciples to believe on Him. Let us all drink deeply from the wine of the Kingdom that we may have His life in us, for except we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God we have no life in us.

*The very same Jesus
The wonder-working Jesus
Oh! praise His Name
He's just the same
The very same Jesus.*

NOTES:

THE MIRACULOUS CATCHES OF FISH

Read: Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 17:24-27
John 21:1-25

Memory Verse: For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that they may marvel. (John 5:20)

What we should learn from this Lesson

- 1. Jesus has dominion over nature.*
- 2. The Lord goes to miracle lengths to launch forth workers in His Kingdom.*
- 3. The Lord possessed miraculous knowledge regarding the fish with the coin in its mouth.*
- 4. The Lord will perform miracles, if necessary, to provide for His faithful workers.*

I -- THE GREAT CATCH: Peter and Andrew and probably James and John had met Jesus before the encounter on Galilee's shore (see John 1:40-42). John the Baptist had called Jesus "the Lamb of God" and Andrew had followed Him that day with another unnamed disciple (possibly John). They saw where Jesus was staying and abode with Him and were convinced that He was indeed the long-expected Messiah. Some time passed, however, and the four were back at their trade as fishermen.

Then came that day which forever changed the lives of the four fishermen. It began like many other days. They set out at night to ply their trade. They fished all night, but caught nothing. Tired, and probably a little grumpy (fishermen who catch nothing often are), they returned to shore. The nets had to be cleaned even though there was no catch. Seaweed and other foreign substances had to be washed off. While they were attending to this necessary chore, a large crowd approached the lake. Soon they saw that the crowd surrounded Jesus. They pressed around Him so that it was difficult for Him to communicate with those at the rear of the crowd. Then Jesus saw Peter and the two boats on the shore and He got into one of them and asked Peter to

push it out a little way from the land. Peter gladly complied and Jesus then sat down in the boat and taught the people the word of God.

When Jesus had ended His teaching, He invited Peter to launch the boat out into the deep water and let down the net for a good catch. Peter, no doubt, thought of the net which he had just finished cleaning and of the long, unfruitful night. "Master, we have toiled all night and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net" (Luke 5:5). Immediately the net enclosed a great school of fish. So many fish were caught that as they tried to lift them into the ship, the net began to break. Quickly, the call went out (maybe Peter whistled) for James and John to come to the rescue. Both ships were filled with the fish so that they almost sank. Now the fishermen were astonished. They knew the lake and its fish well. There was no doubt in their mind whatsoever: this was a supernatural phenomenon. Peter fell at Jesus' feet, confessing that he was a sinful man.

But now Jesus gave another invitation. "Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men," he declared. "Follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men," He invited. The decision was not difficult. Any worry about the supply of their needs was obliterated by this miraculous provision. All four responded to the call and followed Jesus from that day on. Surely the fish were not left on the beach to rot, but others apparently (perhaps Zebedee, the father of James and John) disposed of the fish and carried on the business, for the four partners immediately forsook all and followed Jesus.

II -- THE NEED FOR WORKERS: Jesus performed this miracle especially to launch the four fishermen out into full-time service. There is a very great need for ministers and missionaries today. Too few are receptive to the call to the ministry. To be sure, the call must come from God. But every Christian ought to consecrate and offer himself to God for the Gospel ministry. Then God will surely choose some and make His call clear in their hearts. Opposition often arises, and not infrequently from those near and dear. This God allows so that the call is made sure. Then He will go to miracle lengths to start His servants out in His ministry. Somehow the idea has become natural, to think that the Lord cannot or will not provide adequately for His "employees." It is the unanimous testimony of those who have proved it, that those who truly do His work are well provided for. And, of course, we must consider the rewards hereafter. Despite these considerations, the highest motive for entering His service is love: love for the Savior who gave Himself for us, and love for those whom He died to save.

III -- PETER FILES HIS JOINT RETURN: Jesus was careful not to offend the civil authori-

ties. He asked Peter if the authorities assessed taxes of their own family or of others. Peter thought the tax was assessed from others. This tax was probably the half shekel temple tax that the Sanhedrin claimed from all the Jews. Jesus implied that since the temple was His Father's house He should go free. Nevertheless, in order not to offend anyone, He advised Peter to go down to the Sea (Galilee: they were in Capernaum) and cast a hook and line into the water. The Lord foretold (miraculously) that the first fish which Peter caught would have a one shekel coin in its mouth. Peter then was to take that shekel and pay the temple tax for himself and for Jesus. So it came to pass that Peter filed a joint tax return with Jesus.

This was a miracle of supernatural knowledge. Jesus certainly did not create the money in the fish's mouth, (He was not in the counterfeiting business) but He was given Divine knowledge about how to pay the tax. There is surely a little humor in this story. It is interesting how the Lord was able to use fish for His glory. It is interesting to note the various animals which the Lord was able to use in Old and New Testaments. This incident surely must have been an encouragement to Peter and intensified his commitment to the cause of Christ. The Lord often uses His faithful servants today in some remarkable, and sometimes supernatural, way to show and prove His care and to encourage them in their commitment to Him.

IV -- COME AND DINE: When Jesus was taken and crucified, the disciples failed the Lord miserably. They failed to grasp His teaching about His sacrificial death. They did not have the least idea about His resurrection (though the Pharisees did). Judas betrayed Him. Peter denied Him despite an explicit warning. The three fell asleep when Jesus asked them to watch and pray with Him. Then all of them forsook Him and fled. They did not understand the crucifixion. When Jesus rose and revealed Himself to them, some of them (Thomas, at least) were slow to believe. Peter was undoubtedly ashamed of his failure. Jesus sent word to them that they should go to Galilee and that there they would see Him. So they went and waited. Peter proposed a fishing trip and the others joined (even Thomas and Nathaniel). They fished all night and caught nothing. In the morning Jesus was on the shore, but they did not know it was He. "Catch anything, boys?" He called from the shore. "No, nothing," they replied. "Cast your net on the right and ye shall find," Jesus advised. They did and immediately the net was swarming with big whoppers. John knew at once that the figure on the shore was Jesus. Peter flung himself into the sea to swim more quickly to Jesus. The rest struggled to draw the net to land and finally counted 153 great fishes.

The Lord Jesus had a fire going and asked for some of the fish they had just caught to fix for breakfast (fish you catch yourself always taste better). But Jesus already

had fish and bread on the fire before the disciples came to land. Where did He get them? How would you like to eat a meal prepared by the Son of God just risen from the dead? All doubts vanished from the disciples' minds. Their self condemnation ceased. Jesus still loved them and despite their weakness and failure still wanted to use them. Peter was especially commissioned to "feed My sheep." They all heard the great commission "Go and preach and teach and baptize."

Despite the failure of the past the Lord is anxious for His workers to go and do His bidding. He restores our souls. This was a miracle to inspire renewed commitment to the cause of Christ. Let us renew our commitment to His cause.

NOTES:

THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC

Read: Matthew 9:1-8; Luke 5:17-26
Mark 2:1-12

Memory Verse: For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. (John 5:21)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *We must overcome all obstacles to reach Jesus with our needs.*
2. *It may sometimes be necessary to do something out of the ordinary to obtain help from the Lord.*
3. *There is only one way to obtain forgiveness of sin and that is through Jesus, the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world.*
4. *Sin can hinder divine healing.*
5. *Healing glorifies the Lord and is a manifestation of His kingdom power.*

I -- OVERCOMING THE OBSTACLES: Jesus had just healed a leper and asked him not to publicize the deliverance. The healed leper, however, published the miraculous deliverance everywhere. This resulted in such crowds pressing around Jesus to hear Him, and especially to be healed by Him, that He could hardly enter any city. He had to withdraw to desolate areas. Finally, He crossed the lake (Galilee) in a boat and came to "his own city", Capernaum. There, He entered into a home (possibly Peter's home where He had recently healed Peter's mother-in-law), but soon the news of His presence there was known. The Pharisees and doctors of the law came to see (and criticize) Him. The crowds were attracted to the house until not only was the house filled with people, but even outside the house the crowd overflowed. The religious leaders were there from Jerusalem and Judea and from Galilee. "And the power of the Lord was present to heal" (Luke 5:17).

A young man was brought to Jesus suffering from paralysis. Unable to come to Jesus alone, he came nonetheless, carried on a stretcher by four helpful friends. But now a difficulty arose. There was such a crowd swarming in and around the house that it seemed impossible to get the suffering invalid to the Great Physician. These friends,

however, were not so easily deterred. They soon devised a way to surmount the obstacles, and mount they did: to the roof of the house, above where Jesus was. There they began to lift the roof tiles until they had an opening through which to lower their afflicted friend. All three Gospel narratives record that Jesus saw the faith of these four and it moved Him to act on behalf of the afflicted one.

May we, too, have the faith to surmount all difficulties and doubts in applying to Jesus for whatever deliverance we may be in need of. It is puzzling that often the same suffering "saints" who, because of their affliction, cannot come to the Lord's house to be prayed for, have no difficulty whatever in going to the doctor's office, where often they must sit in a close waiting room with other patients suffering from who - knows - what! Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, and today, and forever. Come to **Him** and stick to Him. Overcome every difficulty until He sees your faith and meets your need.

II -- THE DOUBLE CURE: When the Lord spoke to the young man, He said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven" (Matt.9:7). This was an astonishing announcement. The Pharisees and doctors of the law who were seated there in the house immediately began to reason in their minds, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:7). What the young man himself thought we are not told. Perhaps he had been told that his sickness was the result of sin. Whether the sin hindered the young man's faith, or whether it stood directly in the way of his healing, Jesus took care of first things first. The Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world, did have the authority on earth to forgive sins. The religious leaders could not grasp this and so quite naturally thought that Jesus was presumptuous to say such a thing. The Lord, however, perceived their thoughts and reasoned logically with them. "What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?" He then proved His authority to forgive sin by declaring, "that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he said to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house" (Luke 5:22-24).

The Lord is always ready to forgive and heal. The promise recorded in James is: "...and the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:15). This is what Jesus came to earth to do: "That we might be saved from our enemies" (Luke 1:71). Sickness and death and sin are the greatest enemies of mankind. They are the work of the devil. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8).

Let us not allow the enemy to deceive us into not coming to Jesus for healing

because we are not worthy or because of some condemnation. If we have committed sin, we need only confess and He will forgive and He will heal. Somehow, the enemy is robbing the people of God of glorious experiences of Divine Healing today. He has made it to seem as if the Lord is very reluctant to heal and only if we are very unusual in faith and holiness can we expect to receive healing from the Lord. But if Jesus is the same today as he was when He walked in Galilee, we must conclude that He will readily heal and forgive all who apply to Him. Let us claim the rightful heritage of believers: The Lord, our physician (Exodus 15:26).

III -- SIN AND SICKNESS AND DEATH: All sickness and death are the direct or indirect result of sin. Death found entrance into the newly created world because of the sin of our first parents. Had they remained sinless, death would not have entered. They would have been able to partake of the tree of life and live forever (see Genesis 3:22). Sickness is indirectly the result of sin. The leprosy which Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, contracted was the direct result of his covetousness and deceit. The mental breakdown of Nebuchadnezzar was the direct result of his pride. The impotent man whom Jesus healed at the pool of Bethesda, also, was obviously suffering because of sin, for Jesus later advised him, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." Venereal disease is the result of the sin of impurity. Liver Sclerosis is often caused by the sin of intemperance. The horrible disease known as AIDS is in most cases the result of wicked life-style. Is it not possible also that when we live carelessly in this world that we take ourselves out from the Divine protection and become open to the plagues and pestilences common in the world today? (Psalm 91).

If in time of sickness, we do not receive the deliverance needed, it is not amiss to search our hearts to see if there be any hidden or secret sin that hinders our healing. An unforgiving spirit can hinder deliverance, or a secret evil habit. The Lord is merciful. He is anxious not only to heal our bodies, but also to restore to spiritual health our immortal spirit. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction (death)" (Psalm 102:3-4).

IV -- HEALED AND AMAZED: Immediately, when Jesus commanded the young man to arise, he was healed. He must have nearly danced for joy. Think of what it probably meant. Now he could hold a job again. Now he could hope for a family and home of his own. Now he could go up to Jerusalem; in short he could live again!

The crowd, and remember what a huge crowd there was, had witnessed something they had never seen before. This was one of Jesus' earliest healing miracles. They "glorified God, and were filled with fear and amazement." There should be

similar miracles in the church of Jesus Christ today. Thank God for the occasional miraculous healings we do witness, but let us claim our "children's bread" and pray that the Lord will confirm the preached word by "stretching forth His hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:30). Then the name of our Lord will be more greatly glorified.

NOTES:

THE HEALING OF THE IMPOTENT MAN

Read: John 5:1-47

Memory Verse: For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. (John 5:22)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *The Lord is master even of chronic ailments.*
2. *The sufferer must will to be healed.*
3. *Jealousy and envy destroy sound judgment.*
4. *Jesus identifies Himself with the Father.*
5. *John the Baptist, the Father Himself, the scriptures, as well as Jesus' works, bear witness that Jesus is God's Son.*

I -- PITIFUL PLIGHT: Jesus came to Jerusalem for another feast (probably the Passover). Near the sheep market was a pool where "a great multitude of impotent folk," some blind, others lame or paralyzed, lay waiting for the seasonal "troubling of the water." At the "certain season" when the waters were troubled by "an angel" the first individual to step into the pool was healed of whatever affliction he suffered. The despair must have been deep in a place like that. To think that only one out of the great multitude could be healed at that "certain season" made the outlook bleak. We sometimes encounter similar despairing groups of sufferers at the nursing homes we visit from time to time. The slim hope of deliverance kept that sick crowd at the pool. "Maybe, by some good fortune, I will be the first to get to the pool next time," many of them must have thought. And when one was delivered, think of the disappointment of those who were left at the pool of Bethesda.

II -- WHEN JESUS COMES: Now Jesus passed that way and saw a man there whom He realized had suffered from an infirmity for thirty-eight years. Jesus had compassion on this man and asked him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" In believing the Lord for

deliverance, it is important that we really **will** to claim that victory. We ought never to sink into a despairing coexistence with some chronic malady. Determine to obtain the promise. Don't let the enemy deceive you into thinking that your infirmity is your "thorn in the flesh." Even if the ailment is chronic, the Lord is able. Keep on believing and deep on obeying. Victory is promised by the Word of God.

The impotent man probably thought that Jesus was offering to stay with him to help him into the pool at the next "certain season." He explained that he had no one to help him into the pool and so another always obtained deliverance. Jesus did not discuss the man's difficulties. He commanded him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." Instantly the man was healed. He followed the instructions of Jesus, and took up his bed and left that place of suffering. It happened to be the Sabbath day and the Pharisees stopped the joyful, healed man and said that it was not lawful for him to carry his bed on the Sabbath day. He explained that the one who had miraculously healed him told him to take up his bed. The Pharisees demanded to know who it was that had done this (they knew very well). But the impotent man had neglected to find out who Jesus was, and so could not verify that it was Jesus.

Later Jesus met the delivered man in the temple. Perhaps he had gone there to give a thank offering for this deliverance. There, Jesus instructed him to sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon him. The Lord very definitely linked the sickness with sin. Sin is the direct cause of some sickness. Indirectly all sickness is the result of sin, for it was our first parents' sin that opened the door of humanity to death. Sickness is the beginning of death. It is important in seeking the Lord for healing that no sin be in the way to hinder our faith. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (I John 3:21). Such was the love of Jesus for this suffering individual that He not only healed him but also, foreseeing the possibility of the return of sickness, instructed him how to avoid that tragedy.

III -- THE CRITICAL SPIRIT OF THE PHARISEES: Jealousy and envy absolutely destroy good judgment. That is clearly illustrated in this story. Do you know someone who has been an invalid for many years? If that one were suddenly healed, and took his hospital bed apart and returned it to its owner on a Sunday in obedience to the one who prayed for his deliverance, would you be incensed at the one used to bring healing to the poor afflicted one? Not only did they criticize Jesus for healing on the Sabbath day, but they also "sought to slay Him." Now, that is real, devilish darkness! This could only happen to these educated and religious leaders because of the jealousy and envy which destroyed their good judgment. Envy and jealousy will do the same to you and me if we allow it to take root in our hearts. Let us be sure to root it out at once when we are tempted in that area.

IV -- JESUS IDENTIFIES HIMSELF WITH THE FATHER: The Lord Jesus explained His healing work on the Sabbath day by revealing that He was only working with God the Father: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." Over and over again Jesus linked Himself with the Father (see verses 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, & 30). This enraged the Pharisees. Now not only did He disregard their traditional observance of the Sabbath, but He also spoke of Almighty God as His Father, making Himself (by their interpretation) equal with God.

The primary reason for this miracle was to bring deliverance to this one who had suffered as an invalid for thirty-eight years. The Lord also, through the opportunity presented as a result of this healing, identified Himself with God the Father. He stated that He had been sent to earth by the Father, that the works (miracles) He performed were simply the out-working of the work of the Father which He could see. He foretold greater works in union with God the Father and explained that He, the Son, should be honored just as God the Father is honored. So here in Jerusalem, early in His ministry, Jesus used the miraculous deliverance of the chronic sufferer at the pool of Bethesda as an occasion to declare publicly and officially to the Jewish religious leaders, that He was indeed the Son of God the Father sent to do the works of the Father and to speak forth His words.

V -- THE FOUR-FOLD WITNESS: Jesus did not just make these assertions on the spur of the moment. He had very sound proof to offer. The miraculous sign of healing was, of course, good ground for Jesus' declaration. He also called the attention of the scribes and Pharisees to the witness of John the Baptist to Himself. John prepared the way and then pointed all men (even his own disciples) to "the Lamb of God;" "the one who baptizes with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Jesus also recalled the witness of God the Father Himself, when he spoke from heaven at the baptism in Jordan, when He said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Finally Jesus reminded the Jews of the scriptures which they themselves regarded as offering eternal life. Jesus explained that those very scriptures which they trusted in testified of Him. So the result of this merciful miracle on the impotent man was the public declaration by Jesus Christ that He was indeed the Son of God, sent to do the works of the Father, and to speak the words which he had heard of the Father. He pointed to the four-fold witness: the testimony of John the Baptist, the audible voice of God at Jesus' baptism, the prophetic scriptures which testified of Him, and the miraculous works, of which the healing of the impotent man was an example. Let every one acknowledge that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God, the Lord of all.

The deity of Jesus is the foundation of the Gospel. Modernism discounts the person of Jesus and recognizes His teachings as important. If Jesus was not the Son of God, then He was a great deceiver. It is not the teachings of Jesus that save us, but He Himself. Christian Science, Unitarianism, Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses all deny the Deity of Jesus. They masquerade as Christian faiths but deny the very foremost foundation truth of Christianity. "Everybody ought to know who Jesus is:" God manifest in the flesh. He said plainly enough, "he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

NOTES:

HEALING THE CENTURION'S SERVANT AND RAISING THE WIDOW'S SON

Read: Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-17

Memory Verse: That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him. (John 5:23).

What we should learn from this Lesson

- 1. It was the confidence in the authority of Jesus expressed by the Centurion that called forth such a high commendation from Jesus.*
- 2. Even though Jesus was sent to "the Jew first," He responded to the need of whosoever came to Him, even Gentiles.*
- 3. Jesus is the master over death: He has destroyed him that hath the power of death.*
- 4. The great compassion of Jesus moved Him to help the needy.*

I -- AN UNUSUAL GENTILE: When Jesus came down from the mount where he preached His great "Sermon on the Mount," great multitudes followed Him. They were astonished at the authority with which He spoke. It was very different from the teaching of the scribes. Now Jesus entered into the city of Capernaum. The elders of the Jews came to Jesus on behalf of a Gentile Centurion. He had a servant (the Greek word used in Matthew suggests the servant was a boy) that was very dear to him. This servant was sick. He was paralyzed and in great agony. He asked the Jewish elders to go to Jesus for him because he felt unworthy to come to Jesus himself. The Jewish elders told Jesus that this man was indeed worthy. They explained that he loved the nation of Israel and had himself built a synagogue for the Jews.

These are very unusual traits to be found in an officer of the Roman army. The Jews did not easily befriend the foreign occupation forces of the Romans. They were convinced of this man's sincere interest in them and in their nation. For a hardened

army officer to spend his own money to build these Jews a synagogue was certainly unusual, to say the least. He also was a man of faith, for when he heard about Jesus he did not doubt, but immediately set about to secure the healing of his esteemed servant.

The high regard of the Centurion for his servant is also noteworthy. It reveals real character in this man. Now when Jesus heard the request and the commendation from the Jews toward the Centurion, he went with the Jews toward the Centurion's residence. But as He drew near to the place the Centurion himself came (according to Matthew) and humbly told the Lord that he was not worthy to have Him come to his abode. Further, he explained that he had not come himself (according to Luke) because he was unworthy. He expressed such a profound faith in the authority of Jesus, that the Lord marvelled. It is of great importance that we understand the real faith this Gentile possessed. He had complete confidence in the authority of the words Jesus spoke. He believed and expressed that belief: that all Jesus had to do was speak the word (Be healed.) and his servant would be instantly well. He illustrated his faith by an example of his own situation in the army of Rome. He explained that he was a man who was under authority of a superior and that he himself was the Commanding Officer of his hundred soldiers. When he gave an order to one of those soldiers he could rest assured that the orders were carried out, even as he himself would carry out the orders of his Commanding Officers. He acknowledged that Jesus was the Commanding Officer over the paralyzing affliction of his servant. He had complete confidence in the authority of Jesus. Just as his own commands to his troops were backed up by the power of the Roman army, so he recognized that Jesus' word was backed up by the power of Almighty God.

Jesus was astonished at this Centurion's faith. He remarked that He had not found anyone with such faith amongst the Jews. Indeed He warned that many Gentiles would enter the Kingdom of God from the east and the west and enjoy the fellowship of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while many of the children of Israel would be cast out into darkness where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth. In response to the great faith and humility of this Gentile believer, his servant was healed in that very same hour.

Let us be sure that we learn the lesson from this centurion: to have complete confidence in the word of the Lord. "He sendeth His word, and healeth them" (Psalm 107). The word of the Lord does not change. His promise is still good. We may, and we must, trust Him wholly. "They who trust Him wholly, find Him wholly true."

II -- THE FUNERAL AT NAIN: The next day, or soon afterward, Jesus and His disciples went to the city of Nain. As they approached the town a funeral procession came through the

gate of the city toward Jesus and his disciples and toward the cemetery on the hillside. The only son of a widow of the city had died. It was a very sad situation. Jesus looked at the sorrowing mother. She seemed almost overwhelmed with her grief, and then He stepped forward and said to her, "Weep not," after which He stretched out His hand and touched the coffin. Those who carried it stopped. Jesus spoke out clearly, startling all who heard, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise."

The young man sat up and began to speak. The startled pallbearers quickly set the coffin down and jumped back in terror. Jesus calmly took the young man's hand on one side and the mother's hand on the other and brought them together. What a scene! Mother and son wrapped in each other's arms. The astonished mourners crowded around the young man and his mother. Back to the city they went, no longer a sad and hopeless lot, but a joyful, shouting band bursting with glad tidings.

This wonderful miracle, recorded only by Luke, is a picture of true conversion. As morbid as it may seem, life without Christ is nothing but a slow procession to the eternal cemetery. Each passing day brings an unbeliever one step closer to that yawning, bottomless pit. Without Jesus, an unbeliever is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). A personal encounter with the Savior changes everything. The procession is turned about. Old habits pass away, everything becomes new. Meeting the Master means a miracle! The fact that the young man met Jesus made the difference between life and death. It is even so with everyone.

If you are still in the sad funeral procession, stop; start seeking for Jesus now with all your heart. Don't quit until you have found Him. You will know it when you meet Him, just as surely as the young man did who was raised from the dead. He is ready to stop your funeral procession and say to you, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14).

NOTES:

JESUS STILLS A STORM AND WALKS UPON THE WATER

Read: Matthew 8:18, 23-27; Matthew 14:22-33
 Luke 8:22-25; Mark 4:35-41
 Mark 6:45-53; John 6:15-21

Memory Verse: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. (John 5:24).

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *Jesus, on occasion, left the crowds and retired to a place where He could be alone and wait on God.*
2. *The humanity of Jesus is seen by His nap in the boat.*
3. *Fear and faith are contrary one to the other.*
4. *The Lord has authority over the forces of nature.*
5. *Jesus is the master of the physical laws of nature and can supersede these laws when necessary.*
6. *It is better to keep looking to our all-powerful Lord, than to consider the troubled situations about us.*

I -- THE BOAT RIDE: Jesus had been speaking to a great multitude of people on the shores of Galilee. He taught them about the Kingdom of heaven. He used parables to illustrate the various aspects of the Kingdom. He retired to the house (possibly Peter's) and continued His teaching to the disciples. Toward evening He left the house again, and found the multitudes waiting for Him. Now, Jesus loved the people, but sometimes He had to leave them to fulfill the works which He was called to do. So on this evening He asked the disciples to take Him across the lake to the other side. They were only too happy to do it and soon set forth with Jesus in the boat. What is more pleasant than sailing on a beautiful lake in the evening? The sun was setting behind them. Mount Hermon with its snowy peak towered on the horizon to the north. As the boat rocked

while sailing, Jesus fell asleep in the stern of the ship. His humanity is revealed here. He had been busy all day. Now He was tired, and like many would do in similar circumstances, He fell asleep. What a calm and beautiful scene. But it did not last.

A sudden storm of wind arose on the lake. The waves began to mount higher. The longer it blew, the higher the waves became. The lake is subject to sudden storms today. Often, as a cold front moves down from the north, it is blocked for a while by the obstruction of Mount Hermon. The heavy cold air builds up on the north side of the Mount until finally it reaches the cold snowy peak. And then it spills over the top and down to the lake of Galilee. The heavy, cold air rushes to the low-lying lake and is channeled down Jordan, and the great rift, to the lowest area on earth near the Dead Sea. This natural phenomenon makes for some extremely violent weather in the area.

The disciples were accustomed to the storms of the lake, but this one was more violent than usual. Perhaps Satan himself attempted to get Jesus out of the way before He finished His work. Despite the violence of the storm, Jesus slept on. The disciples worked desperately to keep the ship afloat. They bailed out the water as fast as they could. Finally, the disciples were at the point of despair. In desperation they awoke Jesus and cried, "Master, Master, we perish." Jesus arose and majestically rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. Instantly, there was a remarkable change. The wind ceased, and the waves suddenly died down. There was a great calm; Jesus was master of the elements. Man was created to have dominion over creation. He lost that dominion through his sin of disobedience. Man became the helpless victim of the elements instead of their master. On several occasions we see that dominion and authority restored to a godly prophet or leader in Old Testament days. Moses opened the Red Sea. Joshua caused the most remarkable phenomenon in this regard when he commanded sun and moon to halt their normal movements relative to the earth in order to win a battle for the Lord and His people. Elijah both stopped and opened the windows of heaven concerning rain on the earth. At the word of Hezekiah and Isaiah, the normal movement of sun and earth was briefly reversed. There are several other examples of momentary dominion over the elements, but in Jesus we see dominion restored. He had authority over all the forces of nature. And when redemption is fully experienced and man is subject to the Lord in every way, then once again that dominion will be restored. Jesus showed forth that dominion in this miracle. May God haste the day when He can avenge all disobedience, when our absolute obedience is fulfilled (II Cor. 10:6).

II -- WHERE IS YOUR FAITH: Jesus not only rebuked the wind and the waves, but also the unbelief of the disciples. He had told them to go to the other side of the lake. But when

the storm arose they feared they would be drowned. Fear gripped them and they thought the worst. Fear is contrary to faith.

*"Faith came singing into my room,
And other guests took flight;
Fear anxiety and gloom, sped out into the night.
I wondered that such peace could be;
But Faith said gently--
'Don't you see, they really cannot live with me?'"*

It was important for the disciples to have faith. On several occasions the Lord rebuked them for their lack of faith. At least twice He commended Gentiles for their great faith. But in the end, because the disciples were loyal to Jesus they learned their lessons. Once they prayed, "Lord, increase our faith." And that prayer was indeed answered. After Pentecost these disciples were full of faith. This very miracle increased the faith of the disciples. They could hardly help but believe One who commanded the wind and the sea and they obeyed Him.

May we, too, grow in faith exceedingly; and may we learn to overcome fear, and acknowledge that the same Lord who stilled the tempest on the sea of Galilee can calm any storm on the sea of life.

III -- ANOTHER GALILEE MIRACLE: After Jesus fed the multitude with the multiplied loaves and fishes, He discerned that they were about to attempt to make Him King. Note that it was not His marvelous teaching of the word of God, or even the miracles themselves which motivated them. Rather it was the appeal to the stomach which sparked their desire. Human nature has not changed much in 2000 years. Politicians compete with each other to appeal to this basic appetite in man.

But Jesus had no desire to reign in a political, earthly kingdom. His plan from the beginning was to reign in the hearts of men and conquer the enemies of sin, and sickness, death, and the devil, and thereby open the doors of the everlasting Kingdom to all who believe. To thwart the purpose of the multitude Jesus sent the disciples away to Bethsaida by boat over the sea of Galilee. He Himself went up into the mountain to pray. Toward evening a strong wind arose and prevented the disciples from making good headway. Jesus saw their plight and came to them in the fourth watch of the night, walking on the water. Needless to say, the disciples were terrified (as we would be) and thought they were seeing an apparition. But Jesus called out to them, "It is I, be not afraid." Peter a bit too quick as usual with his mouth, said "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the water." Jesus said, "Come," and Peter came. But when he took

his eyes off the Lord and began to consider the wind and the waves, he began to sink. He cried out, "Lord save me!" Then Jesus reached out and lifted Peter. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Jesus cajoled. And when Jesus stepped into the boat the wind stopped and, according to the narrative of John, the boat was immediately at the land where they were going.

There are physical laws that govern the temporal things of creation. There are spiritual laws which govern things in the Kingdom of heaven. These spiritual laws can, when necessary, supersede the physical laws of nature. Thus the law of displacement was overruled when Elisha caused an iron axe head to float. Natural physical laws were superseded when Philip was transported by the Spirit from the baptismal waters to Azotus. Here, Jesus walked upon water, overcoming the law of physics. After His resurrection Jesus often overruled the limitations of natural law in the physical world.

We are told that when He comes (returns) we shall be like Him. Paul promised the Philippians that our bodies would be **changed** (3:21), and the Corinthians that all would not die but those alive at the coming would be **changed**. Could it be that those who have really crowned Jesus Lord of their whole life, spirit soul and body, will be "caught up" to this higher plane of life? And what might God do through such a company of obedient servants? The devil himself might be cast off the earth! Conjecture? Perhaps! But worthy of consideration. May we let the Lord reign in us, body, soul and spirit, that the full redemption of our bodies might be accomplished in His time and His way. The law of the Spirit of life has made us free from the law of sin and death. May all that this implies be fully realized by the redeemed!

NOTES:

JESUS CASTS OUT DEMONS

Read: **Matthew 12:22-30; Luke 11:14-26**
Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39
Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43

Memory Verse: Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. (John 5:25)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *The Lord Jesus has authority over all demon powers.*
2. *Demons cannot prevent a needy seeker from coming to Jesus.*
3. *It is possible for many demons to possess one person.*
4. *Demons are stubborn and will not be cast out easily.*
5. *Seizures and fits, blindness and dumbness, and lunacy, are all linked to demon possession in the Gospel.*

I -- A VERY BUSY DAY: One of the busiest days of Jesus' ministry, as far as the record shows, is covered from Mark 3:19 through mark 5:20. This day began with the healing of a man possessed by a demon which made him blind and dumb (see Matt. 12:22). The people were amazed, and acknowledged Him as the son of David. This infuriated the Pharisees. Jesus warned them against blaspheming and calling the work of God the work of Satan. Jesus' mother and brothers tried to take Him away from the multitude and His ministry, but He would not go. Jesus then taught the people by parables. His subject was the various aspects of the Kingdom of God (see Matt. 13). Then Jesus and His disciples sailed across the lake. Jesus slept in the boat until awakened amidst the sudden dangerous storm. After stilling the tempest, they landed on the other side, where they were met by a fierce victim of Satan possessed with a legion of demons. When Jesus had delivered this poor victim He was asked to leave that neighborhood

and so, apparently, He and His disciples sailed back across the lake. All this seems to have transpired on one single day in Jesus' busy life, "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4). Let us be about our Father's business with a zealous and willing heart.

II -- JESUS' AUTHORITY OVER DEMONS: We have already noted in previous lessons that Jesus had authority on earth to forgive sins. He proved that authority by healing the young paralytic whose sins He forgave. We have also noted Jesus' authority over the natural elements. He was the Master of the storm, and at His authoritative word the wind and the waves ceased. He had authority to supersede the physical laws of earth. He proved this by walking on the water. He even had authority over death. Three times death was deprived of its premature victims by the authority of Jesus' word. Jairus' daughter, the only son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus, all had their lives prolonged when death had claimed them.

Jesus also had authority over Satan and his agents, the demons, who oppressed and possessed and afflicted humanity. There is one Devil: Satan, he is called. His agents are demons. Those whom Jesus healed from this type of affliction were possessed by **demons**. The use of the word *devils* is not accurate and should be translated and understood to be **demons**, the agents of the Devil. Jesus had power over all the power of the Devil and his demons. These demons recognized Jesus and several times spoke out witnessing who He was (see Mark 1:24 & Luke 4:34). Jesus would not accept the witness of demons and so rebuked them and, commanding them to be quiet, He cast them out. Remember, our Lord is the same, yesterday, and today, and forever. Let us believe that this authority will be manifested in the body of Christ today and that mighty deliverances will be wrought in the name of Jesus.

III-- SEVERAL OUTSTANDING DELIVERANCES: Time and space limit the number of incidents we can consider here, where Jesus cast out demons. In one case (Matt. 12:22), the demon caused it's victim to be blind and dumb. When the demon was cast out the man regained his speech and sight. The Pharisees, unwilling to acknowledge the power of God in Jesus, accused Him of casting out demons by the power of the Devil himself. Jesus strongly repudiated this blasphemous accusation. "No house divided against itself can stand," He declared. "If Satan hath risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end" (Mark 3:26).

Jesus used a little illustration to explain why He could destroy the work of Satan. He said that no one could enter into a strong man's house and carry away his valuables unless the strong man were first bound. This, truly, is what Jesus has done. He has

entered the strong man's (Satan's) house (earth), and has bound him up (by His victory over temptation, and His victory of the cross), and is now able to "spoil his goods" (destroy his evil works). This is the proclamation of the Gospel: Satan is bound! Let us claim the fullness of God's glorious victory and spoil the works of Satan.

Jesus also warned the Pharisees that to ascribe the great work of God the Father to the Devil was a dangerous thing, bordering on the unpardonable sin. Later, the same day, but on the other shore of Galilee, another demon possessed wreck came to Jesus (Matthew mentions two possessed men). In this case the one victim was frighteningly possessed. He was in an advanced state of lunacy and demon possession. No one could control this man. If he was fettered with chains, he could tear them apart like paper. He lived in tombs among the bones of the dead. He wore no clothing. Nakedness and demon possession are linked here. Despite this strong demon possession which caused the man to cut himself and scream in the cemetery, the demons could not prevent the man from coming to Jesus. When the demons spoke to Jesus, He asked their name. "My name is Legion for we are many," was the response. If the body of man can house a legion of demons, what potential is there in the same body for the Holy Spirit? Let us seek to be filled with "all the fullness of God." The legion of demons besought Jesus not to cast them into the deep, but to permit them to enter the herd of swine feeding nearby. Jesus permitted this, though we are not told why. The swine ran down a steep place and perished in the sea. The man was delivered. When the swine herders came to Jesus they found the man sitting, clothed, and in his right mind. Apparently they were more concerned with their loss of the swine than with the deliverance of the madman from his demon possession. They asked Jesus to depart from their borders. The delivered man wanted to accompany Jesus and His disciples, but the Lord advised him to return to his family and friends and testify what great things the Lord had done for him.

Another important deliverance from demon possession took place after the transfiguration. Peter, James and John had been with Jesus on the glorious mountain-top, but the other disciples were having problems. A distraught father brought his son who was subject to fits similar to epilepsy to the disciples of Jesus. They could not, however, cast the oppressing demon out. When Jesus appeared the father brought his case to Jesus. He begged the Lord, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." Jesus turned the tables on the man and said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Then the man cried out, "Lord I believe, Help thou my unbelief." Then Jesus rebuked the deaf and dumb spirit and forbade it to enter again into the lad. The boy was torn violently by the demon and then fell as dead. But he was delivered. Praise God! Jesus is the master of these oppressing and possessing demons in all of their afflicting forms. Let us believe! All things are possible today to

him that believeth. The disciples wanted to know why they could not cast the demon out. Jesus told them it was because of their little faith (Matt. 17:20), and also because that kind of demon will not be cast out but by fasting and prayer.

It is noteworthy that the Lord forbade the demon to return to the lad. In another place the Lord warned that a demon which has been cast out of someone, comes back to investigate the condition of the individual. He will try to re-enter and indeed bring other demon powers with him so that the last state of that man is worse than the former (see Matt. 12:43-45). Clearly, demon possession and the casting out of demons is no place for novices and experimentation. Much of the current trend in some charismatic circles toward blaming demons for everything from sinus headaches to athlete's foot (from head to foot) and casting them out by the repetition of the phrase "in the name of Jesus" is largely foolishness. To discern and cast out demons in the name of Jesus one must be fully under the control of the Holy Spirit. The relationship of such an one to Jesus must be comparable to the relationship of Jesus to the Father. Then the authority of Jesus will be exercised. It is dangerous to be more interested in demons and their various manifestations than in Jesus and the manifestation of His presence. Let us pay attention to Him and He will do what no other power can do for, He has power over all the power of the enemy.

A MIRACLE WITHIN A MIRACLE

Read: Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56

Memory Verse: For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. (John 5:26)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *Great, desperate need often drives people to Jesus.*
2. *The scriptures do not compliment physicians either in their motives or results.*
3. *It was faith in Jesus that brought healing to the woman.*
4. *Those who do not believe in the healing power of Christ can hinder the prayer of faith. Only those who truly have faith should pray for the sick.*
5. *Twice when the Lord Jesus delayed ministering to the sick it seemed too late, but both times the victory was won for the glory of God.*

I -- THE DESPERATE NEED: After Jesus' very busy day of ministry, He sailed back to Galilee and was soon surrounded by a great throng of needy people. The twelve-year-old daughter of a ruler of the synagogue had become sick unto death. Such rulers were not generally friendly with Jesus. This one, Jairus by name, was driven to Jesus, his only hope, by the desperate need of his little girl. She was the joy of his life, like so many little girls are to their Daddies and she was his only daughter. He would gladly have done anything for her. Now she was sick unto death. Finally, in desperation the father decided to go to Jesus. He may have hesitated because of the hostility of the scribes and Pharisees toward Jesus. He probably was aware of their criticism of Jesus when He forgave the sin of the paralytic. But he probably was also well aware of the miraculous healing of the same young man. Now the desperate situation drove him to the decision to apply to Jesus for help.

Today, also, some people come to Jesus because of desperate need. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." Many a parent has come running to Jesus because of

a dangerous sickness in their child. They may have wandered far away from the Lord and His people and the church, but when that little one suffers they come to the Lord for help. Isn't it wonderful that the Lord never turns such an one away. But still better, let every parent stay on good terms with the Lord and His people.

II -- THE DELAY: When Jairus found Jesus, he lost no time making his desperate need known. He fell down at Jesus' feet and worshipped Him. He then called upon the Lord to come and lay His hands upon the little girl who was at the point of death. He expressed confidence in Jesus, expecting that when Jesus touched her, the child's life would be saved and she would be well.

Jesus responded to the urgent entreaty and started out with Jairus. The great multitude, anxious as always to see another miracle, surged around Him. There was one woman in the crowd who had determined to touch Jesus that day. "If I can just touch the hem of His garment I shall be made whole." Her ailment was of a private nature and she sought a private healing. The poor woman had suffered for twelve years; the entire lifetime of Jairus' daughter. She must have been weak from her loss of blood. But she determined to make one supreme effort to reach the great Physician. From earthly physicians she had sought help in vain. They had only cost her more suffering and all her living as well. Yet she was not a bit better, but rather worse than ever. Twice the physicians of this world are mentioned in the scriptures in their efforts to heal; both times they are rebuked by the Word of God. Asa rather is rebuked for seeking their help rather than help from the Lord (II Chron. 16:12). On the other hand there is absolutely no record of any case where someone applied to Jesus for healing and went away disappointed.

In this case, too, the woman finally got close enough to Jesus to lunge and touch Him. Immediately she felt in herself that the hemorrhaging had stopped. She was ready to return to her home when Jesus stopped in His tracks and asked, "Who touched me?" The crowd was pressing all around Him. The disciples were puzzled by such a question. But Jesus explained that someone had touched Him so that healing power had gone out from Him. No doubt the woman was frightened at first, but finally swallowing any pride she may have had, she came forward and confessed all that she had thought and done. Jesus, noting the woman's fear and trembling reassured her, saying, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." It was not the garment of Jesus that healed the woman, but faith in Jesus Himself that gave the woman the deliverance she sought.

But can you imagine the mixed emotions of Jairus during this delay? His only little girl was at the point of death and Jesus had been on the way to his home before this interruption. Now valuable moments had passed. Yet he could not help but rejoice

for the suffering woman's deliverance. He must have been praying silently, "Quickly, Lord, before my child dies." He must have prayed, earnestly, "Don't let it be too late, please, Lord." And then his heart dropped as he suddenly recognized a messenger from his household. The sad countenance of the messenger told the story which was also expressed in words Jairus did not want to hear, "Trouble not the Master, your daughter is dead." Jesus overheard the conversation and spoke to Jairus, "Fear not, only believe!" What words of comfort. How relevant today, still: "Fear not, only believe." Fear limits the working of God. When we get rid of fear faith can work. Jesus reassured the distraught father that the delay was not fatal.

III -- THE DELIVERANCE: When Jesus arrived at the house the mourners were already weeping and wailing. Jesus had left the multitude and had brought only Peter, James, and John. When He saw the great mourning, He rebuked them saying. "Why make ye this ado and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." They laughed Him to scorn (an unseemly action at such a time). Jesus chased them all out. He took only the child's parents and Peter, James and John into the room. The unbelief of the crowd would have hindered the restoration of the child. In Nazareth, Jesus could do no mighty works because of the unbelief of the people. It is important today when we pray for the sick, that all who pray have faith. One unbeliever can hinder the work of faith. Peter later cast out the mourners before he raised Dorcas from the dead. Jesus brought with Him the three disciples with the greatest faith in Him.

He took the girl by the hand and said in the Aramaic language, "Talitha cumi," which means "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise." Immediately the girl rose up and walked. Everyone was amazed. They knew well that she had been dead. Jesus charged them not to advertise this miracle. He also had a the good common sense to advise them to give the girl something to eat. She probably had eaten nothing for several days.

So Jesus was not too late. Another time it surely seemed that Jesus had come too late. Lazarus had been dead four days. Even then Jesus overruled and brought Lazarus out of the tomb and back to life for the glory of God. It is better to trust the Lord than to put confidence in man or princes (Psalm 118:8-9). Let us trust in Him. Press through and touch Him. "They who trust Him wholly, find Him wholly true." And He is never too late!

NOTES:

JESUS FEEDS THE MULTITUDES

Read: John 6:1-71; Matthew 15:29-39

Extra Reading: Mark 6:30-44; Matthew 14;13-21

Luke 9:10-17; Mark 8:1-9

Memory Verse: And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. (John 5:27)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *Miracles of healing attracted multitudes to Jesus.*
2. *Jesus not only healed the people, but taught them of the Kingdom of God.*
3. *The compassion of Jesus moved Him to heal the sick, teach the truth, and feed the people (both body and soul).*
4. *The spirit within us needs nourishment just as the natural body does.*
5. *Jesus can take our small gifts and make them a blessing to multitudes.*
6. *Our priorities ought to put first the meat which endures unto everlasting life.*

I -- THE MULTITUDE: Jesus had sent His disciples out to heal the sick and to preach the Kingdom of God. They had returned rejoicing in the success of their mission. Jesus sought to take the disciples away for a well earned rest, but the people watched every move of Jesus. Shortly after arriving in a desolate area the crowds found Him. Jesus welcomed them and His great compassion moved Him to heal all the sick among them. Jesus also took the opportunity to teach the people about the Kingdom of God.

The Lord has made provision in His church for the same combination. He has set gifts of healing into the church. When these gifts of healing are in operation, the crowds come to be healed and to witness the healings which take place. This gives the ministers of the Gospel the opportunity to teach the multitudes about the Kingdom of God. We must expect the Lord to heal in our midst. The days of miracles are not passed.

"Greater works than these shall ye do because I go unto my Father." Let us expect those greater works. The Lord does not intend to reserve healing for one occasional holy man or woman of extraordinary faith. It is the birthright of the church. Pray for the operation of healing in our services.

II -- THE MIRACLE: As the sun began to set the disciples thoughtfully advised Jesus to send the multitudes away so that they could get themselves some food. But Jesus astonished the disciples by suggesting that they give the great throng food to eat. They looked at one another and finally pooled their resources and told Jesus that they could only purchase two hundred pennyworth of bread. That was like nothing for such a crowd. Jesus then asked (He knew what He would do; see John 6:6) how much bread they had. Andrew had found a lad with five loaves and two fishes. Now Jesus went into action. "Bring them to me," He commanded, "and make the people sit down in groups of fifty." This was a well organized supper. This done, Jesus took the loaves and fishes and looking up to heaven He gave thanks and blessed them, and broke them, and gave the pieces to the disciples to set before the multitude. Imagine, if you can, the wonder of the disciples as they set the bread and fishes before the hungry crowd, seeing one after another break off a piece of bread only to find the remainder undiminished. All four accounts of this miracle mention that the diners were "filled." They had gone all day without food. You can imagine how much they ate. All the Gospel stories state that there were about five thousand men, but Mark adds "beside women and children."

When all had eaten and were filled, Jesus sent the disciples around to gather the leftovers. They filled twelve baskets with gathered fragments. This was obviously much more than Jesus began with. A sanctified imagination suggests that at least one of those baskets of fragments found its way to the home of the lad who offered his lunch to Jesus and the disciples.

This lad certainly would seem to be insignificant amongst a crowd of five thousand men, but his gift led to this marvelous miracle. Perhaps we are inclined to think that we are insignificant or unimportant amongst the many followers of Jesus. but if we willingly offer to Jesus what little talent, or substance, or faith we do have, there is no reckoning what the Lord can do with our offering.

We recently heard the testimony of a man who had attended tent meetings as a lad. Several times he had knelt at the altar to receive Jesus. He came from a poor home and was in constant trouble with the authorities. But that brief encounter with Jesus and His people stayed in his memory. After years of intemperate drinking this fellow came back to Jesus. His life was changed. His home was different. Soon his wife and children followed his example, and not long after more than thirty relatives were saved. The

"lads and lasses" are important to Jesus. There is no telling where their experiences with Jesus will lead them. Let us pray for them, and love, and teach them for Christ.

III -- THE MEANING: The Lord performed this miracle to meet the very real need of the people for food after the long day of following and listening to Him. But there was another reason for this miracle. It was an unmistakable illustration of the ability of Jesus to feed all the multitudes of humanity with the true bread of heaven, Jesus Himself is that bread. After this miracle Jesus declared that His followers must eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to have His life abiding in them. The fickle crowd, first wanted to crown Him king in response to this miracle and then, when He spoke of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, they said "This is an hard saying, who can hear it." Many of them forsook Him and walked no more with Him. They wanted Him to repeat the miracle so they could have another free meal, but they were unwilling to accept His teaching. That teaching demanded self denial and generosity. The natural man rebels at such teaching. What Jesus wanted of His followers was to believe in Him as the Son of God. His grace and power can bring our lives into harmony with His, but only if we renounce sin and the world and accept Him.

Jesus did repeat this miracle near Decapolis. About four thousand ate there of the seven loaves and a few small fishes; and seven baskets of fragments were gathered. Matthew and Mark each relate both miracles.

But Jesus really wanted his followers to develop an appetite for the Bread of heaven. "Labor not for the meat which perisheth," He advised them, "but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." This is a commandment concerning the priorities in our lives. What is the strongest desire of your heart? Is it for material things of this world? Is it for popularity or power in your community? Is it to satisfy the desires and appetites of the body, the natural man? All of these things pass away. Neither worldly possessions nor popularity, nor the appetites of the body are sinful of themselves. But when we give priority to these desires over the offers of Christ to partake of His divine nature, we rob ourselves of the true riches and of eternal values.

How can we eat the Bread which came down from heaven, or eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God? It is first of all by receiving Him into our lives. Then we must live in the consciousness of His presence, learning how to maintain the manifestation of His presence always. Further, we are to have constant fellowship with Him in prayer and do always those things which are pleasing in His sight. The act of receiving the Lord's Supper gives us a tangible point of contact to eat this Bread; but the sacrament is meaningless unless we let Him live out His life within us after we have partaken of His flesh (bread) and blood (cup).

Let us ask ourselves the question really posed by this miracle, "Am I laboring for the natural, material bread of this world; or am I seeking first to have Christ rule my life in my words and thoughts and feelings? His grace will enable us to set our priorities in proper order.

NOTES:

HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

Read John 9:1-41

Memory Verse: Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice. (John 5:28)

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *The misfortunes of life may be turned into opportunities for the Lord to be magnified.*
2. *The Lord Jesus is the Master even of birth defects.*
3. *Does Jesus' use of clay justify the use of drugs and prescriptions for healing?*
4. *Healing led the unfortunate man into faith in the Son of God.*
5. *Determined unbelief in the Pharisees, developed into total spiritual blindness.*

I -- THE DISCIPLES' QUESTION: Jesus and His disciples passed by a blind beggar on a street of Jerusalem. The disciples must have had some knowledge of the man, for they were aware that he had been **born** blind. Perhaps they had discussed or argued about the implications of being born blind before. Now they asked Jesus about the problem. The Lord was not interested in theological discussion but in deliverance. The disciples asked if the man himself had sinned or if his parents had sinned and caused this judgment upon their offspring. They knew, of course, the warning of the ten commandments that sins of the fathers would be punished in their offspring for three or four generations (see Ex. 20:5). The disciples' reference to whether the man himself had sinned may have been just a dumb, thoughtless question. It is more likely, however, that they were curious about reincarnation. Some rabbis of the Jews believed and taught this false doctrine. Could this man have sinned in a previous life and now suffer this blindness as a result of that sin?

II -- THE LORD'S COMPASSION: Jesus declared that neither this man nor his parents had

caused this blindness by their sin. He was interested in delivering the unfortunate man and manifesting the glorious works of His Father. Similar questions arise in minds today. Why was this child born deformed? How can a God of love allow such suffering from hunger? Why does a loved one die prematurely? These, and many more questions, present themselves to the human mind. First, we must remember that Satan is the god of this world. Believers are in enemy territory. The kingdoms of this world are not yet the kingdoms of our Lord. The misfortunes and catastrophes of this world cannot be blamed upon God. However, the believers are translated out of the Satanic kingdom of darkness and into the Kingdom of light. For the true believer, God works everything for good. Further, the believers can by prayer and faith overrule the disastrous effects of the rule of the prince of this world and get glory for the name of Christ. Jesus was more desirous of delivering this unfortunate beggar from his blindness, than in discussing the possible causes of his blind birth. Job's three friends were sure they knew the cause of Job's misfortunes, but they were wrong. The New Testament reveals that God's purposes toward Job were full of mercy and pity. Let us learn to be more concerned with deliverance and compassion toward the suffering, than in establishing the blame for the suffering. When believers are truly moved with compassion for the suffering the power to help will not be long in coming.

III -- THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: Jesus saw in this unfortunate case, an opportunity to work the works of God who had sent Him. His time was short, so every opportunity had to be taken to work for God. "As long as I am in the world," Jesus explained, "I am the light of the world." Then Jesus spat upon the ground and made a paste of the combination of clay and spittle. This he placed upon the blind beggar's eyelids and instructed him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. He obeyed and his eyes were opened. When he returned he could see. Now there was considerable curiosity about this healing. The neighbors who knew him well wanted to know how his eyes were opened. He apparently knew nothing of Jesus but His name, for he explained, "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and received sight." He apparently had not even seen Jesus after receiving sight. Now the neighbors stirred up trouble by taking the healed man to the Pharisees.

IV -- THE BLIND PHARISEES: First of all, they asked the former beggar how he had received his sight. He told them how Jesus had made clay and told him to wash. Some of the Pharisees immediately concluded that Jesus was not of God because he had made this clay mixture on the Sabbath. Others, however, with a little more common sense

said, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? The Pharisees finally asked the beggar for his evaluation of Jesus. "He is a prophet," he replied. Now, the Pharisees would not believe that he had been born blind. They called for the parents. They fearfully testified that he was their son and had indeed been born blind. Knowing that the Jews would cast anyone who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah out of the synagogue, the parents told the Jews to ask their son of the healing. Since he was of legal age he could testify for himself. So they called the man again, "Give God the praise," they advised, "we know that this man is a sinner." The happy man knew only that whereas he had been blind now he could see. They began to question him again, but he said, "I have told you already...will ye also be his disciples?" This angered the Pharisees. They were Moses' disciples and did not know where this fellow Jesus was from.

Now, the healed blind man logically reasoned that since God did not hear sinners and considering that there was no record of anyone who was born blind being healed, surely the Pharisees should recognize that Jesus was a man of God. "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing," he concluded. The Pharisees could not refute this reasoning so they turned to ridicule and violence. "Thou wast altogether born in sins, (as if they were not) and dost thou teach us?" Then they excommunicated him from the synagogue.

V -- THE PROGRESS OF FAITH: The beggar first showed faith in Jesus by obeying His instructions. Then he was persuaded that Jesus must be a prophet. He withstood the accusation of the Pharisees that Jesus was a sinner and witnessed his belief that Jesus was a man of God.

Now, after the Jews threw him out of the synagogue Jesus found him and asked him if he believed on the Son of God. He asked, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" This was the first time he had seen Jesus, but he had heard Jesus' voice before. Jesus revealed, "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." The grateful man responded at once, "Lord I believe!" Then he worshipped Jesus. What a day for this man. From darkness, both physical and spiritual, into the glorious light of the truth of God. He had met the "Light of the World." That Light had shined in his heart and now he was no longer blind. Jesus was more interested in delivering the man from all his darkness than in discussing the possible theological causes for his blindness. Let us pray for hearts of compassion for the sick and suffering around us. Discussion of these social and spiritual problems is of little value. The prayer of faith and the ministry of the gospel must bring the deliverance to the needy. Those who have a real compassion for the needy will receive the help of God to meet that need.

VI -- THE BLINDNESS OF UNBELIEF: The father who sought deliverance for his oppressed son, cried out, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." The Pharisees, however, cultivated their unbelief to a high degree. Here they did not want to believe that the man had been born blind. They refused to yield to the inescapable conclusion that Jesus must be of God to do such miracles. So intent were they in their unbelief that they finally conspired to put Jesus, the Son of God, whose miracles they had witnessed, to death, believing that they were saving Israel from grave error and the nation from destruction. Unbelief blinds. "Are we blind also?" they asked Jesus. If only they would have recognized their blindness there would have been hope, but because they were so sure they saw, and understood, and knew everything; their blindness was incurable.

May our faith grow continually and may all unbelief and darkness be rooted out of our lives that the Light of the World might lighten our lives.

NOTES:

LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

Read: John 11:1-57; 12:1-9,17

Memory Verse: And shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:29)

What we should learn from this Lesson

- 1. Jesus is the Master of the prince of terrors: death.*
- 2. Safety is in the path of obedience to the will of God.*
- 3. Miracles inspire faith, but also harden unbelievers.*
- 4. Jesus teaches that death is temporary, like sleep.*

I -- THE CALL FOR HELP: Jesus must have been at least two days' journey from Bethany when Lazarus became ill. Lazarus was the brother of Mary, who loved to sit at Jesus' feet, and of Martha, who loved to entertain Jesus in her home and serve Him. When the sickness of Lazarus worsened they sent a message to Jesus: "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick." When Jesus received the message, He immediately declared, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." The divine wisdom in the Son of God made Him aware of the entire situation. He did not rush off immediately to the side of His sick friend. For two days Jesus continued His work in the place where He was. Then He said to his disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." They reminded Him that the Jews had just tried to stone Him. The steps of our Lord were not ordered by convenience, or threat, or danger, but by the will of the Father. "If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world," Jesus explained. He felt that as long as He walked in the clear light of obedience to the direction of His Father, he would not stumble. Duty, not safety, was His first obligation!

Next, Jesus told the disciples that, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awaken him out of sleep." The disciples reasoned that if he was sleeping he would surely recover, but Jesus spoke of the sleep of death. This conversation reveals that Jesus knew that Lazarus had died and that God would be magnified and the Son of God

glorified through the restoration of this victim of untimely death. He most assuredly desired His disciples to learn that death was not the end. He had said that the dead would hear the voice of the Son of God (John 5:25). This incident would have provided the disciples with a lesson in faith for resurrection which would enable them to have faith for the resurrection of their Lord after His crucifixion; and indeed for their own resurrection after their earthly days of service were completed. Let us learn the lesson. He is the resurrection and the life.

Now Thomas, seeing that Jesus had turned toward Judea, said to his fellow-disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (vs. 16). It was a characteristic remark from Thomas the doubter. It revealed a certain heroism mixed with much unbelief.

II -- TOO LATE FOR THE FUNERAL: When Jesus finally arrived at Bethany, He was told that Lazarus had been dead and buried for four days. News came to Martha that Jesus was coming and she characteristically ran to meet Him. "Lord if thou hadst been here my brother had not died," she cried to the Lord. Then she added a strange word; "But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee" (vs. 22). Did she have a spark of faith still? "Thy brother shall rise again," Jesus promised. "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day," Martha replied. It almost seems that she was trying to prod Jesus into doing something **now**. Then Jesus spoke with divine authority, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." When Jesus asked Martha if she believed this, she replied, perhaps ambiguously, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." Then she went to get Mary. When Mary saw Jesus she fell at His feet. That was the place she always took: at His feet. Mary also said, just like her sister, "Lord if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." The Jews which had come from Jerusalem to mourn with the sisters were with Mary when she came to Jesus. As Jesus saw Mary weeping, and the Jews that were with her weeping, he groaned in the Spirit. He asked now where they had laid Lazarus and they said, "Lord, come and see." Now Jesus wept also. This caused the Jews to say, "Behold, how he loved him. Could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" (vs. 34-37). Again, this caused the Lord to groan in himself as they approached the place of burial.

III -- JESUS AWAKENS THE SLEEPER: The burial place was a cave. A stone sealed the entrance. Jesus startled Martha by asking her to have the stone removed. Whatever faith or hope Martha may have had when she said, "I know that even now, whatsoever

thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee," vanished in the stark, cold cave at the cemetery. "Lord by this time he stinketh for he hath been dead four days," she objected. "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?" Jesus reprov'd. Now the stone was removed. It was a dramatic moment. Jesus lifted up His eyes toward heaven. He did not ask the Father to hear Him; He **thanked** the Father because He **always** heard Him. The prayer was for the benefit of the people who were crowding around the opened cave. And when He had prayed, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." It must be understood that the dead were wrapped in strips of cloth from the armpits to the feet, leaving the shoulders bare. A cloth or napkin was wrapped about the head and face. At the cry of Jesus, Lazarus appeared at the mouth of the cave, bound in these wrappings. He could not walk and so must have been impelled to sort of "float" forth to the door of the cave. Then Jesus ordered, "Loose him and let him go." Can you imagine the amazement of the spectators? And what a grand reunion when the napkin was unwound from the face of Lazarus, and his sparkling eyes met those of his two sisters and then of Jesus, his Lord and friend. Truly, they saw the glory of the Lord that day. The disciples' faith grew for sure on this occasion. Many of the Jews believed on the Lord because of this miracle. Lazarus was a living witness of Jesus' mastery over death.

But some did not believe. They went and reported that incident to the Pharisees. They were very disturbed. "What do we?" they reasoned, "for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation" (vs. 47-48). They had to admit the reality of the miracles, but their hearts were so hardened that they arrived at the devilish conclusion that Jesus must be destroyed to save the nation and religious system of the Jews.

Lazarus also became the object of conspiracy. Because of his witness many believed on Jesus (ch. 12:10-11). Many of those who witnessed the restoration of Lazarus at the grave that day, were in the crowd on Palm Sunday who shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord" (see ch. 12:12-19).

Probably because Lazarus was the object of plots by the Pharisees, Matthew, Mark, and Luke did not record the story which is by far the most sensational in the list of miracles performed by Jesus. By the time John wrote his account of the life of Jesus, Lazarus may have been dead, and so there was no longer reason to withhold the account from the record. This account, prayerfully considered, will cause faith to rise in anyone in need. These signs are recorded that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name (see John 20:31).

THE MIRACULOUS BIRTH OF JESUS

Read: Matthew 1:1-25; 2:1-15; Luke 1:26-56; 2:1-20

Memory Work: Review John 5:19-29

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *The Holy Spirit, who moved the authors of the books of the Old Testament, miraculously inspired the genealogy of Christ.*
2. *The time of Jesus' birth was miraculously fixed by Daniel's prophecy, and the place by Micah.*
3. *The announcement to Mary, of the birth of Jesus, and Mary and Joseph's subsequent acceptance of the situation was miraculous.*
4. *God used the pagan emperor, Augustus, to bring Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, the city of David, for the birth of the son of David.*
5. *Shepherds and wisemen were supernaturally led to the newborn Son of God.*

I -- THE GENEALOGY OF CHRIST: One of the clearest proofs of the inspiration of the scriptures is the chronology of the "royal line" from Adam to Christ. Throughout the Old Testament the record of dates and years that make up a complete chronology are given only in the case of the particular line from Adam to Christ. These dated events are recorded by various authors who could not have known (by natural wisdom) where this line would lead. The purpose of all this chronology does not become clear until the Bible is completed by the addition of the New Testament scriptures. The genealogical tables of Matthew and Luke reveal the purpose of all this careful data: to lead us to God's Christ.

"Here then is proof of the most convincing sort, that He who alone sees the end from the beginning is the author of the books of Moses, and of all the later books of the Old Testament, through which runs this marvelous chronological line."

--from The Wonders of Bible Chronology

The chronology of Matthew follows the one of the Kings of Judah from Solomon to the captivity, while the lineage in Luke is traced by a different route from David to Christ via Nathan (another son of David). Some scholars believe this to be the genealogy of Mary, the mother of Jesus, who must also have been a descendant of David. Here then is a truly miraculous aspect to the "begats" so often passed over with little regard.

II -- THE ANNUNCIATION: The angel Gabriel was sent by God to the city of Nazareth in Galilee to Mary, a virgin who was engaged to marry Joseph, a carpenter and a descendant of David. The angel greeted her as one highly favored by God. She was perplexed by the greeting. The angel, however, reassured her saying, "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God." Gabriel went on with the long-awaited announcement, "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son and shalt call his name Jesus." Mary asked then how this should be, since she was not yet married. Her question is a clear proof of the virgin birth of Jesus. The angel Gabriel explained that the conception would be brought about by the Holy Ghost and the power of the Highest coming upon her. Such an event would bring Mary into serious trouble. It would endanger her marriage, ruin her reputation, and indeed threaten her very life. Yet Mary was willing for anything and so she replied to Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

Mary went at once to the hill country to be with Elisabeth, her cousin, and probably there in Hebron, (the place of fellowship) the miraculous and divine conception took place. By the Holy Spirit Elisabeth knew that Mary was to be the mother of "her Lord." After three months Mary returned to her own house. We are not told what Mary endured there until the time when she went with Joseph to Bethlehem.

Surely Joseph, too, had a perplexing problem to face. The circumstances seemed to indicate that Mary was unfaithful to him. Three alternatives were open to Joseph. He could go ahead with the marriage and assume responsibility for the child. This would reflect discredit on himself and his conduct before the marriage. He also could divorce Mary either publicly or privately. Engagement, in the Jewish society was as sacred as marriage and could be broken only by the same route: divorce. The last possibility was to accuse Mary publicly and make formal charges against her. This could have resulted in her being put to death. While Joseph thought on these things the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and reassured him that he need not fear to go ahead with the marriage. The angel explained that the child Mary bore was of the Holy Spirit. To Joseph also the name of the child was revealed, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." So Joseph also submitted to the

instruction of the angel of God. The marriage was performed and Mary remained a virgin until after the birth of her firstborn son, Jesus. Other babes were miraculous in that they were foretold and forenamed. Several were born miraculously because of the age of the parents involved. But the greatest miracle of all was this virgin birth of Jesus, foretold in Isaiah 7;14.

III -- THE BLESSED EVENT IN BETHLEHEM: Even the pagan emperor Augustus enters into the working out of the birth of Christ. It was prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (see Micah 5:2). But Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth of Galilee. How would the scriptures be fulfilled? As the months passed it became more difficult for Mary to travel. It surely seemed that the child would be born in Nazareth instead of Bethlehem. But the Roman Emperor, Augustus, at the just the right time decided that he must have a new census. The tax he would collect would also be desirable for his administration and so the decree went out: All the empire must be enrolled. The decree required every man to enroll in the city of his birth. Thus Joseph was required to return to Bethlehem. Despite her condition Mary also had to go. Thus, miraculously, when the days were accomplished that she should be delivered, Mary was in the place where it had been prophesied that the Messiah should be born. In this case, what appeared to be natural occurrences worked out the fulfillment of the prophecy. The timing at least, was miraculous.

On the same hillsides where David had kept his sheep a thousand years before, some shepherds watched their flock that wonderful night. Suddenly, the night became bright with the glory of God. The angel of the Lord appeared to the frightened shepherds. He told them, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ, the Lord." The angel told the shepherds exactly where to find the child: in a manger wrapped in "swaddling clothes." Suddenly a multitude of angels joined the original messenger. They were all praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Quickly, the shepherds followed the instructions of their miraculous messengers. They found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger, just as the angel had said.

Far to the east a different messenger alerted another group of men to the significant event. A star appeared causing the wise men to consult together regarding the significance of the unusual celestial phenomenon. They may have been aware from the writings of Daniel (also a wise man of Babylon in the east) that a "Prince" was to be born. Daniel had fixed the exact time of this appearance of the Messiah by his prophetic vision of seventy weeks. At any rate, quite sure of the significance of the star, the wise

men set out for Jerusalem. Apparently the star had vanished for a time. In Jerusalem they learned that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. So they resumed their journey to that nearby (about 10 miles) town. As they left Jerusalem they saw the star again. Somehow it led them right to where the young child was. They rejoiced with exceeding great joy when they saw the star again. Note that it led them to the "young child," not the babe. When Herod tried to eliminate the newborn king he had all children under 2 years of age slain. This indicates that Jesus was probably between 1 and 2 years old at the time. Note also that 3 gifts are mentioned: gold, frankincense and myrrh. From this fact the tradition of 3 wise men has arisen. The scripture account does not give the number of wise men. Probably the gifts provided traveling expenses for the family when they fled to Egypt in response to the warning of an angel in a dream to Joseph. There are still more miraculous events surrounding the birth and dedication of the Son of God on that first Christmas. We experience a new miracle even today every time a heart opens to Jesus and He is born in us anew!

NOTES:

THE HEALING OF TEN LEPERS

Read: Luke 17:11-19; Leviticus 13 & 14:1-32

Memory Work: Review John 5:19-29

What we should learn from this Lesson

- 1. Leprosy is a type for sin.*
- 2. The mercy of the Lord moved Him to heal the lepers and it moves Him also to cleanse the sinners who apply to Him.*
- 3. Jesus simply told these ten to go and show themselves to the priest. They were healed as they went.*
- 4. The Lord gave special commendation to the one who returned to give thanks.*
- 5. The purpose of the miracles recorded is to help us to believe that Jesus is indeed the Son of God and thereby receive eternal life, God's greatest miracle.*

I -- TEN LEPERS: Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem for the Passover feast which culminated in His death and resurrection. As He entered into a certain unnamed village, ten lepers met Him. They stood "afar off" and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Once before early in Jesus' ministry, a leper had come for healing to Jesus. In that case Jesus had compassion on the suffering man and touched him, though the disease was considered contagious, and said, "Be thou clean." The leprosy departed immediately. The effect of the testimony of that healing was to bring great crowds to Jesus.

In the case of the ten lepers, however, Jesus did not touch them. This time He simply told them to go and show themselves to the priest as instructed in Leviticus 13:49 & 14:1-3. Those who were declared to be lepers, because of certain evident symptoms in their skin were commanded by the Mosaic law to be separated from contact with

unaffected people. These sanitary laws given by God to Israel through Moses are very remarkable. The cleansing effect of running water and the value of isolation was almost totally unknown in the medical world until 200 years ago. Yet God gave these prudent rules to Moses for the people of God more than 3500 years ago.

The name of leprosy was given to several different diseases as we recognize them today. Probably small-pox and venereal diseases were included in the term leprosy. In any event the biblical method of determining whether or not a skin eruption was or was not "leprosy" was based upon the observation of the development of the affected area. This is a sound method. Those who were diagnosed as "leprosy" were separated from society. They often banded together for their mutual benefit and protection. Four such men in the days of Elisha discovered the flight of the Syrians and brought about the end of a famine by sharing the news in Samaria. There is no indication that those four lepers were ever healed, but Naaman the Syrian was healed of leprosy. Miriam and Gehazi and Uzziah contracted leprosy in judgment for their various transgressions. Miriam was judged temporarily for criticism, Gehazi for covetousness and lying, and Uzziah for presumptuously entering the Holy Place in the Temple.

Provision was made in the law of Moses for those lepers who recovered from their disease. Such cases were required to show themselves to the priest and offer sacrifices. After that they could not return to their tents (or houses) for seven days (see Lev. 14:1-32). On the eighth day the priest was to present them cleansed at the door of the tabernacle (later, the temple).

To these ten lepers in our present lesson, Jesus said, "Go, and show yourselves to the priest," "And it came to pass, that as they went they were cleansed" (Luke 17:15). One of the ten, when he realized that he was healed, turned around and came back to Jesus. With a loud voice he glorified God. He fell at Jesus' feet, giving thanks for his miraculous recovery. This one in particular of the ten lepers was a Samaritan. While the Jews normally had no dealings with Samaritans, apparently the common misfortune of leprosy removed such prejudice. Jesus remarked that only one of ten had returned to give thanks, and that one a Samaritan at that. To the thankful Samaritan Jesus said, "Arise, and go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole." Certainly this thankful Samaritan received some extra blessing because of his thankfulness. Have we remembered to give thanks and to glorify God for the many blessings we have received during this year? It will be good to close out the old year with testimonies of thanks, glorifying God with a loud voice for His mercy and grace.

II -- LEPROSY AND SIN: In the several instances already mentioned, specific sin brought about the judgment of leprosy. Moses prayed for Miriam and she was delivered. There

is at least a possibility that Gehazi was healed of his leprosy, for he stood before the king later (a thing no leper could do), and told the story of the resurrection of the Shunamite's son (see II Kings 8:4). Uzziah the king, however, died of his leprosy (II Chron. 26:21). Leprosy in general is a type of sin. No one who had been designated as "leprous" and thereby separated from fellowship with God at the temple and with God's people, Israel, could be restored without the washing and cleansing described in Leviticus 14. Just so, sin separates us from fellowship with God and His people. The sinner must be washed in the prescribed method of the New Testament before he can enjoy the fellowship of God and His saints. The whole world is leprous. There is none righteous, no not one! The blood of 2 sparrows (see Lev. 14:4) can never avail to cleanse the human heart from the infectious leprosy of sin. It takes the blood of a "better sacrifice" (see Heb. 9:23) to cleanse man of his disease of sin. But thank God that there is a sure cure. "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). The Mosaic sacrifice specified that the blood of the bird be shed over running water. Our fountain flows from Calvary's mountain.

*"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.*

This is God's way of cleansing. There is no other. Psychiatry attempts to deal with the "guilt complex," denying the existence of true guilt. But our Lord is not playing games of make-be-believe. He has dealt with the problem and has effected a cure for guilt. The price was high, but it is all paid in full: the vicarious sacrifice of God's Son, our Saviour, on the cross of Calvary. The fountain flows today. Its results are sure. Let no one carry any guilt into the new year. Plunge in today and be made every whit whole, and enjoy the wonderful fellowship with the Father and with the Son. No one need remain outside the camp, unclean. Like Naaman dipped in Jordan's water, we may wash in the river that flows from Calvary. Naaman's skin became like that of a child and our whole nature will be born new. Praise God! "Now ye are clean!"

III -- THE PURPOSE OF THE MIRACLES: Twenty-six identifiable healings are recorded in the four Gospels. To list them by person, disease, and method of healing used by Jesus, is a very faith-inspiring study. These twenty-six do not include several general healings where individuals cannot be identified. If you will make such a list and then study it in time of sickness, your faith will be inspired to claim your healing.

Besides the healings, nine other miracles, or signs, are recorded in the Gospels. From the water changed to wine to the catch of 153 fish the Lord Jesus is revealed as a worker of miracles. The miracles brought Nicodemus to Jesus on that night early in Jesus' ministry, and the miracle of Lazarus' restoration sealed the Lord's death warrant. John tells us that Jesus performed many miracles which are not recorded in the Gospel accounts. He also tells us the reason why the particular miracles (or signs) are recorded: "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah), the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

Should anyone be in doubt concerning the divinity of Jesus, let him study these miracles. John's Gospel in particular goes to great lengths to establish the fundamental doctrine that Jesus is God's own Son, the only begotten of God. Four witnesses give their testimony: John the Baptist; God Himself, speaking in an audible voice; the Old Testament scriptures; and the works which Jesus did. These all agree. Some foolish "intellectuals" assert that Jesus is a great prophet, the greatest teacher, a very holy man. None of these can be true unless He is the Son of God. For if He is **not** who He **said** He was, then he is a **fraud** and neither prophet, nor teacher, nor holy man. "Whosoever denieth the Son," (that Jesus is God's Son) "the same hath not the Father" (I John 2:23). Let us acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God and confess the same with our mouth, and we will partake in the everlasting life which is the promised possession of those who have the Son. This eternal life is the greatest miracle of all!