

Mark 1:32-34 Miracles Happen! Epiphany 5 February 4, 2018

By Pastor Kenneth Mellon, Trinity Lutheran Church and School, Pleasant Valley Rd., West Bend, WI

God's message of grace and peace has changed our lives in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

God's clear truth of the miraculous power of Jesus, our Savior, is written in Mark 1:32-34.

These are Your Words of power, heavenly Father. Give us a strong faith to trust in Your promises. Your ...

Dear People of God in Christ,

Our theme for the day is that miracles happen. Sadly, many people in the world don't believe that miracles are real. They think that the Bible's descriptions of miracles have a physical or psychological explanation i.e. in the 10 plagues of Egypt when God turned the Nile water into blood it was just red dye from tree roots upstream that made the water look like blood. They claim the same for Jesus' miracles. They don't believe that He multiplied a few fish and bread pieces to feed 5,000 people. For them, the hero of the story was the boy who shared his lunch. Once he shared, they say, the crowd got out their hidden supplies of food and shared to feed everyone! We know that these people are deceived by the devil to question what is truth. With their reason, they take plain Scriptural truths, and turn them into lies.

We believers know the truth! We believe God when He tells us that miracles, supernatural events, happened throughout history, especially at the time of Jesus. And, we still see miracles today. Just look at a newborn child so intricately made, and you praise God for the miracle of life. Another time, I had a member diagnosed with cancer. The lab work, the scans, and the pain she had, showed pancreatic cancer. She went to the James Cancer Center at The University of Ohio. They opened her, looked, and then closed her up. They did nothing because the cancer was gone. The doctors didn't know why. She knew it was a miracle!

Miracles Happen!

First, let's appreciate Jesus' miracles! Many of us have grown up hearing about Jesus' miracles 100's of times, they don't seem great. We hear how He stopped a storm to save His disciples, gave sight the blind, made the paralyzed walk, and raised the dead. But, it's hard for us to relate to these lessons. If a storm comes, we go inside for shelter. Since we see, walk, or have good health, why ask God for intervention?

Let's put ourselves in the place of the people at Jesus' time. Those people had no surgeon to restore sight. They had no medicine to stop a high debilitating fever. They had no transplants to extend a person's life. There were no clinics or emergency rooms for sick children. There were a few remedies for illnesses, but nothing like we have today. And the people couldn't afford medicine even if it was available. So many people died at a young age and many others suffered in great pain until they died.

Jesus came to the city of Capernaum located along the Sea of Galilee (v.21). This city had become His home base for ministry while in the area of Galilee. That day began with Jesus worshipping at the local synagogue. While there, a demon possessed man appear and Jesus cast out a demon. Then, He went from there to Peter's home where He found that Peter's mother-in-law was in great pain from a high fever. He not only healed her from the fever, He restored her strength so that she got up and out of thanks served a meal.

Once the Sabbath was over, crowds from all over the city came to Peter's door, and Jesus healed them. What if you lived next to Peter? You'd see a deaf man that couldn't speak walk past to Jesus and a moment later he walks away singing God's praises that he can hear. A poor blind woman was led to Jesus by others and a moment later she walks past on her own praising God for the beautiful sunset! You see parents carry a paralyzed boy on a mat to Jesus and a moment later the boy is running down the street with his parents in hot pursuit! People were led past who were demon possessed, tortured and hurt. Jesus cast out the demons and banished them from harming the people any longer. What an amazing sight that must have been! What miracles!

Of course, such miracles lasted only so long. Every one of those people who were healed later would have another illness, which would cause them to die. Even the member from Ohio that I described who was miraculously healed from her cancer died of other causes a few years ago. Thankfully, so far although we all suffered from sicknesses or injuries, especially over the past months, we have recuperated or are mending. But, some of you have relatives that, unless God intervenes miraculously, they will not be with you at this time next year. We don't need to worry. Our times are in God's hands and He knows when it is best for us to be healed physically or to enter heaven where there is eternal healing!

Second, Jesus' physical miracles show a greater need that we have. His miracles showed that He was no ordinary man or prophet. He was God's Son and the Savior of the world. His main purpose wasn't to give relief or just show mercy by His miracles; it was to preach in order to give people an eternal healing. God had sent Him to save people from their sins. His goal was to reach as many people as possible with the saving message before they died. That is why when the disciples were looking for Jesus in the morning, He replied, *"Let us go somewhere else – to nearby villages- so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."* (v.38) Jesus knew that miracles were not enough to convince unbelievers that He was the Savior. He didn't look like God's Son. He wasn't the kind of Savior that most Jews in their unbelief wanted. They were so stubborn that after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, they plotted to kill Lazarus to stop his witness about Jesus.

Those people needed a miracle inside. They needed God's powerful Word to shatter their hardened hearts. They were dead in their sins and needed a miracle to make them alive. Without intervention, they were going to be separated from God forever. But, Jesus came with His Word of truth, calling them to repent, turn from their sins, and find full forgiveness in Him. He would die to take away all their sins and bring peace with God. Some listened to His Word and believed. Their change of heart was just as powerful as Jesus stopping a storm or healing a blind man. His words brought people to a living faith in God.

Miracles still happen today. God changed us from unbelief to faith. The Bible states, *"The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. (Romans 1:16) It states, "Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17)* That same powerful word is connected with water in baptism. (Acts 23) Jesus performed a miracle by giving us faith to receive His forgiveness the He won of the cross. (Titus 3:5). A miracle will happen today as Jesus' Word and promise bring His body and blood to bread and wine and we receive it for the forgiveness of all our sins. Our faith in Him is a miracle that makes us the children of God and inheritors of eternal life in heaven.

No one had to lead us into church today because of our blindness or carry us here because we were paralyzed. But, just as Jesus healed people in Capernaum, His miracles still affect us. We were spiritually blind, but by His powerful Word we see and believe. We were dead in sins, but not made alive by faith. Perhaps others around us won't see a change instantly like the people healed by Jesus, but by faith we will know the truth. Jesus has saved us from death and brought forgiveness and eternal life to be ours forever. What a miracle!

So, we keep coming to Jesus. He is as close to us as His Word. He is ready to make powerful changes for us and for all people who know they need Him. Thank God that miracles happen! Amen.