

Miracle in 6 inches water.

Do you believe in Miracles? Or let me put it another way – have you experienced any miracles in your life?

Miracles were a huge part of Jesus life and ministry. The Bible Records around 40 of Jesus' miracles

- Driving out demons
- Healing diseases
- Raising the dead
- Rebuking storms
- walking on water
- Feeding the 5,000 and turning water into wine.

His Birth was miraculous and his resurrection was miraculous

In Mark's short gospel alone, roughly one third of the verses deal with miracles.

Miracles were a huge part of Jesus life.

Even his opponents recognised that his miracles needed to be accounted for (John 11:47), and the non Christian historians writing shortly after his time on earth noted his

miracles. Celsus suggested he practiced magic, and Josephus described Jesus as a doer of wonderful works.

Video Excerpt – John 5

### **Jesus' Miracles show his compassion**

What is it like to waken up each morning and have another day of the same stuff – will this ever change? He stayed by this pool because people claimed that an angel visited every so often and stirred up the waters, and that the first person into the pool when the angel visited would be healed.

Think of what life was like for this man.

38 years of lying on a mat unable to walk, or care for himself.

38 years of hoping to be first into the pool for healing

38 years of hoping

38 years of hopelessness

For 38 years he woke up, and thought maybe today, maybe will be the day we are visited, and maybe, maybe there will be someone who has enough compassion on me to help me get into the pool.

Day after day there was nothing, then one day there is a commotion, the waters are stirred, and the neediest people in all of Jerusalem strain with all their might to get in for healing.

And for this man, yet another year, yet another stirring, and yet more loneliness and disappointment.

And then Jesus comes and talks to him. I wonder how long it has been since anyone had enough compassion to go to this man and just talk to him? How long since anyone had even taken one bit of notice of him? Jesus, clearly understanding his pain, comes to him at the point of his most keenly felt hopelessness, and says to him – do you want to be healed. It sounds like a stupid question, doesn't it? Do you want to be healed?

But it is a vital question. Remember what Andy showed us last week that you have to want to understand the parables before you will be able to. The engagement of your will is John 5:16-18 <sup>16</sup> So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began

to persecute him. <sup>17</sup> In his defence Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working." <sup>18</sup>For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God vital.

And the same for this healing – Jesus draws the man's deepest desires out of him, and then he heals him.

Jesus' miracles prove to those who are willing to understand that he is compassionate towards us. Even when we feel alone and vulnerable in this world, we can trust him because he knows us and he has compassion for us. A compassion that led him to the cross, and of course the most mind boggling miracle of history is Jesus, the son of God submitting himself to dying in your place on the cross.

**"Father forgive them!" thus did He pray,  
E'en while His lifeblood flowed fast away;  
Praying for sinners while in such woe  
No one but Jesus ever loved so.**

## Jesus miracles confirm his oneness with God

<sup>18</sup> For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

John 5:16-18

Miracles are only miracles when the natural laws of Physics are suspended. And so when Jesus performs a miracle, he is demonstrating his Godly power and authority.

When John the Baptist was languishing in Herod's prison, and starting to question if Jesus actually was the Messiah he sent his disciples to ask Jesus that very question, listen carefully to Jesus' reply:

Luke 7:22 'Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard: 'The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the

man who does not fall away on account of me.' (Scandalised by me)

Just as it is today – 2000 years ago, it was a scandalous thing for Jesus to claim oneness with God the father. But Jesus is leaving no room for debate at all – these are his own claims about himself- and they are scandalous – but only if they are untrue.

Jesus did something else that was scandalous:

When he found the healed man from the Pool of Bethesda in the temple – he said sin no more unless something worse will happen to you.

Now Jesus is by no means teaching that sickness and illness are as the direct result of sin.

We know that we have sickness and illness because Adam and Eve sinned, but that is quite different from saying that a man's sickness is as a result of his sin,

But it looks like this was the case for this.

## **1 Corinthians 11:29**

<sup>29</sup> For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. <sup>30</sup> That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

### **James 5:15**

<sup>15</sup> And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven

And so when we are praying for someone to be healed of an illness, we cannot rule out the possibility that this illness has come as a result of a sin, maybe unconfessed sin.

So when Jesus says the man – sin no more – he is showing that not only does he have authority over the natural powers of this world, but he has authority over sin, and the authority to forgive our sin.

That is the best news to a soul who is harbouring unconfessed sin is that Jesus is compassionate and is willing to forgive, and what is more, he has the power and the authority to do so.

And so he demonstrates that he is one with God by telling the man to Sin no more

But he is also proving his oneness with God by choosing to perform this miracle on the Sabbath.

Jesus performs miracles on 6 different Sabbath Days, and each time he attracts the wrath of the religious leaders.

These men had taken something that was a gift to mankind, and turned it into a slave driver. Jesus was determined to break their false religion, and the Sabbath was a sacred cow.

<sup>27</sup> Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. <sup>28</sup> So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

Jesus was clearly claiming to be one with God, and you will not be able to worship God unless you worship his precious son Jesus.

### **Jesus’ Miracles are a sign that he will Judge the world**

The Miracles point to another dimension to the Authority of Jesus: one day he will judge every one – whether living or

dead, we will all be raised to be judged, and those who have received the Life he offers will not be condemned.

But those who do not honour the son will be condemned. Don't misunderstand Jesus compassion as meaning there will be no judgement. Of the issues that he speaks about, more verses are given to his teaching on hell than any other subject.

It is important that you understand that. This is a crucial doctrine. One that should make us weep before God.

We should not try to frighten anyone into believing about God because of their fear of hell, we should show how much he loves us so that we would be drawn to move him. But his death on the cross doesn't make any sense unless we see the whole picture, and part of that is to see what he is saving us from.

Jesus used these miracles not only to demonstrate his oneness with the Father, but also his role as Judge

On one occasion the religious leaders asked Jesus to perform a miracle for him:

### **The Sign of Jonah**

<sup>38</sup> Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you."

<sup>39</sup> He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. <sup>40</sup> For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. <sup>41</sup> The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here.

A few weeks ago we discussed how the prophets were sent to grab our attention, and how Jesus wept over the City of Jerusalem because they had killed the prophets, and rejected him.

The consequences for rejecting Jesus are unspeakable.

### **Jesus is doing Even Greater Miracles**

<sup>20</sup> For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. <sup>21</sup> For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

We got off the bus from Carrick just down from the football ground on the Shore Road. I was eight, my mum was carrying my baby brother in her arms, and my dad was holding my hand and my younger brother's hand.

Before the baby was born we would often have made that journey to go to the Grove Picture House, but this time our whole family were doing something that we had never done before, nor ever did together again, we were attending a healing meeting.

My mother had been diagnosed with an incurable disease soon after the baby was born. This was something she had dreaded all her life. Her mother had suffered from this disease, and now the terrible news had been confirmed – she too was diagnosed. My parents were devastated.

My mum had been a Salvationist in the salvation army growing up, but my dad wasn't a Christian, nor had he any interest in Christian things and so she was no longer living for Jesus, and he never had been, and so it was a bit unusual that we were climbing the stairs as a family to a faith healing meeting.

My dad explained to me that we would sit in the back row, and maybe they would see if mum could be healed.

I have four distinctive memories from that meeting:

I remember the room being dark – the curtains were drawn, and special lighting was being used on the stage. I remember the drummer used brushes to play the drums. I remember my parents not moving when the invitation was extended for people to come to the front for healing. I remember being relieved they didn't go forward, but leaving the meeting sad that my mum was still ill.

Do I believe that Jesus Heals – well I believe he does, but my family didn't experienced it. Do I believe in miracle? absolutely and I have experienced some.

The next two years in our family's' life were terrible. Due to my mum's worsening condition, and after her second attempt to commit suicide, my father gave up his job to look after her

My mum's depression got worse, and one morning, while he was dressing her, she snapped at my dad that she didn't need him. And it broke him.

That night when we were in bed I heard him moving about downstairs in our living room.

He came into my bedroom, and explained that he had to go out to post some letters, and then he said something that was strange. He said 'look after yourself son.' I was 11, and I sensed there was something strange about the way he said that.

So when the front door shut, I went to the window and watched him walk away, and just knew that he wasn't coming back.

I sat on the stairs in the early hours of the morning and although I was not a Christian, I prayed that he would come

back. Soon the police were at the house, and some neighbours came and helped.

My father had taken an overdose of prescription drugs, and was in a coma for three days. One of our neighbours, a Christian man who we didn't really know, heard about what happened, and visited my dad in hospital. He asked if he could get a Pastor to call with him, and my dad said just said 'whatever – I don't care.'

After the Pastor listened to my dad's story, the pastor said – 'Howard your plan is to end your life, but I believe that God's plan is for you to live life.'

A few months later, just before Christmas, we were all upstairs in bed oblivious to what was happening to my dad downstairs.

Again he found himself wrestling with his life, but this time, instead of the wrestling with demons, he was wrestling with the Holy Spirit who moved in our home that night. My dad came under conviction of his sin. He rang the neighbour, who came and led my father to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Soon my mum opened her heart once more to Jesus, and the change in both of them was unbelievable. My parents still suffered - my mum from the debilitating disease, and my dad from terrible bouts of depression. But the difference now was that Jesus walked every step of the journey with them.

I was 14 when they were baptised in Carrick Baptist. My mum was so unsteady on her feet that she that there was genuine concern that she might fall in the process of walking along the floor to get down into to the baptismal tank, and so two of her friends took an arm each as they helped her to the water.

Well – we the Holy Spirit has a sense of humour, because my mum didn't slip, but one of her friends stumbled, and my mum reached out to prevent her from falling into the water, and the congregation gasped, then giggled.

Then the pastor received my mum into the baptismal tank, she folded her arms in front of herself, asked her if she professed Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, she said 'I do', and he then he eased her backwards into the water, as she was coming up out of the water there was a radiant glow in

her face which made her look as if she was full of the Joy of the Holy Spirit.

Does Jesus still heal today? I think he does, but he does even greater things than healing sickness – he saves people from the penalty of their sins, and he gives them the Holy Spirit to enable them to live a life of battle against sin. If my mum had been healed at that meeting when I was eight, they might never have given themselves to Jesus.