

SUNDAY, April 14, 2024 "When we Can't See our Way- Jesus Heals"

I John 3: 7 John 9:1-7 Luke 24: 36-48

For the last couple of weeks we've ask this question: Do you believe in miracles? But what is a miracle? We've shared these definitions: "a surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency " and "an extraordinary event taken as a sign of the supernatural power of God, or an extremely outstanding or unusual event thing or accomplishment."

Another question asks the purpose of miracles. The purpose of the miracle is not to prove the existence of God, but it is to prove the legitimacy and the validity of an agent of revelation. This means that there is a change by someone whom God has sent to speak His message at a specific time and place. The miracle—or act of change verifies or legitimizes God's messengers and these messengers appear in both the Old and New Testaments. The miracle stories in the Old Testament are of God as Creator, or source of energy, life and time. But as Christians, we look to Jesus' miracles not just as a challenge to our minds, but a promise to our hearts because the world we all want is coming. The miracles of Jesus serve as a glimpse and just a bit of what God will accomplish on a grand, universal scale when Jesus comes to establish the New Heaven and the New Earth.

But in the meantime we need to look to miracles and wonders God has created. This past week with the solar eclipse brought much discussion to people who never really paid attention to the moon and the sun. Yet when the moon eclipsed the sun bringing the signs of dusk at 3-4 in the afternoon there was a sense of awe, wonder and amazement. There was also a feeling of being small in this universe. Birds flew around in swarms, the temperature dropped, street and parking lot lights came on. Store lights brightened and for a few short minutes silence but the sound of seagulls captured the minds and eyes of people in our region with what people have also called a miracle in creation. No human could make this happen and the wonder of creation and the Creator emerged. In discussion with people this week comments included—how can one not believe in God? How might Jesus' message of heaven and earth become one?

Sure scientists through the years have learned about eclipses and calculated when and where the 100% totality would occur in this region, but how was this possible? God's creation is full of miracles!

This is one type of miracle. Divine acts that bring things into existence –God creating what we call the physical universe and its natural laws. Creational.

A second type of miracle are those miracles which point to the ongoing operation of nature that allow humans to exist and flourish. Jesus sustains all things by his word (Hebrews 1:3) as he is the “image of the invisible God” in whom all things hold together (Colossians 1:15-17).

Sustaining miracles point to what makes life possible. Some people believe that the birth of every baby enables us to know that life will continue because God is sustaining life. Another thought about sustaining miracles asks who sustains you? Psalm 3:5 answers that it is God.

A third type of miracle is providential in nature. An example is if one prays for a new job offer and a few minutes later an email is received about this. Is it a miracle or coincidence? In Matthew 17:27 Jesus tells Peter to go fishing. Then take the first fish you catch, open its mouth and you will find a four drachma coin. Was this a miracle? Because of the timing between what Jesus said, Peter fishing, catching the one fish with money in it. It sounds like a coincidence, but is it?

Predictive miracles arise from ‘fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. A predictive miracle were experienced when accurate predictions came true-like the coin in the fish's mouth but Jesus foretold this would occur. Predictive miracles contribute to our knowing truth about God- power, faithfulness and omniscient because God has universal or complete knowledge. Miracles are not merely extraordinary, isolated events, but fulfillment of predictive prophecy.

The fifth type of miracle is suspension. These appear to violate some natural law but really suspend or stop for a time, a natural principle. An example of this is when Jesus healed the man born blind from John 9. What occurred in that situation was that the disciples observed

a man who had been blind from birth. They asked who it was that had sinned to cause this man to be blind. Jesus responded by saying, "Neither he nor his parents sinned. He was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him." The miracle he was about to do was also a predictive one because years before his birth it was predicted that this man would be born blind in order to show others God's works.

Jesus spits on the ground, makes a small mud pie and puts it on the man's eyes. He then tells the man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. He goes and washes his eyes and he comes back able to see. The neighbours and those who had seen him before begging in the street ask whether it is the same man. He answers and then tells them the story. They—who we don't know- take him to the Pharisees. It was the Sabbath when Jesus had 'opened the eyes of the formerly blind man. The Pharisees question him again and ask What do you say about the man who healed you? He is a prophet. The Pharisees then questioned his parents as to whether their son was really blind. They said yes. They were also questioned how it was possible. They told the Jewish leaders, to ask him; they were afraid of them because the Pharisees had already told people that if they believed this man was the Messiah they would be put out of the synagogue.

The story continues as the Pharisees ask the formerly blind man more questions about what occurred, who he believed Jesus was and what he thought. Eventually they put this man out of the synagogue and Jesus learns of this. He finds him and they talk. Jesus says I came into the world for judgment so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind. Some of the Pharisees heard this, and asked, "Surely we are not blind are we?" If you were blind you would not have sin. But now that you see, "We see," your sin remains." They did not want to admit that Jesus was the Messiah.

The Miracles Jesus did were often points of conflict for the Pharisees. Had they witnessed this miracle? No-but they investigated the one who could now see. They questioned

the man, his parents and those in the crowd. They did not ask Jesus directly but when they asked, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus answered well.

Our reading from Luke 24 occurs after Jesus' resurrection and he appears to the disciples. He asked them to touch him and see that he is alive. He also had some fish to eat. He then spoke to them, and opened their minds to understand the scriptures. He wanted them to know how his death and resurrection was prophesied and what it meant and will mean for generations to come. He rose from death to new life and this is the most significant miracle which suspended time and all of God's laws of life and death. Jesus died and rose again! This is Jesus' Easter miracle!

But we cannot leave it contained in ourselves. We need to be witnesses to the story like John recorded in the First letter of John ch.3 (not the gospel). John witnessed the miracles of Jesus and felt it necessary to tell others. He states, "We are God's children and what we shall be has not yet been revealed. When Christ becomes known, we will be like him and we will see him as he is."

Our eyes will be opened again. Our eyes will be able to see Jesus as the Messiah, our Saviour and the Son of God. And we will know that this is a miracle of love and grace.

PRAYER SONG

SING "IT TOOK A MIRACLE" by John W Peterson.