

Sunday, January 17, 2016

Isaiah 62:1-5

John 2:1-11

Miracles Abound

Tess was 8 years old when she heard her parents talking about her little brother, Andrew. All she knew was that he was very sick and they were completely out of money. They were moving into an apartment next month because the doctor bills were growing and they could use the money from the sale of the house to pay for the brother's surgery which could save him. No one was able to loan them money. She heard her father say that "only a miracle would be able to save little Andrew."

So Tess went to her bedroom and pulled a glass jar from its hiding place and counted all the change out really carefully. She counted again and then put all the coins back into the jar. She slipped out the back door of the house and made her way to the Rexall Drug store 6 blocks away. She walked to the back of the store and waited patiently for the nice man who she had seen many times before with her mother. He was the man who gave out medicine. He was busy at that moment and so she made noises to get his attention. Nothing. Finally she took a quarter from the jar and banged it on the counter.

The pharmacist was now annoyed with the little girl and asked, "What do you want? I'm talking to my brother whom I haven't seen in ages."

I want to talk to you about my brother. He's really sick and I want to buy a miracle."

The pharmacist asked, "What?"

My brother has something bad growing inside his head and my Daddy said that 'only a miracle can save him now. How much does a miracle cost?"

The pharmacist responded, "We don't sell miracles here. "The girl continued, "I have money to pay for it—if it isn't enough, I will get the rest. How much for a miracle?"

Meanwhile the pharmacist's brother stooped down and asked the girl, "What kind of miracle does he need?"

I don't know. But my Daddy can't pay for it so I want to use my money.

"How much do you have?"

"\$1.11 but I can get more if I need to."

The man smiled and said, "\$1.11 exactly the amount for little brother miracles. The man then asked her to "take me to where you live I want to see your brother and your parents. I'll need to see what kind of miracle you need."

The pharmacist's brother inquired about the family, had the pharmacist call the girl's parents and they all went to where they were. The brother was a neurologist and had diagnosed the necessary surgery for the little brother and the operation was completed without charge. Andrew became well again.

A while later the parents were talking about the chain of events that led them to where the boy was doing well. The mother commented, "That surgery was a real miracle, I wonder how much it would have cost?"

Tess had heard her mother's question and simply replied, "\$1.11"

And her parents looked at her—and smiled—and a whole lot of faith.

How important are miracles to you? Do you believe that there are miracles happening today? Several years ago Children's Hospital had a fundraising campaign and they sold sweatshirts in support of the work they do. On the sweatshirt it read, "We believe in miracles". What did this statement say about the work they do? And do miracles happen today?

A miracle by definition is an event and not explicable by natural or scientific laws. Such an event maybe attributed to a supernatural being, God or gods, magic or miracle workers. Often we give the name 'miracle' to when we cannot explain how individuals walking along the street escape serious injury or death when traffic accidents occur or when someone suffering from serious illness seems to suddenly become well. What occurred is not able to be explained scientifically or any other way.

If we lived in the first century just after Jesus ascended into heaven miracles would be an everyday topic of discussion instead we talk about the hockey game or football game of the previous evening. If we lived in the first century we would be looking for those individuals who were blind and now able to see; were lame and could walk and even in Lazarus' case was dead and was alive again. Not to say this this does not occur now, but in today's scientific world we call for proof on every level. And the Church universal, does not proclaim miracles on a wide basis or using the same criteria. It seemed that when Jesus was alive on earth miracles were abounding. And maybe this is it-the reason miracles happen is because when Jesus is around miracles occur!

In a recent article by Tim Stafford writing for Christianity Today states: "Around the world, wherever churches are growing, reports of miracles are rampant. Many Christians regard miracles as extremely important to their faith because they can see changes in others, that there was something before which is no longer, or the opposite what was once considered hazardous to health (like malignant tumours) are gone. But what is the miracle really about-a physical organ being healed or changed or the actual change itself when we can say medically it was the treatments which brought healing. Yet we are a people of faith- and so I ask what is a miracle to you?"

Jesus and the disciples were invited to attend a wedding and this was not just a one evening event, but depending upon the circumstances of the couple, the party could go on for a week. There

would be plenty of food, dancing and wine. Huge amounts of food and wine of various tastes and qualities would be served and the party would carry on unless they ran out. If the wedding hosts ran out of wine it was considered poor planning and the party would end.

The wedding Jesus and the disciples attended might have been a close family member or friend because Jesus' mother, Mary, was involved in the preparation stages of the wedding and during the course of the event she saw that there was no more wine. She tells Jesus that there is no more wine and Jesus sounds a little bit rude when he speaks to her and says, "Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come," Jesus was obviously distracted by the events of the wedding and wondering why his mother was bothering him. What am I supposed to do—if there is no wine?" But Mary knew that Jesus could do many things- after all, he is the son of God. And she believed this and so she tells the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

The story unfolds with Jesus telling the servants to fill six big water jars with water. He then tells them to draw a sample and take it to the man in charge of the banquet. Upon doing so, the master of the banquet exclaims that it is good wine and how usually people share the better wine while people are sober but the master says that this wine is better and being served later in the feasting time. He does not know where it came from; only Jesus and the servants know. And all continue to enjoy the wedding.

Did Jesus do something spectacular and unusual? Could anyone give an explanation as to how he had made the wine and did everyone get to hear the story- eventually? We don't know. All we do know is that this is regarded as a miracle of Jesus.

I believe that there were two major miracles in our faith. The first that Jesus came to Earth as a human—the incarnation. Why was it necessary for God come to us as human? Jesus left his glory and experience of the universe and came to live with us- to be human. He was born into a family and it was Mary and Joseph who oversaw his growing up years. And Mary is the one who knew from the beginning that he would save his people- in God's time. Yet at this wedding, Jesus told Mary it was not yet time. She knew and so he did act.

The other major miracle in our faith is Jesus' resurrection. There were signs of his coming death and resurrection throughout the time he prepared for his death and for those who saw him raised from death. And it is the same for us as we pray that we will live a resurrected life. Jesus dying was at the hands of people; but his rising to new life was because God fulfilled the promise he made and Christ lives again.

What is amazing is that this miracle is still being shared worldwide, and people are believing. People believe in the miracles of God and what Christ continues to do not just merely healing their physical bodies, but transforming them when what was holding them back was lack of trust, pain, hurt caused by themselves, and then they meet and follow Jesus and there is freedom from within.

Do you believe in miracles? I also believe that miracles happen because God wants transformation to occur. But it is by God's grace that this occurs.

There is a story about a young boy whose cat had a litter of kittens. The boy noticed that the kittens were all blind and having difficulty moving around their mother cat. He had no church background and so when his mother saw him praying and putting his hands over the kittens she wanted to know what was happening. The boy said I think God will perform a miracle on these kittens within the week because he wants these kittens to be all right too. Sure enough within just a few days= the kittens opened their eyes and they could see. But was this a miracle or did this family not understand the natural way of kittens not to be able to see until a few days after birth? This family came to know a little bit about God and what is natural for kittens. They also wondered and were curious enough to go and find out why the boy would turn to God whom he did not know for a ‘miracle’. This miracle study led them to a person of faith, a church family and to Christ. But what was the miracle in this story? -the kittens being able to see or the boy and his family seeking God?

As faithful followers of Jesus we are responsible when we see inexplicable events occur to give the glory to God, to offer our praise and to think about what message God has for us in these events. We are not to demand miracles as proof that God is present but to be reminded that Jesus is God’s Son and He is the one who does miracles. Miracles are not the substance of the kingdom but only signs pointing to Jesus. The substance is Jesus, who suffered, died, and was buried, then was raised again to life

I am concerned that we don’t turn to the source of these inexplicable events and give the glory to God. It seems that only when everything else is lost- then we look for God’s help. Isn’t the miracle because we believe in the resurrection that he have hope in all things because leads us and guides us? When we stop and pray and ask for his blessings miracles will abound. But we cannot recognize a miracle if we do not know the miracle worker. And we know that in Christ there is hope we just need to believe that God is the reason for miracles. We just need to believe.

PRAYERSONG

I believe in miracles. I’ve seen a soul set free. Miraculous the change in one because of Calvary. I’ve seen the lily push its way up through the stubborn sod. I believe in miracles for I believe in God.