

# Miracles



The greatest miracle worker was Jesus Himself. He opened deaf ears, caused the dumb to speak, healed all who came to him and even raised the dead! Then He says that those who follow Him will do even greater works (miracles) than He had done (John 14:12). It's been stated that 80% of Chinese Believers come to know the Lord either through a miracle or deliverance! Why therefore are some Christian workers tempted to sidestep this means of bringing people to Jesus? Does our intellect agree with miracles, but are our hearts far removed from the reality of experiencing them, or are we afraid of a consumer approach whereby people simply come to Jesus to get out of Him all they can? Probably most of us fear "failing" the recipient of the prayer but every prayer of faith touches God and brings His touch to the one before us. Healing prayer needs to be practised and one day there will be breakthrough into a greater level of effectiveness. As Mark Batterson remarks 'The greatest tragedy in life is the prayers that go unanswered because they go unasked.' Of course there is a mystery as to why sometimes godly people full of faith toward God apparently do not receive a miracle while unbelievers sometimes do. Pray for the former to grow in faith, courage and experiencing His Presence in their difficult journey. Stand with them as you would want someone to stand with you. At a time of great discouragement in my life I twisted my ankle severely. My wife feeling equally down hearted touched my ankle without any sense of faith and prayed for healing and the pain instantly went. It is such a joy to know His nearness in our need.

## Bible Perspective

Jesus said to His disciples and surely you are part of that group:

'Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give' Matt 10:8.

'And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well' (James 5:15).

However there is another side to the subject of healing which we mustn't ignore:

Paul said "Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh (body)" (2 Cor 12:7). Some scholars suggest that this could be a physical affliction to make him dependent upon the Lord as we do know Paul appears to have had failing eye sight (Gal 6:11).

## Observations

1. Although many people are attracted to healing miracles, and rightly so, yet there is no greater miracle than a life transformed by the power of Christ (2 Cor 5:17). We need to get passionate about that and I am grateful to belong to a church which has this emphasis of bringing many to a transformed life in Jesus.
2. C. S. Lewis an intellectual, indicates that Christians must not only accept but rejoice in miracles as a testimony of the unique personal involvement of God in his creation. A good reminder!
3. The writer of John's gospel does not use the word 'miracle' for a miraculous event, but substitutes it with the word 'sign'. In other words miracles point to the glory and wonder of God at work (John 2:11). Too many miracle workers are out for self-promotion.

4. Although my mother and elder sister died of cancer as Believers, I am grateful that throughout decades of ministry no one has died from cancer while pastoring our churches. The 'prayer of faith' does bring about healing (James 5:15)) but the mystery is that even non Believers can receive significant healings with no or little faith, while godly people with faith may not. We need to walk pathways of integrity and not create false hope or dispel faith.
5. When young I heard many people pray for the sick. These people generally prayed, 'God if it is your will heal this person'. There is a place for that, but I feel if this is the only prayer we pray, it is inadequate. Through the teaching of John Wimber I was encouraged to discern God's will and pray accordingly. If I discerned God was at work in healing I would pray with authority for healing, otherwise I would generally encourage them from Scripture and pray for grace and strength and the touch of God in their lives. I would not however rule out the possibility that God may still heal.
6. Many Christians are ready to die and want to meet the Lord. It can be right to pray for their release rather than prolong their suffering and we must not see this as matter of defeat. Death comes to us all. That was my prayer for my mother when she was suffering from cancer even though it was a sad time for us all.
7. Miracles are not dependant upon our righteousness and how spiritual we feel, but they come entirely dependant upon God's grace and power.
8. Soaking prayer is important whereby we still our hearts before God and let the Holy Spirit do His work. These types of prayer sessions may last some time and be repeated for weeks or months.
9. Recently I was in conflict as to whether I should pray for someone who was not walking in God's way. However, I was reminded that when Jesus prayed for the ten lepers to be healed, God knew only one would return with thanks. I therefore prayed for that person.
10. God brings healing in many ways, including through the medical profession. We need to treat them with respect and if you are in that profession allow God to use you at home and abroad.

## **Resources**

'Miracles' by C. S. Lewis

'The Case for Miracles' by Lee Strobel

'Healing the Wounded Spirit' by John and Paula Sandford