

Receiving Miracles Prepared for You *by Frank Damazio*

A certain village had been without rain for a number of months, their crops were failing and the people were starving. The village elders called the people to come to the square to pray for a miracle, to pray for rain. They asked that everyone who came to bring an object of faith, something that would encourage them. As all the people gathered together to pray, they began to look around to see the objects of faith. This one brought a book, that one a cross, another a rosary, another a picture of a crop. But the best object of faith was brought by a nine-year-old girl-an umbrella!

Do you have faith for miracles like this little girl, expecting God to answer prayer, do the impossible, surprise everybody with His acts of power? If you are a little bit like me you might be somewhat dissatisfied by the level of results we are having in our answers to prayer and in the supernatural, healings and miracles.

I believe there is a widespread hunger in the body of Christ to see authentic miracles take place in our homes, our schools and our churches-not just in some stadium a thousand miles away. We hear about healings and miracles in Africa, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, and numerous other countries. What about America and Canada? What about your place or mine? I desire to see the supernatural grow and abound in our lives, not just in the famous evangelist's life.

It is not pleasing to the Holy Spirit to dismiss evident discrepancy between our theology and our experiences with a "shrug of the shoulder" or an "oh well" or "we can't seem to figure this out so let's go on without it." We as believers must believe in and stand on the word of God for our families our churches our nations and ourselves. The truth is the Word of God, not our feelings, experiences or traditions.

What does the Word of God say about miracles for our day? The Word of God is clear. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. The Holy Spirit is still working miracles all over the world and promises to work miracles in our world. God has something prepared for me that is good.

Miracles are life changing. We must believe that miracles are on the way. They have already been released from the throne of God and will intercept you at the right time, overcome you and happen around you.

I want to challenge you to begin right now with a new mindset of faith, believing it's possible, believing God has a miracle for you - it's on its way. Open your heart, open your hands and open your eyes. Miracles are destined to happen in you, around you and through you.

God is ready to work miracles through any person who has a heart to believe in God's unlimited power and unlimited possibilities. Miracles sometimes happen instantaneously and other times they are a process and a progress being made. Believe it, expect it, wait for it, and walk in it. A miracle is in progress right now if you have eyes to see and a heart to believe.

The miracle on its way may encounter fear, doubt, delay or adverse circumstances. Don't be discouraged with the fiery trials or the attacks of the enemy. God is faithful and He doesn't lie. Stand on the Word, not on what others say or what you feel. The Word is your sure foundation!

Miracles remind us that God has chosen imperfect people through whom to reveal His power, release His grace and change the world around them. Albert Einstein said, "There are two ways to live your life - one is as though nothing is a miracle, the other is as though everything is a miracle." God has a storehouse of miracles for you-full, abundant and ready to be unleashed upon your life.

Believe! Put doubt and fear aside. In Mark 6:5-6 the writer gives this sad commentary about Jesus' ministry, "Now he could do no mighty work there except that he laid hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief."

Unbelief stopped the flow of miracles in Jesus' own hometown. This was unbelief brought about because of familiarity. They didn't see the real Jesus, the Son of God, the All-powerful One. They saw the Jesus of their own making. We need to receive new eyes to see the Jesus of the Bible, the real Jesus, the miracle working, the today Jesus.

1 Corinthians 2:9 reads, "but as it is written, eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." Our prayer should be, "Come Holy Spirit, quicken my spiritual eyes, let me see things beyond our natural seeing, let me hear things beyond our physical ears, let me think things beyond my own imagining. Reveal the supernatural realm to me now, today, and every day. Let me have eyes of the Spirit. Enlarge my capacity to perceive spiritual things. Allow me to see the hidden things of God, the miracles God is doing and will do in me, around me and through me, miracles God has held in reserve for me."

Miracles are something we do not understand because they transcend our experiences and lie beyond the scope of the laws of nature so far ascertained by us. Even though we don't understand the supernatural, we must be a person of expectation, to see God's power manifested in today's world and century. Augustine, the philosopher and theologian, describes faith, "It is to believe what we do not see and the reward of faith is to see what we believe." Jesus stated it this way in Mark 9:23, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

We can't work-up miracles; we have no power or authority on our own to do any mighty works. Our part is to believe, exercise faith and move out in faith expecting God to do what He has promised.

Jesus challenged his disciples in Matthew 10:7-8, "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give." The "as you go" part is the believer's responsibility. You must get up from where you are and search out the place where a miracle is needed. I guarantee you won't have to go far.

Jesus has called us to go forth and heal the sick, cleanse the leper, cast out demons. This is our mission, to preach and proclaim the kingdom of God is here now in power and authority.

Our churches are filled with many good things-choirs, bands, teaching, preaching, small groups, worship and prayer. What about adding miracles that list? American and Canadian churches need miracles and healings to be as prominent as teaching and worship.

As individual members of our local church we need to fast and pray, move out in faith, and encourage the atmosphere of miracles. At the same time we also need patience with ourselves and with God as we position ourselves for miracles.

Patience does not mean being passive. Patience is a faith attitude that stands its ground holding onto the Word of God. I'm talking about patience coupled with faith. We need to have a dissatisfied satisfaction when it comes to the power points of Christianity. We need the practical, we will not forsake the principles, we God's Word, but we also desire and need God's power.

C. S. Lewis in his book *Weight of Glory* says, "Indeed if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the gospel, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures... Like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea, we are far too easily pleased."

The first church was a church of the supernatural, and we with our belief in the restoration of the church must believe for this power also. Notice in the following verses from Acts how natural it was for the Early Church to move in the supernatural.

"And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch" (Acts 5:12).

"So that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. 16 Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed" (Acts 5:15-16).

"And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:8).

"And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed" (Acts 8:6-7).

"Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done" (Acts 8:13).

"There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. 34 And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately" (Acts 9:33-34).

"But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up" (Acts 9:40).

The release of the miraculous power of God among the people of God is one of the chief reasons why the church grew and multiplied greatly in the first century and they saw thousands saved, baptized and added to the church.

Our confession must be that of David in Psalms 77:14, "You are the God of miracles and wonders, you still demonstrate your awesome power." Our confession must be Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Therefore miracles can and will happen in our day, the Holy Spirit is ready and willing to work signs, wonders and miracles in our world today. The late Kathryn Kuhlman (the great healing evangelist) said, "The secret to the power in the ministry is found in the presence of the Holy Spirit. I have chosen to accept the gift that Jesus left for me and you will never regret it if you accept the gift too!"

Andrew Murray received healing in his own body after his ministry was being threatened by a serious illness. He later wrote several books about healing. He said, "Divine healing is the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ's redemption extends its powerful working to the body and the Holy Spirit is in charge applying it to us and maintaining it in us."

We as believers who have the Holy Spirit should step up and begin to activate the gifts of the Spirit, especially the gifts of healing and miracles.

The purpose of miracles is to forcibly startle men out of the dull dream of sense-bound existence. While it may not be itself an appeal to the spiritual man, miracles act as a summons to him opening his eyes to the spiritual appeal which is now about to be addressed to him.

Jesus is the great physician today just like he was 2000 years ago. Aimee Semple McPherson (another great healing evangelist back in 1920-30) states, "Is Jesus Christ the great 'I Am' or is He the great 'I Was'?"

Unfortunately today many pastors, leaders and churches tell the multitudes eloquently and instructively, "We will tell you of the wonderful power churches used to have, the miracles He used to perform and the sicknesses He used to heal. Wonderful, marvelous was the power that used to flow from the great 'I Was.'" We serve the God of the now, the God who is and can. The great I Am of the past is still the same today. Amen!