

Th122 Foundation Doctrines

Lesson Th122 - 9 Faith Produces Miracles

Many things happen in life that cannot be separated from each other. For instance, you will not have rain unless there are clouds in the sky. Without a seed, a plant will not grow. Without faith, there cannot be a miracle. Two stories in the life of Jesus show this connection between faith and miracles.

Jesus' disciple Matthew wrote the first story in his Gospel. It all began when Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him to the top of a high mountain. He and his disciples had been ministering in a city called Caesarea Philippi. This city was about 40 kilometers (24 miles) north of the Sea of Galilee. It sat at the base of one of the tallest mountains in the area, Mount Hermon. Jesus had just rebuked his disciples a few days earlier because of their lack of faith. He had reminded them how he had fed 5,000 people with just two fish and five loaves and then had fed 4,000 people with only seven loaves.

Now Jesus, Peter, James, and John climbed to the top of one of the high mountains in the Hermon mountain chain. There something remarkable happened. Jesus suddenly began to glow and shine. His face became as bright as the sun. His clothes shone with a bright light. Two men suddenly appeared and began to talk to Jesus. A bright cloud appeared above them and a voice thundered from the cloud saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

When the three disciples heard this they fell face down on the ground, terrified. But Jesus touched them saying, "Get up, don't be afraid." When they stood up Jesus was alone (Matt 17:1-8).

The three disciples walked back down the mountain with Jesus to rejoin the rest of the disciples. When they found them, they were in the middle of a crowd of people having a heated discussion. Standing in the middle of the crowd were a man and his son. When the man saw Jesus, he knelt and said, "Lord, have mercy on my son. He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him" (Matt 17:14-16).

The disciples looked at one another, somewhat embarrassed. They all had ministered before in Jesus' name and had seen miracles take place. But on this occasion, nothing had happened. They were wrestling with their personal belief and understanding of who Jesus was. He had rebuked them a few days earlier about their lack of faith. Now they were about to receive another rebuke. "You unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus said. "How long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." Then Jesus cast out the demonic spirit that had possessed the boy and he was healed instantly.

Later the disciples questioned Jesus in private asking him, "Why couldn't we drive the demonic spirit out of the boy?"

Jesus responded by saying, "Because you have so little faith." Then Jesus taught them the significance of faith. "Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matt 17:14-20). Faith is a trust in God's Word and his will. Jesus had already told the disciples to heal the sick and drive out demons (Matt 10:8).

From this story we learn the connection between the faith of a person and his or her ability to believe God for miracles. Matthew wrote another incident in the life of Jesus that teaches us the other side of faith and miracles. Not only does the person who is performing the miracle need to have faith, but those who are receiving the miracle must have faith as well.

Jesus came to his home town of Nazareth. It was where he had grown up and was well known by everyone in the village. As was his custom he went to the synagogue and began to teach. Now the people in the village knew that he had never had any formal training like the Pharisees. They were amazed at his teachings. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers, James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?"

Instead of believing in him, they all took offense at him. Jesus then said to them, "A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own town and in his own home." And Jesus did not do many miracles there in his home town because of their lack of faith (Matt 13:54-58).

This is an incredible truth. Jesus, the Son of God, was unable to perform miracles there. He had unlimited faith, but those to whom he was trying to minister lacked faith. Christ's power did not depend on man's faith. However, unbelief prevented many opportunities for miracles, because not many people came to him.

This lesson is **important** because it teaches that when there is faith, miracles happen. When there is a lack of faith, miracles do not happen.

The **main truth** of these stories is that it takes faith in God's power and prayer to see miracles happen. Both the one ministering and the one with a need must have faith. God has promised to respond to those who ask in faith.

Let's **review** what we have discovered in this lesson:

1. Why were Jesus' disciples unable to drive the demon out of the demon-possessed boy?
[Pause]
 - A. If you said that the disciples lacked faith, you answered correctly.
2. Why was Jesus unable to perform many miracles in his home town? [Pause]
 - A. If you said that the people in his home town lacked faith, then you are correct.
3. What must be present for miracles to take place? [Pause]
 - A. If you said that faith must be present for miracles to take place, then you are right.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to watch this lesson at least three times until you can retell the two stories from Jesus' life. Spend time praying and asking God to increase your faith in him, so that miracles will accompany your ministry.