

In the Name of Jesus...

Acts 3:1-26

6 Sept 2015

The work of the Holy Spirit empowers people to proclaim Jesus as God's saviour of the world to the glory of God.

**THIS IS THE PURPOSE TO ALL THINGS.
SALVATION OF A PEOPLE TO THE GLORY OF GOD!**

QUESTION:

Before I move on to what I would like to show you today, let me ask you a question: "**How important is it for you, for miracles to still occur today?**" What if in all your years of life, you never witnessed a miracle?

Would you still believe in the God of the bible?

We can see early on that miracles were being performed. But what you may be unaware is

- the **rarity of the recorded** instances of healings in the New Testament.
- **There is no recorded** case of a healing in the any New Testament church.
- In fact we see the recordings of healing decreasing as we go through the book of Acts. Moreover, we see disciples becoming sick and the apostles **NOT** healing them;

As Paul ends his second epistle to Timothy he says he has to leave Trophimus, at Miletus because he had become sick. But doesn't heal him.

2 Timothy 4:20

20 Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left **Trophimus**, who was ill, at Miletus.

Why didn't Paul just heal him?

Timothy had frequent ailments and rather than being healed, Paul gave him medicinal advice

1 Timothy 5:23

23 (No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.)

James gives us specific instructions when we are sick

James 5:14

14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

There is no healing instructions every given in the New Testament.

We even read of Elisha who performed more miracles than Elijah, dies of an illness

2 Kings 13:14

14 Now when Elisha had fallen sick with the illness of which he was to die, Joash king of Israel went down to him and wept before him, crying....”

The purpose of my highlighting the rarity of miracles and healings is not to provoke you to doubt the reality of miracles but to assign a biblical level of importance and purpose to them.

If miracles and healing become less pronounced the more time from the ministry of Jesus, we need to ask; **what was in fact the purpose of miracles?**

TO THE TEXT

This passage gives us such a clear picture of at least four things we can learn from miracles and healings;

1. The contrast in the miracle-workers then with those now;
2. The purpose of them;
3. The level of importance placed on miracles;
4. Then the outcome of miracles;

PICTURE #1

Look at the difference between the apostles who performed miracles in our passage with those who claim to perform miracles now. One particular preacher who claims to impart you with the knowledge for healing, recently claimed he needed a \$70 million dollar private jet to carry out this ministry.

And now look at the disposition of the apostles;

Acts 3:6

6, "I have no silver and gold, **but the thing they do have is**; the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth...

We should be very cautious of any so-called miracle-worker who has silver and gold – when the apostles had none;

The apostles don't have any silver or gold **because they have everything in the name of Jesus**. Whereas today these false prophets gain everything the world offers by profaning the name of Jesus.

PICTURE #2

That's not what miracles were for, they were not to gain fame, status, money or private Jet...the miracles were used to grab the attention of those seeing, and give authority to the miracle-worker.

Some tried to gain this authority from the public by tricking them to believe they performed miracles.

Acts 8:9-11

9 But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and **amazed the people of Samaria**, saying that he himself was somebody great.

10 **They all paid attention to him**, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great."

11 And **they paid attention to him** because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.

Miracles, not only grab the attention of the watching public but also makes us pay attention

Acts 3:4-5

4 And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us."

5 And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.

So there can be no confusion as to who will perform the miracle. And the reason I believe Peter makes sure the lame beggar fixes his attention on him...is so there will be no mistake on who performs the miracle...and there will be no mistake on who the public should then pay attention.

SO Peter wants to make sure he has his attention...**so its says the beggar does** because he expects to receive something from them. Now Peter has his attention, so whatever happens from this miracle Peter knows he will be listened to. So what happens.

They stare at each other and Peter says;

Acts 3:6

6 "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"

The apostles did not have money or wealth to give, nor did they demand it from those they healed. The purpose to the apostle's miracles, is far away from the purpose the miracle-workers today;

The purpose for the miracles was not for the apostles to earn a living or become rich, but it was to gain the attention of the onlookers and provide them with authority to be heard.

Even Jesus the day after he fed 5000 people with 5 loaves and two fish is questioned;

John 6:30

30, "Then **what sign do you do**, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?

Miracles are what an unbelieving generation seeks to believe and their purpose is to grab the attention of the masses, and provide to speak.

But what of the miracle itself? Well the miracle is just a means, a sign post.

PICTURE #3

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MIRACLE

Back to our text;

Acts 3:11

Acts 3:11

11 While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, **ran together to them** in the portico called Solomon's.

[The apostles have the attention of the people, now what? What importance do they place on the miracle itself?]

12 And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this,

[Why do you marvel at the miracle?

Why do we marvel at the signs, why do we crave signs? Why do we seek the ostentatious, why do we seek the fantastical?]

He continues...

or why do you **stare at us**, as though by our own **power** or **piety** we have made him walk?

Peter has just made a lame man walk, he could've just said, "Well what about that?", Don't I have the power? But instead he is saying two things...

1. **Don't look at the miracle**, don't marvel at the sign, and;
2. The other...**Don't look at us either**...as though it was our power, or piety.

Did you catch that? He is saying two major things with this last statement. We do not have power! This is the apostle Peter speaking, **Cephas**, the **rock by which Jesus** said He would build His church...and the apostle John **is next to Him**...the beloved disciple, the **one whom Jesus loved**, the one who rested on Jesus' chest...both are saying don't look at us as though our power has healed him...OR that it was **our piety healed him!!**

What a contrast from these disciples and the false-prophets of today. The disciples here actually heal a man and say **stop looking at the miracle**, stop looking at us as though we have power, **stop looking at us as though we are more spiritual**...while the false prophet of today says; "Let me show you a miracle" "God will do a miracle today, right now" ..."look at how I perform it" "look at my special gift" "look at me"

And the disciples do the opposite;
After stopping the people from marvelling at the miracle we need to ask well;

- You just performed a miracle – you have their attention
- You just performed a miracle – and you tell to now stop looking at the miracle

PICTURE #4

Well what now? What should we see then?

We can't look at the miracle, we can't look at your power, or your piety, so you don't want us to look see you guys either, then what shall we see?

Well see this...he then preaches how the God of their fathers glorified His servant **Jesus**...

Acts 3:16

16 And his name—**by faith in his name**—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and **the faith that is through Jesus** has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

Peter, from grabbing his attention to himself then performing the miracle, Peter was then able to fix their attention see Jesus.

This is the purpose of miracles. It was to shift the attention of people away **from the brokenness of the world and towards its healer – in the name of Jesus.**

PICTURE #4

OUTCOME

Glory of God through the spiritual healing of broken people!

Acts 3:8-9

8 And leaping up he [**the beggar that is**] stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God,

The healing of this lame beggar gave the apostles the attention and authority to proclaim and to be believed. **And what they proclaimed was that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah.**

CONCLUSION

How much importance do we as a church place on miracles?

We at **Providence will always believe that God is sovereign over all things.** That He can govern His creation however He see fit.

miracles should always drive us away from the miracle itself, and towards the author of the marvellous; **Jesus Christ** – and by His Spirit – to the glory of the Father.

Here I beg of you all, **see Jesus.** Don't marvel at the miracles, don't look at mere men, don't look at piety, do not get strung up on sermons...but divert your attention to where all of this points you...

Look to the founder and perfecter of your faith. The Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Amen.