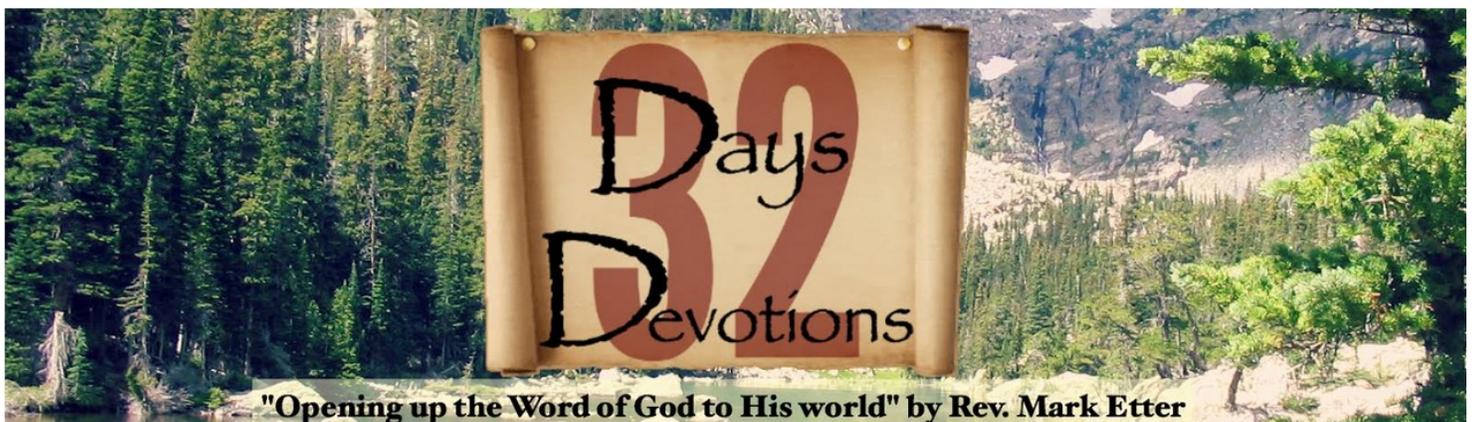




*The miracles of Jesus fill the pages of the gospels and show the kindness and compassion of Jesus who healed the leper, the lame, and the blind. Yet, the miracles of Jesus teach us something about the character and the message of Jesus, too. In these devotions, we follow six miracles in the gospel of Mark to go beneath the healing and find what each miracle says about Jesus and about the ministry that He has among us today.*

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You can find these devotions and others on the blog at  
**[www.32daysdevotions.blogspot.com](http://www.32daysdevotions.blogspot.com)**



# “The Miracles of Jesus”, Part I: Giving A Greater Gift

## Focus passage: Mark 2:1-12

The ministry of Jesus had grown as he traveled the countryside healing people of various diseases and casting out demons. As His popularity grew, people had begun to push and shove to see Him. The house was packed with people who wanted to see this miracle worker and hoped to see a marvelous healing firsthand. Yet, there was a greater need than just healing bodies wracked with pain. He had come to heal the soul with His message. When people opened up the roof and dropped a paralyzed man into the midst of the crowd, Jesus had a chance to do more than just heal the body.



“What gift can you give someone that is greater than being healed from leprosy, blindness or paralysis?”

**Jesus looked up v.4.** Jesus’ teaching was interrupted as everyone watched the man being lowered into the room. The crowd saw an interruption. What Jesus saw was extraordinary faith from four friends who were certain that Jesus could heal their friend and who were letting nothing stop their friend from coming before Jesus.

**Jesus looked down v.5.** The crowd saw a broken body. Jesus saw a broken spirit. Here was a man who needed the soul healed before the body would find the healing that it needed. Jesus began by forgiving the man’s sins. The man needed to be at peace with God before any physical healing could be lasting. Jesus began with the deeper need that only He could see.

**Jesus looked around v.8.** As Jesus looked around, He saw only doubt. The crowd rejected His ability to forgive the man and heal the soul. As a demonstration of His almighty power, He addressed their doubt by healing the man before their eyes. They could not see the forgiveness, but they could see the miraculous healing. He wanted them all to know that He could heal the soul as well as the body.

The greatest miracle that day was not the healing of the body, but the healing of the soul. Any doctor can help the body, but only Jesus could save the soul with the forgiveness He would win from the cross. Sometimes the body is wracked with pain because the mind and soul are not healthy. As Christians, we should help others with their bodily needs like food or shelter, but the greatest gift we often can give is to share the Bible with them or pray with them so that they can have the healing power of Jesus for their soul. That is the greater gift and is the gift that only Christians can offer.

## “The Miracles of Jesus”, Part II: Desperate to Daughter

### Focus passage: Mark 5:25-34

We bow our head in anguish. We are desperate and nothing is turning out right. Life seems overwhelmed with problems that just don't seem to have any answers. Illness, job loss, or divorce break us till we despair that life might as well be over. We are angry with the world and can be angry with God. Why is it so easy for everyone else and so hard for me? We can live in our self-pity or we can turn to the Lord. Desperation is like the desert. The heat of life takes away all your strength. You can either turn toward God and let Him guide you through your troubles or you can turn from Him and wander till the troubles dry up your soul.



**She didn't feel good enough to talk to Jesus v. 28:** She was a woman with lots of problems and no answers. She had spent all she had and was left broken and in pain. She couldn't ask him for healing like thousands of others because she was unclean according to Mosaic Law. Yet, she believed that she would be healed if she could just touch Jesus. He could help her where others had not been able.

**Jesus wants to lift her soul v. 32:** Jesus could have just let her slip away. While there was important ministry to do with Jairus since his daughter was dying, Jesus would not let her go. He wanted to be more than just a healer. He wanted to be her savior and her friend. He stopped the crowd so He could heal her doubts and pain as well as her body. He wanted everyone to know that she had been healed so she could lead a normal life.

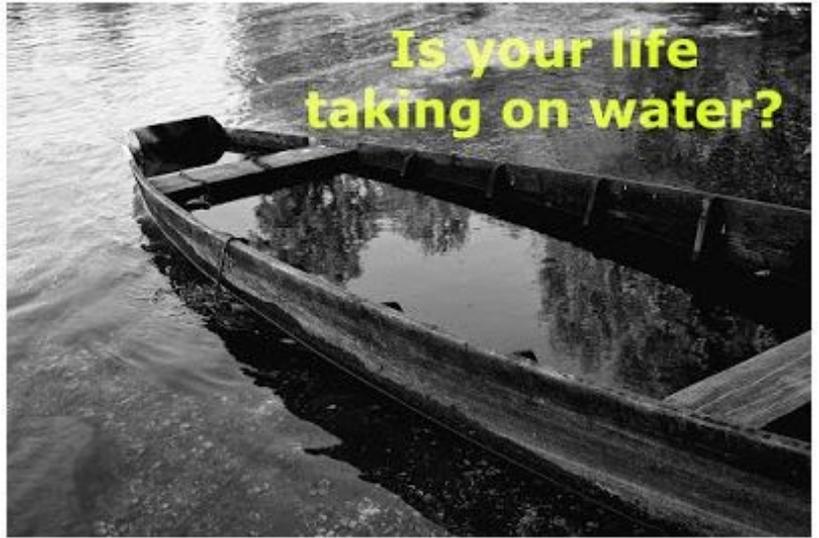
**A new relationship is born v. 34:** She had faith in a healer. Jesus wants her to have faith in a friend. This is the only place Jesus calls someone daughter in the gospels. A new relationship had been born. She had fallen at His feet in fear afraid He would be mad at what she had done. He instead calls her daughter and tells her to go in peace. You were an outcast and now people will call you blessed. You were an unknown, but now your story will be told for centuries to come. He didn't just heal her, he gave her a new life.

The question in life is whether we are desperate enough to turn to Jesus. Do we believe that He can and will help us when life overwhelms us and sucks all the energy out of us? A stroll through the gospels tells us how eager Jesus was to heal people. He healed their bodies from illness and He healed their souls so that they could live a full life again. The woman reached out in faith and Jesus reached back in love. There is no reason for anyone to be in bondage to their problems. Our Lord will never turn away the desperate who come to Him in faith. He will heal them inside and out.

## “The Miracles of Jesus”, Part III: Simply Amazing

### Focus passage: Mark 6:45-56

Bob sat and just stared out the window. He wanted to be anywhere but sitting at the kitchen table this morning. The hospital bills were piled high and he wasn't sure how to pay them all. The doctor said Bob's wife Judy was doing better, but Bob couldn't see it. With his head in his hands, he felt helpless. He began to cry as he prayed to God. Why Lord? Don't you care about us? Give me a sign so that I know what to do. As he prayed, he opened up the Bible and came to the story of the disciples helpless in the boat. In the margin of his bible, he had written "**Helplessness can teach us to lean on Jesus.**" He began to pray.



**They were straining and getting nowhere v.48a** It had been a long day watching Jesus teach the people along the remote eastern shore of the lake. His miracle of feeding the 5000 had excited the people causing Jesus to send the disciples away because He feared the crowds. It had seemed like a good idea, but the seas had become rough and the disciples strained at the oars. They had rowed for hours in the darkness and made no progress. Why did you leave us Lord? We are so tired.

**Everything has turned against them v.48b** It had been going so well. The disciples had successfully healed the sick and cast out demons. Jesus had miraculously fed 5000 men and their families. Now the sea had turned against them. With the wind in their face, the experienced fishermen began to wonder if they would live to see the other side. They had felt so powerful working at Jesus' side, now they were helpless and scared.

**They felt like Jesus didn't care v.48c** Sometime after 3 AM, Jesus passed in front of the boat so that they could see Him and take comfort. Jesus had seen how desperate they were and had come to help. Sadly, it never occurred to them that it was Jesus because they did not expect Him to have power over the seas. In the darkness with the first light over the horizon, they thought that they had seen a ghost. Perhaps it was the grim reaper ready to take them to death. Instead reaching out, they were afraid and cried out for their lives.

Sometimes, we have to recognize our helplessness so that we will turn to the only one who can give us real help – Jesus. It was in the boat that the disciples learned to trust Jesus. In their time of helplessness, Jesus called to them from the water letting them hear His familiar voice and calming their fears. The overconfident disciples had become helpless enough to need Jesus. His presence encouraged them and helped them to see that everything was not lost. In the moment that Bob opened his bible and saw the words "**Helplessness can teach us to lean on Jesus**", his mood began to change. It was the familiar voice of the savior crying out to him that he was not alone. It was time to trust Jesus and to ask Jesus to help instead of just trying to push the oars by himself. Jesus could calm any storm.

## “The Miracles of Jesus”, Part IV: Great Provider

### Focus passage: Mark 8:1-9

It sent a shudder down his back. Steve had been in this waiting room’s padded chair before looking at his reflection in the buffed floor. His wife had woken with chest pains. Here in the hospital waiting room he was terrified. Would it be a heart attack like last time? Would she need surgery again? The memories flooded back over him. He began to pray and a different kind of memory surrounded his fears. Last time when there was little chance of recovery, the Lord had worked a miracle. Suddenly, he could feel God’s presence. He was not alone. God was there at his side. There is power in remembering what God can do. Sadly, the disciples did not remember what Jesus was capable of.



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**Jesus was filled with compassion v.2** The number of people was large and the options for food were small. He felt their need and wanted to show compassion. The eyes of a lame beggar or the cry of the leper in the distance always made Jesus stop. His heart went out to them and gave them hope. The first thing we should always remember when we face a crisis is the love and compassion of Jesus.

**The disciples focused on the problem and not on Jesus v. 4** The place was remote. The crowd was large. The disciples forgot Jesus’ power and repeated the wrong answers they had given at the feeding of the 5000. Standing in front of the answer to the problem, they failed to remember what Jesus had done before. They forgot that there was nothing Jesus couldn’t do.

**Jesus again showed them what God can do v.8** He must have been saddened by their response. Once again, Jesus told the disciples to pass out the seven loaves and a few fish to the people as they had done before. Once again, everyone had more food than they needed. God was generous. Every person was satisfied and there basketfuls of leftovers. God exceeded their expectations.

There is power in remembering. As we look at our hands and wallets, there is never enough. As we look at the hands of Jesus, even a little is more than enough. Miracles depend on Him and not us. God doesn’t want our resources to be adequate. He wants us to lean on Him and depend on Him to do miracles in our lives. He wants us to see that it is not what is in our hands that matters, but what His hands can do. When Steve’s grown daughters joined him at the hospital, they were all in tears. He embraced each of them and felt their pain. He prayed with them and began to recount the story of their mother’s earlier heart attack. Then he asked them to remember how God had healed their mom and to trust that God could do the same this time. The family bowed their head and prayed. Now there were four waiting in padded chairs for a miracle.

## “The Miracles of Jesus”, Part V: Seeing Clearly

### Focus passage: Mark 8:19-30

Jesus had used five loaves to feed 5000 people and seven loaves to feed 4000 people. Yet, it was clear that the disciples did not understand what Jesus had done. He is frustrated at the limits of their faith. Sadly, people still experience such immature faith today. Weak faith must grow to grasp what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. You grow in knowledge, but more important you have to grow in your ability to serve and to witness to others. Jesus heals a blind man in stages paralleling the disciple's statements of faith in the verses following the miracle.



#### **Faith begins with fuzzy sight**

**v.24.** The first time that the man is touched, he can see with unclearly. He can see people, but they look indistinct like trees walking around. When Jesus asks later in the text who people say that He is, the answer is again fuzzy sight. People see Jesus as a man from God, but none of those see Him clearly as Savior or Messiah. Their vision is still unclear.

**Faith can become clearer v.25** Jesus touches the man's eyes once more and the man can now see clearly. His sight is fully restored. He is a living object lesson for the disciples. Later, when Jesus asks Peter about His identity, Peter says clearly that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. His faith has grown by watching Jesus heal the blind and by listening to His teaching. He now has a vision of Jesus as the special one of God.

**Yet not everyone is ready to see v.26** The man who was blind was sent home so he could go to his own village and show them what Jesus had done. The village of Bethsaida was not ready, but his family would be touched by this healing and grow in their faith. Later, Peter is also told to tell no one that Jesus was the Christ. The people were not ready. People were looking for a Messiah who would be king and not a savior. The crowds would have to grow in their faith before their sight could be clear.

The more time we spend with Jesus, the clearer our faith and sight becomes. Faith comes in stages so that we will never see it all. The joy of being a Christian is in the journey. It is in learning more about your Lord each day and seeing things that God has revealed just to you. It is the close fellowship that you have with this Lord who will teach you and work with you to help others. In the end, you will be different just as the disciples became different. They could sing when life was a struggle. They could lead others and people would follow. Clear vision impacted their lives and the lives of all the people close to them.

## “The Miracles of Jesus”, Part VI: Failure begins with “we”.

### Focus passage: Mark 9:14-29

Joe began the men’s club meeting with a sigh. Only three people had shown up again. What was the use of even trying to hold the meeting? There weren’t enough people to get anything done. He remembered just a few years ago when the group numbered twenty each month. Now look at it. Some had suggested that the whole group disband, but Joe enjoyed the fellowship with the few who still came. This was a good group of men. There just weren’t many of them. What should they do to make it better? Why can’t we succeed like we did before? It was in such chaos that Jesus miraculously triumphed.



**Disciples are overwhelmed v. 14.** Not that long ago, the disciples had cast out demons easily. Now they were overwhelmed with the father screaming at them to do something, the son out of control and the teachers of the law mocking their failed attempts. It was chaos as their ministry failed and they wondered what to do next.

**Child’s father is lost in doubt v.22.** The father has his own demons inside to deal with. Disappointed and deflated, he is angry at the disciples and at God. Can anyone please help my son? He pleads with Jesus but is unsure that Jesus can do anything against such a powerful demon. He longs for help, but doubts that help is coming for his son’s condition. His mind is in conflict as he wonders what to do next.

**Jesus flexes His muscles v. 25.** Jesus takes control before things get out of hand. Withdrawing from the crowd, Jesus issues a simple command forcing the demon out of the boy. It is hardly a fair fight. The Lord of the Universe speaks and everyone must obey. Jesus does not argue with their frustrations or fears. He demonstrates why they should have relied on Him.

There are times many of us feel like our lives are shattered and lying on the floor. The “demons” in your life are getting the best of you. Our first question is often “What are we going to do?” Sadly, that is the wrong question. The turning point for the father was when he believed in the power and promise of Jesus. So it was for Joe. Frustrated with the low attendance, Joe began to cry and then he began to pray. He prayed for the men’s group. He prayed that the group would be blessed by the Holy Spirit so that they touched the hearts of people who were missing. He prayed that they touch friends who were going through difficult times. Soon, God began to do miracles with their witness and the group slowly grew. It was all a matter of what “God” could do and not what “we” can do.