

view

August 21, 2005

This Week's Agenda

August 21, 2005

The Lord's Day

8:30AM & 10:15AM

Sermon: David Posey

5pm Sermon: David Posey

5:30pm: Classes for all ages from 18 months and up

Adult Classes

- Auditorium: Mark – Grant Mulligan, Dan Singleton
- Room 6: Bible Essentials – Dennis Wade
- Room 11-12: 7 Churches of Asia – David Posey, Jr., Jeff Clark

Wednesday

7:30 PM - Classes for all ages 18 months and up.

Adult Classes

- Auditorium: Mark – Grant Mulligan, Dan Singleton
- Room 6: Bible Essentials – Dennis Wade
- Room 11-12: (Young Adults) Divorce & Remarriage – David Posey, Sr.

News and Prayer Needs

“Weep with those who weep”

Monica Fulton, Dave's mother, received some negative news about her cancer and must undergo further, more intense, chemotherapy. We will continue to pray that her health will improve.

Barbara Sterling. The dear, sweet wife of Ken Sterling and mother of Greg, Jeff and Jodi Horne, is terminally ill with cancer and may not survive through the week. Barbara is ready to go, but Ken is devastated and is not well himself. Keep the entire family in your daily prayers. Ken and Barbara, so full of life and of love for others, have made a huge impact on the lives of many people over the years. This news is very hard to bear for those who know and love the Sterlings.

Bill Westphal has had some health issues that caused him to be hospitalized with severe pain. He seems to be doing a little better now.

Continue to pray for the many who have lost their parents or other loved ones in the past few months, including Sharron Tarrant, whose father passed away two weeks ago. Sharron, Jolee, Natalie and Belinda will be home on Tuesday.

Steve Ries' father passed away and Steve came to the US to attend the funeral. Continue to pray for Steve and his family and for Steve as he returns to Iraq.

Sharron Wade's mother, Neta Sellgren, had surgery on Friday and must undergo radiation and chemotherapy treat-

Bible Reading

Sunday – Reflection

Monday – Ezra 1-4; Psalm 112

Tuesday – Ezra 5-7; Psalm 113

Wednesday – Ezra 8-10; Psalm 114

Thursday – Nehemiah 1-3; Psalm 115

Friday – Nehemiah 4-7; Psalm 116

Saturday – Nehemiah 8-10; Psalm 117



ments. Sharron has gone to be with her and Dennis is joining her there and they will drive back together this week.

Updates

Pamela Ludlow, Nolen Woodside and Charles Davis' mother are all recovering from surgeries, so continue prayers for their full recovery.

Continue prayers for Wes Shamblin's grandmother; Sharon Jones; Becky Woolpert; Kathy & Hank Wilson; Jamie Cole; and the many who are fighting cancer: Carly Cain; Larry Thompson; Brady Rembleski's grandfather; Justin Ivie's dad; Dave Fulton's mother, Monica (Monroe, WA); Tom Royston; Ken McClelland; Margaret Everett; Cheryl Wilson; Laurie Ann Reagan; Oliver Sasse.

“Rejoice with those who rejoice”

Remember all our new children; the latest is Emma Karlsson, born to Magnus and Amber. Also, pray for Terri Zwahlan (note spelling of last name) and her son, Kyle. They were baptized a week and a half ago.

Continue prayers for the expectant mothers: Janelle Thorp, Carly Posey; Carrie Sadowy; Dani Rembleski.

Out of Town

Dick and Rosie Gardner; Sharon Tarrant and the girls; Steve Dickey – probably many others are out of town this week.

Andrew Westphal left for FC on Tuesday. Other college students will be leaving for various campuses, so keep all of these fine young people in your prayers.

Christians Serving in Iraq

Jeremy Allen, Philip Cain, Steve Ries, Titus Cain. Keep these good men in your prayers each day.

Other Involvement Opportunities

The Ladies Workshop meets from time-to-time. Please see Denise Westphal for details.

Group Meetings

The third round of group meetings have begun. The deacon in charge of your group will be contacting you.

Have you seen a miracle?

John McArthur, in his book *Charismatic / Chaos*, tells about a woman who felt in her heart that she saw the face of Jesus in a tortilla as she was frying it. She took the tortilla out of the pan, placed it in a little glass case, elevated on cotton balls, and called it “The Shrine of the Holy Tortilla.” Reportedly, people from miles around came to see the face of Jesus in the tortilla.

Before you ridicule the lady and the sign-seekers, consider this question: If every bit of our information about religion does not come from Scripture; if we admit that there is the slightest possibility that God will yet reveal something never before revealed; if we admit that, in some cases, our feelings count more than God’s already revealed words... then upon what basis can we dispute the discovery of the lady who saw Jesus in the tortilla?

There are many sincere people in the religious world that feel they have seen a miracle. I wouldn’t even attempt to argue with them. But I do plead for an open mind and I ask anyone who thinks they’ve seen one to compare that perception with what the Bible says about miracles. Logically, any “miracle” must share the characteristics of the miracles and wonders described in the Bible. If a person refuses to compare what he is calling a “miracle” with the validated miracles in Scripture, then that person’s conclusions should be dismissed out of hand. We must submit all of our feelings to the hard light of truth as revealed in Scripture; otherwise, our feelings are just feelings.

Yet many people have replaced God’s word with experience. For example, on a program on Trinity Broadcasting Network, one of the guests remarked that God had given him a “life verse.” That verse was Mt. 19:26. He said, God gave it to me because I was born in 1924. Paul Crouch, owner of TBN and host, got excited. “Wow! I was born in 1934...” Upon looking in the book of Matthew, however, he found there was no 19:34, so they decided his Life Verse must be in the book of Luke. He found the verse in Luke and was thrilled. It said, “The Lord hath need of him.” “Yes...” said Crouch, obviously pleased that he had found such an appropriate passage. After a few more

giggly moments, his wife Jan discovered something and spoke up... “honey...honey...that verse is speaking about a donkey!” And we make donkeys of ourselves when we base our view of God on our own personal experience.

Miracles are historical, but have ceased

I believe every miracle recorded in the Bible took place just as the Bible says it did. So we are not arguing (1) that miracles never occurred, (2) that God is incapable of doing a miracle today if He wished to, (3) that people have experienced what they believe to be a miracle. But we will show that the time for miracles has ceased, that the purpose of miracles is past and that so-called miracles performed today are not of the same character as the miracles of Jesus or the apostles.

What difference does it make?

First, an unhealthy desire for signs has returned. People are obsessed with the supernatural and paranormal. This is not new—see Matthew 12:38-39. The devil is seducing millions through sensualism and it’s more mundane twin, subjectivism, in which feelings become god. One of their leaders made this incredible statement: “Believers are not led by logic. We are not even to be led by good sense. The ministry of Jesus was never led by logic or reason.”

Second, the efforts to re-establish the validity of miracles for today requires a gross distortion of Scripture. Listen to charismatic leader Robert Tilton on John 15:7: “The miraculous should be commonplace in every church. . . Jesus was talking about demanding your rights. . .” Or Paul Yongi Cho, leader of the largest denomination in the world: “If Jesus is with us now, the same things that He did 2,000 years ago should appear in our daily lives. By this we can judge whether Jesus’ sayings are true or not. . .”

Some of these religious leaders are telling us that only those who have gifts are truly “spiritual,” though the Bible never hints at the idea that miracles were proofs of faith for every believer. Yet John Wimber, the preacher at a large charismatic church in Southern California known as The Vineyard, now lists raising the dead as one of the basic elements of the healing ministry. Of course, not one modern in-

stance of raising the dead has ever been verified. And who can measure the result of this falsehood on the hearts of those who feel they have somehow failed because they cannot do these miracles?

What is a miracle?

A miracle has been described as “an extraordinary event produced by God, usually through human agency, that cannot be explained by natural forces.” There are slight distinctions between miracles, works, signs and wonders, but they are essentially synonymous. All involve supernatural, superhuman forces specifically associated with God’s messengers and are not merely strange happenings, coincidences, sensational events or natural anomalies.

How do miracles differ from providence? Providence involves God working through His natural, created order to achieve His plans and purposes. Providence is the means God uses to answer prayer. It does not involve suspending the natural order, while miracles often do (for example, the parting of the Red Sea, Elisha’s floating ax head, turning water to wine, healing by Jesus and the apostles, raising the dead, etc.).

The components of New Testament miracles

As we compare New Testament miracles with current day replicas, we should ask some questions. First, who were the persons involved in doing miracles in New Testament times? Not every believer was empowered to do miracles, but had to be empowered to do so by either Jesus or the apostles. Read Acts 2:43; 5:12; 15:12; II Cor. 12:12. The Bible teaches that individuals received the power to do miracles when the apostles laid their hands upon them: Acts 6:8 (see v. 6); 19:6; II Tim. 1:6. Not every believer even got a spiritual gift nor did every believer get the same gifts. See Rom. 1:11; I Cor. 14:4ff.

Second, we should ask about time-frame for these miracles. Charismatics admit that miracles ceased after the early church but claim they are recovering the power of the Holy Spirit in 20th century. The first “discovery” occurred in 1901 in Topeka, Kansas and again in 1906-09 in the so-called Asuza Street Revivals in Los Angeles.

A study of the Bible seems to indicate that miracles came in clusters in “three miraculous eras.” (1) Moses and Joshua [1400-1300 B.C.] (2) Elijah & Elisha [875-785 B.C.] (3) Christ & apostles (1st century). Not surprisingly, the third era is by far the most dramatic, since it was led by the King of universe. Otherwise,

miracles were isolated events, such as the healing of Hezekiah or Daniel surviving in the lion’s den. In other words, miracles are by no means the status quo in the Bible.

Proponents of modern-day miracles are quick to point to I Cor. 13:8-13 and then assert that the “perfect,” which they interpret as the second coming of Christ, has not come yet and, therefore, that the gifts mentioned in the text are still extant. But these folks miss a very simple and basic point: the “perfect” and the “part” must be the same in the text. By way of illustration, think of a cherry pie: if you have one piece of the pie (the “part”) then you know what the rest of the pie is (the “perfect”). What is the “part” in the text? Gifts! Specifically, the gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge. These gifts all relate to revelation, something that was incomplete, or imperfect, in the time that Paul wrote his letter to Corinthians. He is simply saying that when the revelation is complete, these gifts will cease; and so they have. It is unfortunate that this powerful proof of the finality of God’s revelation in the New Testament (see Jude 3) has been reduced to a weak proof-text for spiritual gifts in the modern day.

A third question is to inquire about the characteristics compared with so-called miracles today. Anyone who thinks modern-day miracles bear any resemblance to those of New Testament times has not read his Bible carefully enough. Generally, New Testament miracles were immediate, thorough, public and permanent. Mark makes much of this in his gospel, since he is teaching primarily about the power of Jesus. Note his use of the word “immediately” in places such as 2:12; 5:29, 42; 7:35; 10:52.

Today, “miracles” are always gradual, partial, private and temporary. For example, McArthur discusses a “miracle,” in which a man said he was free from his wheelchair for first time in several years. Yet he is now walking with crutches and heavy braces! Then there is Oral Roberts. “I can’t tell you about all the dead people I’ve raised. I’ve had to stop a sermon, go back and raise a dead person.” Pressed to supply names and addresses, he could point to only one incident, a baby he supposedly raised but who he admitted was not clinically dead.

The fourth question is: what was the purpose of miracles in the first century? If you read carefully, the answer to this question is apparent: the purpose of miracles was to confirm the word of God and validate His messengers. Read John 10:24-25; 20:30-31; Acts

Think on These Things

George Barna Reports on How People Share their Faith

New survey data from The Barna Group examine how born again¹ adults attempt to enable those who are not born again to have faith in Christ. The Barna survey explored nine specific approaches to sharing faith in Christ with non-belie-

Miracles, from p. 3

2:22; Heb. 2:2. Even when Jesus did miracles, they did not lead to acceptance of Him—no one did more notable miracles, yet the people murdered Him anyway! Charismatics completely miss this point. See John 2:23-25; 6:26; 60-66. The point of Jesus' miracles was to confirm that He was the Christ, regardless of people's acceptance or rejection of Him.

No miracles today

There are four reasons you will not see a miracle from God today: (1) They do not have the same purpose. (2) They do not have the same characteristics. (3) They do not fit the time-frame for miracles. (4) They do not involve the prescribed persons.

Does this mean God has lost His power? Absolutely not! Read Eph. 3:20. He has just changed His methods. He affirms that the power of salvation is not in miracles but in the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16). Desire for miracles is just a modern day manifestation of clamoring for signs. John 4:48.

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Endnotes

¹“Charismatic” comes from the Greek word usually used for spiritual gifts, *charisma*.

ers. The most prolific method was to “offer to pray with a non-Christian who was in need of encouragement or support.” Eight out of ten Christians (78%) said they had done so in the past year. Nearly as common was an approach widely known as “lifestyle evangelism,” which was described in the survey as living in ways that would impress non-Christians and cause them to raise questions about that lifestyle. Three out of every four born again adults (74%) tried this means of outreach.

Another popular approach was to “start a discussion with a non-Christian in which you intentionally asked what they believe concerning a particular moral or spiritual matter, and continued to ask questions about their views without telling them they are wrong, but continuing to nicely challenge them to explain their thinking and its implications.” Known as “Socratic evangelism” because of its dialogical nature, seven out of ten believers (69%) said they had engaged in this approach.

About half of all believers utilized each of three alternative means of outreach. Among them was a form of moral confrontation (i.e., to “tell a non-Christian a specific behavior was inappropriate and then describe the biblical basis for your view and an alternative approach”). This moral confrontation approach had been used by 50% of born again adults during the

¹The terms “Christian” and “born again” are used by the Barna Group to describe those who have “invited Jesus into their lives” and have made a commitment to Him. The Bible teaches that those who are “born again” (and therefore are Christians) have been baptized (John 3:3-5).

prior year. The other means were event-oriented strategies: bringing a non-Christian friend to a church service (49%) or bringing them to an outreach event (45%).

The least widely used methods were giving evangelistic literature to people (undertaken by 35%); sending evangelistic letters or e-mails to non-Christian acquaintances (21%); and preaching on the street or in other pub-

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Services

Sunday Morning Assembly
8:30AM & 10:15AM
Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Study
7:30 PM
Classes for all ages.
Private classes arranged at your convenience.

For more information,
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