

LESSON 163

Egermeier's Story:

Page 493 – The Lame Man at the Gate Beautiful

Memory Verse: John 20:31 “But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.” NASB

Scripture: Acts 3; 4:4

Teaching Resource:

New Testament Overview Section 6 The Persecution
Bible Study Guide for All Ages Lesson 114

Object Lesson:

Write a letter or a story that you can remember; then put it in an envelope and seal it. Take it to class with you. Ask the students if they know what is in the envelope. Point out that you know what is in the envelope. Recite the note or story that you wrote. Ask the students how they would be able to prove that you know what the note says. Of course, just open it and read it. If it reads just like you recited, then that is proof that you knew.

In much the same way, miracles prove the message is from God. The apostles were telling people a message from God. They needed to prove that what they were saying was truth from God. Because they performed a miracle that only God's power could perform, the apostles had proof of the truth of their message.

Doctrinal Emphasis: Miracles

Key Theme: *Miracles are proof of the message.*

In John's Gospel, the miracles that Jesus performs are called “signs.” The reason John refers to Jesus' miracles as signs is to emphasize the significance of the miracles rather than the performance of the miracles themselves.

John 20:30-31 “Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have

been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

Indeed, the signs lead the reader of the Gospel to the truth that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. In our story from Acts, we see that Peter did not take credit for healing the crippled man. Peter credited the miracle to the power of God to glorify His Son Jesus. Peter states—

Acts 3:16 “And on the basis of faith in His name, [it is] the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which [comes] through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.”

The miracle of healing was intended to draw attention to the message about Jesus. The message was effective.

Acts 4:4 “But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.”

What is the role of miracles in the Church Age in which we live today? If we look to the Acts of the Apostles, we see that God used Paul as an agent of His power at Ephesus.

Acts 19:11-12 “God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.”

But when we compare this to Paul’s later life, this power is not available to him.

II Timothy 4:20 “Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus.”

Paul prays repeatedly for healing for himself and comes to realize the reason for this “thorn in the flesh.”

II Corinthians 12:7-9 “Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

We must remember that we live in a fallen world, a world that is characterized by sinfulness. Death is the result of sin.

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

If it were God’s will to heal every believer, then believers would not die. Remember that believers are forgiven of their sins but have not ceased to be sinners. The wages still apply. This does not suggest that God does not heal people today. We can pray in faith that a person can be healed. We can pray in faith that a good harvest will come. In both cases, we do what needs to be done at the human level, whether it is availing ourselves of medical science or getting off our duff and planting the seeds needed for the harvest.

When you read the stories of missionaries who are taking the gospel to unreached cultures around the world, you will find events that are miraculous leading to acceptance of the truth of God’s saving grace. You only need read books by Wycliffe Bible Translators and other missionaries to see that God displays power to attest to the truth of the gospel message that is being presented to a group from which He will bring new believers.