**St Martins C3 – October 15, 2023**

**Miracles – Here and Now**

**Sermon Summary:**

If God were to do a miracle in or around your life right now, what would it be? We know a God who does miracles. So, are we asking him to do that miracle we need in our lives right now? (Matthew 7:7-8) Let us make sure we are asking God to do the miraculous, not simply assuming that He won’t intervene in our lives.

In order to highlight the fact that God does miracles and the fact that we ought to be seeking Him for them, we are embarking on a series over the next few weeks where we focus on God doing miracles in us and around us. Specifically, seeking to answer the question: *What might asking God for more of His miraculous power in and around our lives look like?* To find the answer to that question, we look to the person and work of Jesus.

History records that Jesus did many miracles. As Jesus did these miracles, He also gave the reason for why He did them.

**Read: Matthew 12:22-28**

**Miracles happened in and around Jesus’ life, because with Christ and the Holy Spirit’s presence, the Kingdom of God had come.** Or, to put it another way, Jesus was bringing the life of Heaven to earth.The Kingdom of God, is spiritual, not political. The Kingdom of God is where God’s purposes, or God’s life are present in any given situation. (Luke 17:20-21) Therefore, we see the miraculous break through into our world because healings, deliverance, provision, wholeness and life are all things that are normal in God’s world. God’s “world” or God’s Kingdom has come to this world through Christ.

We are still waiting for the fullness of that Kingdom to be a reality in the future, but Jesus made it very clear that God’s Kingdom had arrived in the present, so we can expect miracles to happen.

Jesus also taught His disciples that He didn’t need to be physically present for miracles to happen. God will use those who are willing to seek His Kingdom purposes to bring miracles to those around them. (Matthew & Luke 10) We may not know if or when a miracle will happen, but that ought not hinder us from seeking the miraculous work of God’s Kingdom in and around our lives. After all, that is why Jesus taught us to pray, “your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” (Matthew 6:9-10)

**Where God’s Kingdom is present, miracles happen.**

So, let us return to the question that we started with today: ***If God were to do a miracle in or around your life right now, what would it be?*** Are you seeking God for His purposes in that situation? What is He saying to you? What is He asking you to have faith for?

In the coming weeks we will explore how God uses us to bring His miraculous Kingdom life to others. In preparation for that, you might want to practice regularly praying the following prayer: ***“God reveal to me what your Kingdom purposes are in this situation.”*** You might be surprised how He might use prayers like that!

**Suggested questions for Connect Group discussion:**

*What miracles have you experienced in your life, or witnessed in someone else’s life?*

*Why do miracles accompany the presence of God’s Kingdom?*

*How come miracles happen sometimes, but not every time we pray?*

*What might be an area of your life where God is challenging you to ask Him to move more miraculously than what you are currently experiencing?*

Songs we sung this Sunday:

* Great things
* Holy, Holy, Holy
* Christ be magnified.
* Son of suffering
* Here and now

**Monday’s Devotion – The purpose of miracles**

**John 6:26-29**

*Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.**Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”*

*Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”**Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”*

This teaching of Jesus was just after He had miraculously fed 5,000 people. Jesus knew that people would follow Him, for what they could get. His followers may have thought that they would be healed, or not need to work, because Jesus could miraculously multiply food. So, Jesus takes the opportunity to explain the main purpose of miracles. Miracles are to lead people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Miracles are to lead people to believe that the King and His Kingdom are here. Miracles are to lead people to worship Christ for who He is.

This week we will be exploring various miracles that Jesus did and why He did them. Every miracle of Jesus was motivated by compassion, however, there was also a lot more going on, than just doing good. God will do miracles in us and around because He loves us, but also to draw us to worship Him. Worshipping Him as the Lord of all. That worship leads us to see life from God’s perspective, rather than ours. May we wholeheartedly believe in the Son. May that lead us to worship. Then may that worship lead us to a life lived for God. That’s the purpose of miracles.

**Tuesday’s Devotion – Miracles set people free**

**Luke 10:17-19**

*The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”**He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.**I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.*

Without God’s power and authority, we cannot overcome evil. Therefore, removing demonic activity from our lives is a miraculous work of God.

This was clearly acknowledged in Jesus’ day. Before Christ, no one had the power to evict demons. With the arrival of Christ and His Kingdom, demons and Satan were defeated. Those looking on were in awe of these miracles.

Not only did Jesus miraculously cast out demons, so too did His disciples. That surprised not only the onlookers, but also the disciples.

If we are willing, God will miraculously use us to set ourselves and others free from demonic activity. Like the disciples, it will surprise us at times; however, this is the culture of Christ and His Kingdom. Let us be willing to grow in our confidence in Christ’s authority and power over the enemy. The miraculous work of deliverance not only happened in Jesus’ day, it still happens today.

Maybe it is needed now, more than ever?

**Wednesday’s Devotion – Death is overcome**

**John 11:25**

*Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.”*

As far as miracles go, coming back to life, (without the help of a defibrillator) has to be right up there. Jesus raised people from the dead on several occasions. Then, of course, he raised Himself from death.

Interestingly tests and interviews with people who have died and been resuscitated now show that they still have consciousness after death. Or, to put it another way, there is scientific evidence now to show that there is life after death. That of course doesn’t change the fact that we can’t “will” ourselves back to life again. Life and death are in God’s hands, not ours. He is the one who can and does resurrect the dead. In Him there is resurrection life.

Bringing life from death is something that is normal in God’s Kingdom, but miraculous in our world. I haven’t yet witnessed someone physically returning to life miraculously after they had died, but that would be really cool. I am confident God can and does do miracles like that.

What resurrection miracles do is reveal to us that God and His Kingdom is a Kingdom of life. Life that overcomes death. Therefore, we need not fear death or the threat of death, for death has been overcome.

**Thursday’s Devotion – The sick are healed**

**Mark 3:9-10**

*Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him.**For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him.*

Something we need to appreciate is that in ancient times, there was very little medical knowledge or medical resources. There were no antibiotic drugs. When people got a significant illness, they often died. A significant amount of people had leprosy. Something in our modern world is almost unheard of. So, when Jesus started physically healing people, it understandable got a lot of attention.

As expected, most people would have been simply focused on getting their healing, not internalising the message of Christ and His Kingdom. However, that didn’t stop Jesus healing people. He knew that some would not only receive healing for the bodies, but healing for their souls as well.

We now live in a world where we tend to rely more on modern medicine than we do the miraculous healing God provides. Maybe our default ought to be to pray before we reach for the Panadol? As we witness God healing us, may we be drawn into a deeper confidence in His power and authority. May it draw us into the life of His Kingdom. A Kingdom where the sick are healed.

**Friday’s Devotion – The Spirit doing Kingdom work**

**Acts 1:8**

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

This week we have seen that there are a variety of miracles that God does. God provides, heals, delivers and brings life out of death. All these things are miraculous in the natural world, but normal in God’s Kingdom.

When Jesus was physically present with us, He revealed that the Kingdom of God had come. The important thing for us to remember is that God has not withdrawn His Kingdom from this world. His Kingdom is still present in us and around us.

Christ confirmed to us, His Church, that He still wants His Kingdom to be extended in the world, through the sending of His Holy Spirit to us. The presence of God’s Spirit assures us that God is still wanting to do His miraculous Kingdom work.

The presence of God’s Spirit also empowers us to do that miraculous Kingdom work. We have not been left with the instructions without the capability. Are we seeking to be more aware of the Spirit’s empowerment in our lives? Are we seeking to partner with God’s Holy Spirit in the Kingdom work He is doing in and around our lives? What could seeking a greater empowerment of God’s Holy Spirit look like for you?