



Seminole

BAPTIST CHURCH

KINGDOM POWER

PART TWO

Forty Daily Devotions
On Miracles
From the Gospels
(Matthew, Mark, Luke and John)
(Based on the NKJV)

Introduction

Miracles! Simply defined, they are the punctuation marks of the Almighty. Throughout God's Word, miracles are used unsparingly to identify the mood of the Writer as His message is recorded for our instruction and spiritual well-being. Through these divine punctuation marks, carefully placed by the God Himself, we know when to stop, slow down, yield, or simply when to proceed with caution. In the miracles that are recorded throughout the Bible, we can better understand the intent of the Holy Spirit as He guides human beings by His inspired, infallible Word. The Gospels are packed with miracles that, when read and studied, teach us that God is all-knowing, all-loving, and all-powerful!

Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	Matthew 1:18-25	09/20/21
2	Luke 1:26-38	09/21/21
3	John 2:1-11	09/22/21
4	Matthew 3:1-17	09/23/21
5	John 4:46-54	09/24/21
6	John 5:1-9	09/25/21
7	Luke 4:16-36	09/26/21
8	Luke 5:1-11	09/27/21
9	Matthew 8:14-22	09/28/21
10	Matthew 7:24-8:4	09/29/21
11	Mark 2:1-12	09/30/21
12	Mark 3:1-6	10/01/21
13	Luke 7:1-10	10/02/21
14	Luke 7:11-22	10/03/21
15	Mark 4:30-41	10/04/21
16	Matthew 9:27-38	10/05/21
17	Mark 5:1-15	10/06/21
18	Luke 8:41-56	10/07/21
19	Mark 5:21-34	10/08/21
20	John 6:1-15	10/09/21

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	Matthew 12:22-32	10/10/21
22	Matthew 14:22-36	10/11/21
23	Matthew 15:21-28	10/12/21
24	Mark 7:31-37	10/13/21
25	Matthew 15:29-39	10/14/21
26	Mark 8:22-32	10/15/21
27	Matthew 17:1-13	10/16/21
28	Mark 9:14-29	10/17/21
29	Matthew 17:14-27	10/18/21
30	John 9:1-21	10/19/21
31	Luke 13:10-17	10/20/21
32	Luke 14:1-14	10/21/21
33	John 11:38-54	10/22/21
34	Luke 17:11-19	10/23/21
35	Mark 10:46-52	10/24/21
36	Mark 11:12-26	10/25/21
37	Luke 22:39-54	10/26/21
38	John 20:1-18	10/27/21
39	John 21:1-14	10/28/21
40	Mark 16:9-20	10/29/21

Day 1: Matthew 1:18-25

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows...” (Matthew 1:18)

The Birth of Jesus

To introduce the story of the birth of His Son, God chose a very simple statement: “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows” (1:18). However, it is not a simple matter from there! We are told that Mary was “betrothed” (pledged, espoused, engaged) to be married to Joseph, but before they ever actually were married and slept together as husband and wife, it was discovered that Mary was pregnant and that the child living within her womb was “of the Holy Spirit” (v. 18). Joseph was informed of this fact by “an angel of the Lord” that “appeared to him in a dream” (v. 20). The next time you read through the Gospel of Matthew, track the phrase, “in a dream” and you will find that it occurs five times in the first two chapters of the book! The angel told Joseph that the child conceived in the womb of Mary was “of the Holy Spirit” and that after his birth, this miracle child would “save His people from their sins” (vs. 20-21). So, today’s Scripture reading actually covers two miracles for us – that of the virgin birth of Christ and the new birth of those who choose to believe in Him!

Prayer Emphasis: Decide to live a life that is marked by the miraculous. God’s **Kingdom Power** is within all of us through the new birth. **Be** what you are – a child of God, born to Him in a miraculous way through the power of God. **Make** your heavenly Father proud of you today by **spending** time with Him!

Day 2: Luke 1:26-38

“And having come in, the angel said to her, ‘Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!’” (Luke 1:28)

“The Lord is With You!”

In Luke’s divinely inspired account of the birth of Christ, God sent Gabriel to Nazareth to tell a young virgin (Mary) that she was to become pregnant and give birth to a son whom she was to name Jesus. It is important to note the first recorded words of this angel to Mary: “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!” Much of the miraculous nature of those first words has become lost in all that follows and what has become our Christmas Story today. “The Lord is with you!” It is after this announcement that the angel continues his message to Mary and informs her of the miraculous conception of Christ. We often speak of the Savior’s birth, but it was His conception that bore the marks of the miraculous! Jesus was born in a stable, no doubt through the normal and regular process of birth. But, through the miraculous power of God, He was conceived in the womb of a young virgin who had never been with a man. Because the angel could say to Mary, “The Lord is with you,” we can all rest assured that the Lord is with us as well. Matthew’s gospel quotes from the Old Testament prophet, Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14) in his record: “‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us’” (Matthew 1:23).

Prayer Emphasis: Imagine how different Mary’s life must have been from that day forward! **Imagine** how different our lives *could* be today if we *would* only grasp hold of the idea that the God who formed a new, supernatural life in the womb of a virgin is the same God that has formed a new life in us through the new birth. **Live** like God is with you today and **do** something that He would enjoy doing. **Call** and encourage a fellow believer by assuring them that **“The Lord is with you!”**

Day 3: John 2:1-11

“On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee...” (John 2:1)

The First Miracle!

In John, chapter 2, we are told that Jesus and His disciples were invited to a wedding in Cana of Galilee. The exact location of Cana is not known, but it was obviously near Nazareth. This town is mentioned only in John’s gospel. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was also at the wedding. When the host ran out of wine, Mary made mention of the need to Jesus. Some believe that Mary made this comment to Jesus because she expected Him to perform a miracle for someone who was obviously a close friend or associate. However, that is not likely the case since verse 11 clearly tells us that this was the *first* miracle that Jesus performed. Even though Mary had witnessed some things that proved to her that she was raising no ordinary child, there is no reason to believe that she was aware of His miraculous powers at this time. Jesus responded that His time had not yet come. We read phrases similar to this again in John 7:6, 7:8, 7:30, and 8:20. Without further prodding, Jesus commanded the servants to fill six large pots with water. After they had filled them, He then told them to take some of the water from the pots to the host. The host was surprised at the quality of this new wine and commented to the bridegroom that it was the usual custom to serve the best wine first! This first miracle was a manifestation of Christ’s glory and resulted in His disciples growing in their faith. Wine is often symbolic of joy in the New Testament. When Christ is glorified, His people always experience great joy!

Prayer Emphasis: **Praise** God for the joy that He has brought into your life! **Thank Him** for your marriage, your spouse, and your family. **Express** your gratitude for those closest to you. **Tell** them how much you love and appreciate them.

Day 4: Matthew 3:1-17

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.” (Matthew 3:13)

A Voice from Heaven

When Jesus came to John for water baptism, John exclaimed that he thought that it should be the other way around – that Jesus should be baptizing him! There is much to be learned from the Lord’s response to John’s concerns. Jesus likened His being obedient in the matter of baptism to a righteous act that fulfilled God’s commands. When Jesus was baptized, He came up out of the water and the heavens were opened. We are told that “He” saw the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. We are not sure if others actually saw these things happen or not. Also, we cannot be sure if anyone other than Jesus heard the voice of God speaking. However, we can be sure that God’s Word indicates that all of the “faces” of God appear in this story. God the Son came up out of the water, God the Spirit descended down from Heaven, and God the Father voiced His divine approval. Those who were there may not have seen and heard these miraculous happenings, but those of us who choose to be readers of God’s Word have been blessed with a “front row” seat to this wonderful miracle of God!

Prayer Emphasis: **Review** your own baptism experience and **recall** the significance of that event. If you have never been baptized, then **consider** doing so. Baptism does not save, but it is definitely a right step toward submission and service to God. God’s **Kingdom Power** is more readily noticed by those who are obedient to God’s commands.

Day 5: John 4:46-54

“So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.” (John 4:46)

The Nobleman’s Son

After spending two days with the Samaritans that had believed because of the witness of the woman He met at the well, Jesus returned to Cana of Galilee where He met a nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. We are not told if this man was a Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, or what kind of official that he was. Jesus saw only a man in need. Some believe that the comments of Jesus in verse 48 would indicate that the man was a Jew, since they were the ones that sought signs and wonders from Him. This was to be the second miracle performed in Cana of Galilee and the first of the recorded healing miracles. Some have said that the two miracles performed at Cana are significant due to the fact that the first was performed at a wedding and the second was performed to bless a home. The first was performed at a time of great joy while the second was performed at a time of great anxiety. The man’s son was near death and the poor father begged Jesus to come and heal him. Jesus said, “Go your way; your son lives” (v. 50). The man believed Jesus and began the journey back to his home. Imagine his great joy when his servants met him along the way with the news that his son was alive and well! After inquiring about the time of day that the boy began to show improvement, the man soon realized that his son was healed at the same hour that Jesus had spoken His promise to him.

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Power is always displayed to further God’s Kingdom Purposes. **Be aware** of the needs of others and **ask** God to help you to be a better witness to those around you.

Day 6: John 5:1-9

“Jesus said to him, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk.’” (John 5:8)

A Sabbath Day Healing

There were many people healed by the power of Jesus during His earthly ministry. However, there were only seven such miracles that happened on the Sabbath Day. This was the first of those Sabbath healings, and thusly, this miracle becomes a mark in the beginning of the constant conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders of His day. This miracle was performed in Jerusalem, very near the temple area, at a pool of water called Bethesda. The pool was surrounded by five covered porches. It was in these shaded areas where people would bring their blind, lame, and paralyzed friends and family members hoping for a miraculous healing. The people believed that an angel would come and “stir” the waters from time to time, and that the first person to get in the water after this stirring would be healed. There is no biblical record of any of these healings having ever taken place and, therefore, no reason to believe that the stories of such healings were anything more than legends. Desperate people will cling to any hope given. In this case, real hope came to the rescue. Jesus healed one of these “hopeless” people by merely telling him to rise, take up his bed, and walk. What problem could the Jews possibly have had with that? Being aware that the man had obviously been healed on a Sabbath Day, they took issue with the man, questioning him about the person who would tell him to take up his bed and walk, thus violating Sabbath laws. Read verse 18 again and note that, as Jesus sought to help people, the Jews sought to kill Him for it!

Evening Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to help you to see the needs of people as being more important than simple religious observances. **Watch** for an opportunity to be a blessing to someone today and do not be afraid to **reach out** to someone in need.

Day 7: Luke 4:16-36

“...they led Him to the brow of the hill...that they might throw Him down over the cliff.” (Luke 4:29)

What’s Your Excuse?

In the earlier part of our reading we find Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth on a Sabbath day. He stood and read from the words of Isaiah and then announced that the prophetic words that He has just read were spoken about Him! What followed was a discussion that went from bad to worse – beginning with questions about Jesus and who He was and ending with the people driving Him out of town and trying to throw Him off of a cliff! How many of us would have even attended “church” again after such a dreadful experience? However, on what was probably the very next Sabbath Day, we see Jesus, *in the synagogue*, teaching the people. Read verses 18 and 19 again and note the words that have to do with teaching, preaching, and proclaiming. Jesus did not cease to do what He was *anointed* to do simply because He was *disappointed* in people! On that second Sabbath, a man possessed by a demon interrupted the service, crying out to Jesus at the top of his voice. With the briefest of commands, Jesus took control of the situation and the man was miraculously released from his oppression (again, see verses 18–19). Jesus was who He said He was, and He was committed to what He had been sent to do. He did not allow past experiences to influence His present activities. Such commitment is always accompanied by **Kingdom Power!**

Prayer Emphasis: **Examine** your every reason for not serving the Lord today. **Ask** God if your absence from being an active part of His body is an “approved” one. If Christ could be run out of town, survive an attempted murder, and still be in “church” on the next Sabbath, what’s your excuse?

Day 8: Luke 5:1-11

“... ‘Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.’” (Luke 5:4)

“Let Down Your Nets!”

Today’s reading finds Peter and his partners in a bad situation. They had “toiled all night” and had nothing to show for their labor (v. 5). Jesus had situated himself in Simon’s boat and was teaching the Word of God to the crowds around Him while the fishermen were washing their nets. After Jesus finished speaking, He directed Peter to return to the water and let down the nets. Notice that there was a *promise* that was actually made a part of this *command*. Jesus said, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets *for a catch*” (v. 4). And what a catch they made! They soon had so many fish in the nets that the nets began to break and another boat had to be called over to help. Ultimately, both boats were so full of fish that they actually began to sink! We have every right to believe that God will keep His every promise to us, and we should not be afraid to ask Him for wonderful things to be done on our behalf. But, before we do, let’s be sure that we have done all that we can do ourselves. Peter and his friends had worked hard all night long to find fish before they were commanded to “Launch out into the deep.”

Prayer Emphasis: **Evaluate** your own prayer life to be sure that you are *asking* God to help you and not *telling* God what you want done for you without any investment of your own time, abilities, or energy. **Be obedient** in all that you know to do and then **ask** God to bless your efforts with a strong dose of **Kingdom Power!**

Day 9: Matthew 7:24-8:4

“... ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.’” (Matthew 8:2)

“I Am Willing”

If those who listened to Jesus tell the story of the wise and foolish builders were “amazed” at his *teaching*, then you can only imagine the amazement of those who later witnessed His *touching* and healing of a leper! This miracle, coming immediately after the Sermon on the Mount, helped all to see that Jesus had not come simply *declaring*, but also *delivering* God’s **Kingdom Power** to all that would come to Him in faith. The Jews commonly believed leprosy to be a divine punishment upon those who had sinned against God. As far as they knew, this disease was incurable without the divine intervention of God Himself! Luke, who was a physician by trade, noted that this man was “full of leprosy” (Luke 5:12). At that time it was a violation of law to touch a leper. This man believed that Jesus *could* heal him but, like so many of us today, he obviously questioned whether or not the Lord *would* heal him. *Most* true believers do not question God’s Kingdom Power but *many* still question whether or not it is available to them. This poor man may have, like so many around him, believed that his physical condition was a result of some spiritual failure in his past. Therefore, he was hesitant to assume that the Lord would care enough to help him. The same Jesus who was willing on that day is still willing and able today! Do not hesitate to come to Him with your every need.

Prayer Emphasis: **Think** about how much God loves you! **Praise** Him for sending His only begotten Son to save us from the incurable disease called sin. **Share** this uncommon love story with someone else at your very next opportunity.

Day 10: Matthew 8:14-22

“Now when Jesus had come into Peter’s house, He saw his wife’s mother lying sick with a fever.” (Matthew 8:14)

Peter’s Mother-in-Law

You can also read about this miracle of Jesus in Mark 1:29–34 and Luke 4:38–41. It is interesting to note that Matthew and Mark mention only that Peter’s mother-in-law had a fever, while Luke, a physician by trade, noted that it was a “high fever” (Luke 4:38). It is also important to note that this miracle took place in Peter’s “house.” The last part of today’s Scripture reading will reveal to us that Jesus, Himself, had no such earthly pleasures or possessions of His own. Both Luke and Mark place this miracle as having occurred immediately after the one we read about yesterday, and, as such, may mean that it happened on a Sabbath. Notice that there is no indication in Matthew’s account that Jesus was asked to heal this woman. It simply states that Jesus “saw” her condition and did something about it. Mark states that Jesus was “told” about her condition before He healed her, while Luke does state the He was “asked” to do something for her. However it happened, the important thing to note is that it did happen! We know that nothing escapes God’s all-seeing eye, but I am sure that He is pleased when His children come to Him with their needs, *telling* Him all about them and *asking* Him for His divine intervention.

Prayer Emphasis: **Ask** God for healing for someone today. Do not be afraid to **seek** something from Him that is above and beyond all that man can even imagine. **Tell** someone that you are praying for them today. In the meantime, **take** some **time** to **thank God** for your every blessing, including that of your own home. **Do** all that *you* can for your friends in need and then trust God with the rest.

Day 11: Mark 2:1-12

“I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” (Mark 2:11)

“Take Up Your Bed”

We often associate Jesus with Bethlehem, Nazareth, or Jerusalem, but He spent more of His adult life and ministry in Capernaum than any other city. Matthew even refers to Capernaum as Jesus’ “own city” (Matthew 9:1). When it was “heard” (v. 1) that Jesus was there, the house where He was staying was soon filled to capacity. Four unnamed, unknown men came to Jesus carrying a paralyzed man on a cot. When they could not gain entrance into the home, they climbed up on the roof and made a hole in it through which they could lower this needy man down to where Jesus was. What many may have thought they saw was a small group of dedicated and determined men who were creative in finding a way to get a needy person to Jesus. But we are told that what Jesus saw was “faith” in action! And upon seeing *their* faith, Jesus told the paralyzed man that his sins were forgiven. Later He would tell this same man to take up his bed and walk! **Kingdom Power** was first released to meet the man’s *spiritual* need (forgiveness) and, after that, his physical needs were also addressed and met. I assure you that more than one man left that meeting that day with the impression that he had received a miracle from the Lord!

Prayer Emphasis: Do something unselfish for someone in need at your next opportunity. Don’t just *wait* for a chance to help someone, *watch* for it! Be ready to **share** both spiritual and physical help with others you meet along your way.

Day 12: Mark 3:1-6

“And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand.” (Mark 3:1)

A Good Day at Church!

In today’s text, we again find Jesus in a synagogue on a Sabbath day. We are told that a man with “a withered hand” (v. 1) was there on that given day. Even though this story is given in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, no writer mentions this man, or anyone else, asking Jesus to do anything to help him with his physical problem. Most likely, this problem was from birth, and this man had learned to live with his limitation. We do notice, though, that his limitation did not cause him to be without desire to be in the synagogue on the Sabbath Day to worship God! Even though some of them (the Pharisees – see Mark 2:23) were watching Jesus’ every move, there is no reason to think that this man was there for any reason other than to worship and serve God. Jesus first told this man to stand up in front of everyone. He later asked him to reach out his hand, probably in His direction. When the man stretched his hand out toward Jesus, it was obvious that it was fully “restored” and “as whole as the other” (v. 5). Some think that the word “restored” may indicate that the injury was not from birth but from some kind of accident. In either case, the man was in the right place and listening to the right person, so he went home with both hands fully functional for good and for God. I would say that he had a good day at church! Perhaps complete obedience to all that Jesus commands us to do might bring the same kind of **Kingdom Power** into our own lives.

Prayer Emphasis: **Commit** to being faithful to the worship services at your church. **Believe** that God is going to bless you for your faithfulness. **Lift** up your hands to the Lord today and take a moment to **thank** Him for the ability to perform such a simple task!

Day 13: Luke 7:1-10

“...a certain centurion’s servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die.” (Luke 7:2)

The Centurion’s Servant

Jesus was once again in Capernaum, His adopted home town, and He performed another of His amazing miracles while He was there. This miracle was performed by request, with the request coming from what may have seemed a strange source. A local Centurion’s servant was very sick. It was obvious that this Centurion was a good man for his servant was “dear to him” (v. 2). This same man was well thought of by the Jewish community for many reasons, one being that he had obviously supplied the funds for them to build a synagogue. Typically, throughout the New Testament, Centurions were known to be men of high moral fiber and good character, and they are often well-spoken of in Scripture. As Jesus neared the home of this good man, He was met by messengers from the Centurion’s house stating that the man did not consider himself “worthy” to approach Jesus and seek His help. To help you better understand this man, be advised that this is the exact same Greek word used to describe how John the Baptist felt about being requested to baptize Jesus. However, verse 9 helps us to understand that it was *faith* and not *merit* that led to the healing of this servant. Jesus considered this man’s faith to be a “great” faith. I wonder what He would say about our faith?

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to grow your faith. The disciples were not ashamed or afraid to do it (Luke 17:5) and we shouldn’t be either. **Believe** that God is growing your faith with every moment that you spend in His Word. **Turn** to Romans 10:17 and underline that verse in your Bible.

Day 14: Luke 7:11-22

“...a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow...” (Luke 7:12)

The Widow’s Son

While the NKJV states that this miracle was performed “the day after” the healing of the Centurion’s servant, other translations simply say something like “soon afterward” (v. 11). Perhaps the translators believed it to be even less than a full day afterwards, and thus, even sooner than on the next day. One thing is very clear, whatever the amount of time that had passed from one event to the other was exactly the right amount of time because Jesus would not have met this funeral procession along the way if God had not been in the timing! While Luke 7:22 allows us to consider that the raisings from the dead that the Holy Spirit chose to record in the New Testament may not have been all of these type miracles that Jesus performed, we do have three definite, recorded occasions where Jesus raised someone from the dead. Jesus raised a young child almost immediately after her death, this young man who was already being carried along in a funeral procession, and, eventually, a fully-grown man who had been dead and buried for four days! Notice that Jesus touched the coffin (verse 14). This was perhaps an even more daring and controversial move than His earlier touching of the leper. Upon the touch of the Master’s hand, the dead man sat up and began talking. Lots of other people began talking, too (verses 16-17) and soon the news reached the imprisoned John the Baptist. This was more excitement than the preacher could bear, and he immediately sent for a word of confirmation that this was the sign that the Messiah had truly come.

Prayer Emphasis: Expect big things from God! **Believe** His every promise and **ask** Him to fill your life with **Kingdom Power!** **Trust** God’s timing and **never think** that He is not aware of your every need.

Day 15: Mark 4:30-41

“Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’” (Mark 4:39)

“Even the Wind and the Sea Obey Him!”

Only Mark’s gospel indicates an exact time for this miracle. He states that it occurred on the evening of the day that Jesus completed His giving of the parables recorded here and in Matthew 13. Jesus asked His disciples to take Him to the other side of the lake. After He got into the boat, a sudden and furious storm arose, and the waves began to come over the sides of the boat, nearly sinking it. It was a storm strong enough to scare even the most experienced sailors and fishermen among them, because we are told that “the disciples” were afraid and certain that they were going to drown. Both Mark and Luke’s accounts of this story tell us that Jesus was sleeping when this storm came up and that He apparently remained asleep, even while they were in the midst of it. The disciples had to wake Him up to express their concern over what they believed to be a desperate situation. I must emphasize again that these were not pleasure boaters or novice seamen who so feared for their lives! After being awakened, Jesus rose, rebuked the wind and then told the waves to “be still” (v. 39). Then, just as suddenly as the storm had come, it went away and the seas became completely calm. It seems that the only things that God ever created that do not obey Him fully are Satan and human beings! Jesus used this occasion to teach His disciples that there can be a direct correlation between our fears and our faith. Verse 40 records two questions that He had for them: “Why are you so fearful?” and “How is it that you have no faith?”

Prayer Emphasis: **Expect** storms to come, but **believe** that God’s **Kingdom Power** will see us through them. **Pray** for the kind of faith that will provide peace even in the most turbulent times. **Realize** that nothing is going to happen today or tomorrow that God cannot handle!

Day 16: Matthew 9:27-38

“Then He touched their eyes, saying, ‘According to your faith let it be to you.’” (Matthew 9:29)

Two Miracles

Today’s reading covers two miracles that are recorded by Matthew only. First, we read of the healing of two blind men and then of the healing of a deaf mute. Although all of the miracles performed during the Lord’s ministry were significant, these particular miracles probably had people quoting the prophecies of Isaiah 29:18, “In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see...”. That Messianic prophecy clearly mentioned the healing of the deaf and the blind. It is not difficult for us to understand the spiritual implications of these words. You can imagine what the people of Israel were saying about these miracles – and the words that they called to mind! The fact that the two blind men cried out to Jesus, calling Him the “Son of David” only served to express what some were already saying about Jesus and to inspire even more talk about who He was (v. 27). The first plea of these men was for mercy. Then Jesus brought faith into the equation when He asked these men if they believed that He could do this for them. Notice that no mention is made of these men asking Jesus directly for their sight. Yet, Jesus knew exactly what it was that they needed. Remember the statement that Jesus made in Matthew 6:8: “...Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”

Prayer Emphasis: **Believe** that your heavenly Father hears and answers prayer and **pray** like you believe it! **Realize** that our greatest need is for God’s mercy. **Thank** God for what His mercy has meant to you.

Day 17: Mark 5:1-15

“...there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,” (Mark 5:2b)

A Demon Possessed Man

After Jesus calmed the stormy seas, He and His disciples went “to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes” (v. 1). Upon their arrival they were immediately confronted by a man possessed by an “unclean spirit” that lived among “the tombs” (v. 2). Places such as these tombs, where this man was hiding, were common haunts for many such demented people who were no longer accepted within the confines of normal society. No one could subdue this man and even chains could not hold him. There are three strong indications that the demons possessing this man were well aware of who Jesus was. First, after seeing Jesus he ran and knelt before Him. Verse 7 records that he “cried out” “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?” Then, the demon living within the man pleaded with God not to torment him. This was probably a plea that Jesus would not cast him into the abyss where many of Satan’s fallen angels resided. The demon declared his name to be “Legion,” (v. 9) denoting that there were many of them. After the demons were given permission to leave the man and enter into a nearby herd of swine, causing them to rush down a steep bank and drown, those tending the pigs ran and reported what they had seen to the people in the city. When the people came out to see what had actually happened, there wasn’t a pig in sight, but there was a formerly naked and demon-possessed man fully dressed, in his right mind, and sitting calmly at the feet of Jesus.

Prayer Emphasis: Allow Jesus to be more than a Savior to you and your family. Ask Him to be the Lord of all that you say and do! **Kingdom Power** is available to all who will do this!

Day 18: Luke 8:41-56

“And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus’ feet and begged Him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying.” (Luke 8:41-42a)

A Dead Girl and a Sick Woman, (Part One)

Upon His return from the land of the Gadarenes, a man named Jairus, a ruler among the Jews and in the synagogue, came and knelt down before Jesus. He begged Jesus to come to his house because his only daughter was dying. As Jesus was on his way to this man’s house, the crowds rushed to follow Him, almost crushing Him. Among the crowd was an unidentified woman who had suffered from a condition for 12 years. We will have more to say about her in tomorrow’s devotional. While Jesus was still speaking to that woman, someone came from the home of Jairus to say, “Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher” (v. 49). Upon hearing that announcement, Jesus said to Jairus, “Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well” (v. 50). I am sure that you know the rest of the story! Every time that I read through the New Testament, I pause at the two words, “only believe.” Our Lord makes it sound like something that anyone and everyone *could* do. Because we know, from stories like these, that such faith brings such amazing results and blessings, we should realize that “just believing” is something that anyone and everyone *should* do.

Prayer Emphasis: **Kingdom Power** is released when people have faith in Christ! **Believe** in Him for your salvation and for the power to serve Him on a day-to-day basis. **Acknowledge** that He deserves our all and live like you truly believe that today.

Day 19: Mark 5:21-34

“For she said, ‘If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.’” (Mark 5:28)

A Dead Girl and a Sick Woman, (Part Two)

As Jesus was on the way to the home of Jairus, he was crushed by the crowds that were following Him there. It was from this crowd that the woman with the incurable issue of blood had come and touched the edge, or border, of his cloak. Mark tells us that she had spent a lot of time and money at the doctors only to find that her condition was not getting better, but actually growing worse. But she had heard about Jesus! So, she fought her way through the crowd that followed Him and touched the hem of His garment. Immediately her bleeding stopped! What the best doctors could not do over the course of 12 years, Jesus would soon do with the speaking of just a few words. We should all be amazed at the sensitivity of Jesus as He asked in verse 30, “Who touched My clothes?” Verse 31 records that His disciples were shocked at the question and were quick to respond with a question of their own: “You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’” However, Jesus knew that someone had touched Him because He sensed that power had gone out of Him. Upon discovery of who had touched Him, Jesus told the woman that her faith had healed her. It is not difficult for us to imagine the joy that this poor woman must have felt and the undying appreciation that she must have expressed to God from that day forward!

Prayer Emphasis: **Remind** yourself daily that God is fighting for you. **Ask** Him for the things necessary for you to have **Kingdom Power** in your life. **Trust** Him with your every need and **believe** that He is able to do anything – even more than we could ever imagine.

Day 20: John 6:1-15

“Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?’” (John 6:5)

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

Other than the resurrection of Jesus, this is the only miracle recorded by all four of the gospel writers. While many of us cannot relate to being blind or deaf, or being possessed by demonic spirits, we can all relate to being hungry. John clearly points out that many of the people who were now following Jesus were doing so because of the miracles that He was performing. The fact that the Passover Feast was near probably had a lot to do with the size of the crowd on this particular day. Jesus questioned Philip about how enough bread could be acquired to feed such a large crowd. For that reason, many scholars believe that “acquisitions” was a task assigned to that apostle. We are told that Jesus only asked Philip in order to “test” Philip (v. 6). Obviously, Philip had already been thinking about how he was going to feed this gathering, for he responded that the money on hand would not be enough to provide even one small piece of bread for each person there. Andrew approached Jesus with a young man who had a lunch of five loaves of bread and two small fish. I always smile when I read about these two fish being “small” and wonder just how “big” a fish would have to be for two of them to feed so many people. But Jesus took that small amount of food and fed everyone until they were full, and there were still 12 baskets of food left over!

Prayer Emphasis: **Learn to thank** God for the simplest things! Every time you see a piece of bread, **remember** just how big God is and what He can do with even the smallest of things that are given to Him.

Day 21: Matthew 12:22-32

“Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.” (Matthew 12:22)

Power over Demons

Though we are not told exactly who brought this demon-possessed man to Jesus, we might suspect that it was the Pharisees and that they did not bring him in order to *help* the demon-possessed man but to *hurt* Jesus. Although this story is also recorded in both Mark and Luke, I chose Matthew’s account of this miracle because it is so short and to the point. They brought a demon-possessed, blind, and mute man to Jesus and Jesus healed him. Just like that! Jesus healed him and now he could talk and see. (That sounds just like the way an accountant would report it, doesn’t it?) But this healed man was not the only one talking. Verse 23 states that “all the multitudes were amazed and said, ‘Could this be the Son of David?’” To the Pharisees, the question was clear: “Could this be the Messiah?” These religious leaders took this opportunity to accuse Jesus of casting out demons by the power of the devil himself. This is one of the few occasions recorded in the Bible where Jesus ever defended Himself against any attacks or accusations. His threefold response to the accusation of the Pharisees is clearly spelled out in verses twenty-six through twenty-eight.

Prayer Emphasis: Remember the words of Jesus when He stated that no one could serve two masters. Now is the time for all believers to clearly identify themselves as Christ followers and **stand** proudly for the One who died for them. **Be** instinctively Christian in your thoughts, words, and deeds. Someone’s life will be blessed by your obedience.

Day 22: Matthew 14:22-36

“Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.” (Matthew 14:25)

Walking On Water

Immediately after the miracle of the loaves and fishes, Jesus “made His disciples” get into a boat and go ahead of Him to the other side of the lake (v. 22). The Greek word in the text means to compel or force. It causes us to wonder if anyone, including the disciples, wanted to leave the wonderful environment of fellowship that had to engulf the multitudes that had been treated to such a miraculous meal. However, if Jesus had to be about His Father’s business, then the same held true for His disciples. However, Jesus did not join them in the boat, but retreated into the hills to pray. Soon the disciples were caught in a terrible storm. Mark recorded the time of the storm to be somewhere about “even” – or between 6 and 9 pm. Jesus came to them, walking on the water, sometime during the fourth watch – or between 3 and 6 am! We are not told why, but the disciples were left to struggle in this storm for many hours before Jesus came and calmed it. But, the fear that this storm brought to the hearts of the disciples was small compared to that which they felt when they looked and saw Jesus walking toward them on the water. But “Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid’” (v. 27).

Prayer Emphasis: Commit to “stay in the ship” no matter how rough the seas may become. **Know** that Jesus is aware of our every need and that He will come to us when we need Him most. **Pray** for a suffering friend today.

Day 23: Matthew 15:21-28

“And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him...” (Matthew 15:22)

A Miracle for a Gentile

Today’s reading finds Jesus entering “the region of Tyre and Sidon” (v. 21) where “a woman of Canaan...cried out to Him” for help with her daughter (v. 22). This woman was coming from an area known for its worship of pagan gods and many past pronounced judgments from God. It was desperation alone that drove this mother to seek out Jesus. Apparently the news of all that He had said and done was reaching far across the lands. Notice how much she already knew about Jesus. In verse 22 she referred to Him as “Lord” and as the “*Son of David*.” At first, the Lord’s reaction seems to be cold and uncaring. He did not even answer her! His disciples besought Him to help her and send her away. They were tired of listening to her cries. After another refusal from Jesus, the woman, who you might have thought would have been offended or angered by now, *worshiped* Him. Note her plea in verse 25: “Lord, help me!” You have to wonder if she somehow blamed herself for her daughter’s condition and was asking Jesus to help her cope with her guilt and shame. Even after Jesus referred to her Gentile ancestors as dogs, she still called him “Lord” and expressed her faith that He could help her daughter from just the “crumbs” or leftovers that He had come to give His own people. Guess what? She got her miracle! And I am not the least surprised.

Prayer Emphasis: Commit to give God what He wants even if He does not give you everything that you want – especially right when you want it! **Ask** God to free you from any guilt and shame that you are carrying from past sins and **seek** His miraculous help to face the needs of today.

Day 24: Mark 7:31-37

“Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech...” (Mark 7:32)

A Deaf Mute is Healed

Jesus left the area near Tyre and Sidon and headed back down toward the Sea of Galilee. Some people brought a man to Jesus who could not hear and, because of his deafness, could not speak plainly. This man had obviously not been born deaf, or he would not have been able to speak at all. Look back at verse 35 and note that after the Lord healed him, the man was able to speak “plainly.” We are not told anything about the people who brought this man to Jesus. We do not know if they were family members or even friends. What we do know is that they had heard of Jesus and that they cared for this poor man. Although Matthew spoke of the many miracles that Jesus performed after returning from His trip to the foreign regions, only Mark gives us the details regarding this particular miracle. Sometimes Jesus healed among crowds, and sometimes He healed in a more private situation. In this case, He took this poor man aside and away from the crowd before performing this much-needed miracle. Since the man could not hear, it almost seems as if Jesus touched his ears and then spit onto His own finger so as to say, “I know that you cannot hear what is coming out of my mouth.” He then touched the tongue of this deaf man and with a deep sigh said to him, “Be opened” (v. 34). Immediately his ears were opened and his speech was clear!

Prayer Emphasis: Observe those around you and reach out to them when you have the opportunity. **Believe** that Jesus can help people and do your best to bring as many people to Him as possible. Like the people in our story, **work together** with other Christians to **bring people** to the One who is most able to help them.

Day 25: Matthew 15:29-39

“Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.” (Matthew 15:38)

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

This miracle is another that happened just after Jesus returned from the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon. He went into the hills near the Sea of Galilee and great crowds came to Him, bringing their sick and afflicted friends and family members to Him for help. He did not let them down. The people were amazed as they saw “the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing” (v. 31). About three days into this healing service, Jesus called His disciples to Him and expressed His concern for the crowds and their need for nourishment. Just like He did not want the lame to leave limping or the deaf to leave without hearing, he did not want the hungry to go away hungry. This time the disciples did not need to look to a little boy for their rations, but gave the seven loaves and few fish that they had with them to Jesus. Jesus told the crowd to sit down. He then took the seven loaves and few “little” fish, prayed over them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. Like the feeding of the 5,000, the number stated in the Bible was the number of men who were in attendance. Notice the phrase, “besides women and children” in verse 38. We are not sure exactly how many people Jesus fed at either of these miracle picnics, but we know that there was enough for everyone there with plenty to spare!

Prayer Emphasis: **Trust** God to meet your every need. **Believe** that God is concerned with our day-to-day provisions. **Express** your appreciation for all that God has done for you and spend some extra time praying for someone who may have some provisional needs today. **Ask** God if He might want you to do more than pray about this matter!

Day 26: Mark 8:22-32

“Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him...” (Mark 8:22)

The Blind Man at Bethsaida

This miracle is unique in the sense that it is a miracle recorded only in Mark’s gospel. Another unique characteristic to this story is that it, like no other in the gospels, was performed in two stages. Once again, we see a man brought to Jesus by others who begged Jesus to heal him. It would be almost impossible to number the nameless servants who were mentioned in the Bible in this sense. Jesus took the man outside the village. This is one of only three of the recorded miracles that Jesus performed outside of a public venue. After a first touch, the man’s sight was partially restored. After a second touch, the man could see clearly. This is what I meant in saying that this miracle was performed in two stages. After the first touch, the man responded to the Lord’s question by stating, “I see men like trees, walking” (v. 24). Perhaps the man was saying that he could see the forms of people around him, but they were only a blur and resembled trees that could walk. After the second touch, the man could see clearly. Our reading closes with Christ disclosing His upcoming death to His disciples. Note that He also promised to rise again on the third day. This was to be a fact that they did not seem to recall immediately after the crucifixion.

Prayer Emphasis: **Think** of someone that you could possibly bring to Christ for spiritual healing. **Pray** specifically for someone who needs physical healing today. **Encourage** that person by letting them know that you are praying for them. **Record** a specific prayer request and **return** to record it when the answer to your prayer arrives. **Praise** God for His love and compassion!

Day 27: Matthew 17:1-13

“...He was transfigured before them...” (Matthew 17:2)

The Transfiguration

Matthew, Mark and Luke all record this magnificent story! Some have pointed to this story claiming to find one of the so-called “contradictions” in the Bible. In doing so, they point to the fact that, while Matthew and Mark both state that this event took place “six days” after Peter’s confession of Christ, Luke states that it was “about eight days” later. The key to understanding this story is to note the two words, *after* and *about*. Matthew and Mark state that it was six days *after* Peter’s confession, and they count only the days *in between* the two events while Luke counts the day of the confession and the transfiguration in his number. Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a high mountain and allowed them to see Him transformed. His face and his garments became as bright as the Sun, and Moses and Elijah appeared there with Him. Can you imagine seeing these three Bible characters having a conversation together? Amazing! Peter began to speak (no surprise there) and, while he was speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them and the voice of God was heard speaking from the cloud. Many years later, while Peter was writing his second epistle, he made reference to this day (2 Peter 1:16–18).

Prayer Emphasis: **Imagine** yourself on that mountain with Jesus! **Believe** that He has revealed Himself to you just as clearly through His Word! **Realize** that we operate with much more knowledge and understanding about Jesus than the early disciples. **Thank** and **praise** God for His Word today.

Day 28: Mark 9:14-29

“He said to them, ‘This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.’” (Mark 9:29)

A Demon-Possessed Boy

While three of the Lord’s disciples were on the mountain with Jesus and being exposed to His glory, the remaining nine were still ministering among the people. Upon returning from the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus and his three disciples saw the other disciples surrounded by a large crowd of people, including some teachers of the law who were arguing with them. Notice that the presence of Jesus brought an end to the arguing! Even though *we know* that *He knew*, Jesus asked them what they were arguing about. A man explained that he had brought his demon-possessed son to the disciples, asking them to free the boy from this evil spirit, but they had not been able to do so. Immediately, Jesus disclosed that this was a matter of believing and faith (verse 19). Jesus called for the boy to be brought to Him. Notice the reaction of the evil spirit as it obviously recognized Jesus! Jesus then commanded the evil spirit to come out of the boy, and the boy was miraculously made whole. Later, the disciples would privately ask Jesus why they had not been able to help this boy. What was His response? “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting” (v. 29). While the word “fasting” is not included here in some translations of the Bible, it *is* included in many others. Unfortunately, it is not included in the lives of many believers today, and neither is the kind of faith that can help such needy people!

Prayer Emphasis: **Try** fasting. **Begin** with maybe just a meal on one day. **Grow** in your fasting experiences, and you will grow in your faith and Christian discipline. **Use** the time that you spend fasting doing something to feed your spiritual person. If fasting does not cost you something, then it is not fasting at all!

Day 29: Matthew 17:14-27

“However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” (Matthew 17:21)

The Miraculous Power of Faith

Today we are reading Matthew’s account of the same miracle that we read about yesterday. In Matthew’s account, the father made his own diagnosis of his son’s problem. He stated that his son was “an epileptic” and that he suffered “severely” from that problem (v. 15). In Matthew’s record, greater detail of the Master’s teaching on faith is recorded. He wanted them to understand that even a little faith could accomplish very big things. Some translations do not contain verse 21 in their version. If your Bible does not have it, look for a footnote that provides the wording in the margin or at the bottom of the page. If it is not there, find a Bible that does have this verse and read it carefully. Again, Jesus teaches that the kind of faith that can help such needy people is grown in the spiritual soil of prayer and fasting. However distasteful fasting may sound to people, perhaps the subject of taxes is even more distasteful! The first verses of today’s reading help us to understand how much Jesus desires to meet our deepest spiritual needs. The last verses help us to understand how much He cares about and provides even the most basic physical necessities of life. Faith is not just for the big things in life. Faith is for every part of our lives, including the everyday things that seem to sometimes trouble us so. We do not have any needs that are not important to Jesus!

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Power does not come without a price. Prayer and fasting offer us opportunities to **step away** from the concerns of this world and to better **concentrate** on the things of God.

Day 30: John 9:1-21

“Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.” (John 9:1)

A Man Born Blind

It is no coincidence that this miracle comes just after Jesus had declared Himself to be “the light of the world” (John 8:12). This miracle is special in the sense that no one brought this man to Jesus. Our Lord noticed this man as He went about His daily activities. Probably after seeing Jesus look at this man, His disciples asked about the man’s blindness and if sin was its cause. When Jesus responded that neither this man nor his parents sinned, He was not crediting them with having lived perfect lives. He was simply stating that this man’s blindness had not come as a punishment for some past sin. Jesus then repeated His claim to being “the light of the world” (verse 5). In the performing of this miracle, Jesus put a mixture of saliva and mud on the man’s eyes and told him to go wash it off at the Pool of Siloam. When this man was presented to the Pharisees, it was determined that Jesus had healed him on the Sabbath Day! The Pharisees did not praise God for the miracle that stood before them, but criticized Jesus for “working” on the Sabbath! They had their own ideas and expectations about how and when God’s work should be done, and they were not pleased that Jesus was not fitting into their religious box. If you have time, read the entire story of this miracle and listen in as Jesus sheds more light on what the Light of the World can do for sinful, needy people.

Prayer Emphasis: Refrain from putting God in your own little box. **Allow** Him to be all that He desires to be in your life. **Avoid** being critical of other churches and ministries and **pray** for power to help others that you meet along the way. **Look** for an opportunity to **minister** to someone in need today.

Day 31: Luke 13:10-17

“Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.” (Luke 13:10)

A Crippled Woman Healed

This miracle was like a “show and tell” relative to the things that Jesus had just taught the people in the previous chapters and verses. In this story we find one of the few times that Jesus referred to the Pharisees and religious leaders as “hypocrites.” (I have mentioned this before, but it is worth repeating. Jesus is the *only* person in the New Testament that ever called anyone a hypocrite. This was because He was the only one who *could* do so since He was the only person *who had never been hypocritical in any way.*) Jesus used the term here because, after seeing the Lord place His hands on this poor woman who was “bent over and could in no way raise herself up” (v. 11), the ruler of the synagogue became indignant and decided to have a little “show and tell” time himself. However, he did not use the healing of this woman to help explain the power of God, but rather to criticize Jesus for healing on the Sabbath! That’s when the word “hypocrites” came into the conversation! Jesus pointed out that the religious leaders had no issue with allowances for needy animals on the Sabbath, but were taking issue with His concern for the lives of people. He repeated the details of the woman’s plight, stating that she had been bound by Satan for 18 years. He then demanded an answer as to why she should not be set free from her burden on a Sabbath Day. Of course, the religious leaders gave no sufficient answer to His question.

Prayer Emphasis: **Realize** that the world is filled with people who have suffered for a very long time. **Make** a phone call or **send** a note to **encourage** someone who is struggling with pain or problems.

Day 32: Luke 14:1-14

“And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy.” (Luke 14:2)

Pressing the Issue

As the time for Jesus to suffer and die drew nearer, He seemed to sometimes force the issue with His religious antagonists. While eating in the home of a prominent Pharisee on a Sabbath Day, Jesus was confronted by a man with “who had dropsy” (v. 2). Dropsy is a condition where excess fluid is stored in the body tissue, creating pain and discomfort for those who are thereby inflicted. Some believe that the fact that the Pharisees “watched” Jesus “closely” (v. 1) indicates that they had perhaps actually invited this suffering man to the dinner so that they could see what Jesus would do. We know that there was more than one Pharisee in attendance because the plural is used in verse 3. Jesus took the initiative when He asked, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” No one responded, so Jesus healed the man and sent him away. The fact that Jesus sent him away is another indication that Jesus understood that the man was there for a specific purpose. Jesus then asked these highly religious men about the Sabbath law that made allowances for helping animals in need on the Holy Day. Again, no one responded. Since they didn’t want to talk about that, Jesus just moved on to another subject. Noticing how some people were seated at places of honor for this dinner, He decided to teach on humility. The careful reader will note that Jesus cited Proverbs 25:6–7 as His “text” on this day. Could there have possibly been a better subject for such a crowd?

Prayer Emphasis: **Realize** that we are watched today just as Jesus was watched in His day. **Practice** humility when such things occur and **confess** that we are all far from perfection. Then, **take the initiative** by asking your accuser if they recognize their own imperfections and need for a Savior.

Day 33: John 11:38-54

“Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone...’” (John 11:39)

“Take Away the Stone!”

Jesus has been led to the tomb of his beloved friend, Lazarus. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. You can well imagine that this moment was charged with emotion. Jesus was deeply moved. Mary was crying and Martha was concerned that her brother had been dead for four days and that the stench of death was within the tomb. Nevertheless, Jesus commanded that the stone covering the grave be removed. Earlier He had promised Martha that her brother would rise again (verse 23). He was now ready to make good on that promise! They took away the stone and Jesus began to pray. He did so more for the sake of those listening and watching than He did for Himself. After He prayed, He called out to His friend in a loud voice. “Lazarus, come forth!” was His command (v. 43). This command was met with an immediate, obedient response. Lazarus came out, his hands and feet still wrapped in grave clothes, and his face still shrouded with a cloth covering. Although Lazarus still looked very much like a corpse, he was alive! Jesus commanded that the wrappings be removed from the body of Lazarus so that he could, once again, be free to move about and pursue life. Many of the Jews who witnessed this miracle ran, in faith, to Jesus. However, others ran to the Pharisees to report what they had seen and heard. You would think that this glorious miracle would have been the final piece of evidence to convince everyone of who Jesus was. Instead, we find them setting a plot to end His life.

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to give you eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart that is ready to believe Him and obey His every command. **Commit** yourself to sharing the good news of the gospel to as many people as possible. **Thank** God for your own new life in Christ.

Day 34: Luke 17:11-19

“...there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off.” (Luke 17:12b)

Ten Lepers

On the day that this miracle was performed, Jesus was in His final days and already on His way to Jerusalem. Yet, on His way, Jesus encountered ten men who had leprosy. In accordance with the law, they stood at a distance, but still called out to Jesus to help them. No prayer was prayed, no action was taken, and no words were exchanged. In verse 14 we read that Jesus simply commanded them to, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” That is exactly what someone would do if they thought that their leprosy was healed. They would have to show themselves to a priest and be pronounced clean. Somewhere along the way to see the priest, they were cleansed. One of the former lepers did not continue on to see the priests. Instead, he came back to where Jesus was, praising God with a loud voice, throwing himself at Jesus’ feet, thanking Him. Luke points out the fact that this man was a Samaritan. As such, in the eyes of the Jewish society in which he lived, he was bearing an additional curse to his leprosy. The Samaritans were despised by the Jews and thought to be a lesser people. Jesus asked about the whereabouts of the others that HE had healed. He then spoke to the man, saying “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well” (v. 19). The Lord’s command for this man to “arise” indicates that he was still kneeling at Jesus’ feet.

Prayer Emphasis: **Appreciate** the difference that Jesus has made in your life! **Praise** Him for all of the wonderful things that He has done for you! **Count** your blessings and see if you do not run out of time before you run out of reasons to render sincere, heartfelt praise to God.

Day 35: Mark 10:46-52

“...blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.” (Mark 10:46b)

Blind Bartimaeus

Pay special attention to what you are reading today because this is the last healing miracle recorded in the Gospel of Mark. As Jesus and His disciples were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus, whose name means “son of Timaeus” (v. 46), cried out to Him, calling Him the “Son of David” and asking Him to have mercy on him (v. 47). It is interesting to note that this was the first time that anyone ever referred to Jesus by that title in the Gospel of Mark. No religious leader, apostle, priest, or any other person had ever called Jesus by that Messianic title. Apparently, only this “blind” man could “see” Jesus for who He really was. Even though many in the crowd rebuked him, telling him to be quiet, he shouted all the more, repeating his plea to Jesus for help. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record this miracle, and all three mention that a large crowd was following Jesus. Since Bartimaeus was blind, he had obviously become aware of what was happening because he could *hear* the sound of the crowd as they followed Jesus. But even though He was surrounded by many people, Jesus could clearly *hear* the cry of one, blind man as he desperately sought His attention. Stopping, Jesus asked that the blind man be brought to Him. The blind man eagerly threw his cloak aside and hurried to Jesus. Verse 51 reveals that Bartimaeus was a man of few words at that moment. After the Lord had asked him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” He had only replied, “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight”

Prayer Emphasis: Refer to Jesus by the titles that He deserves: Savior, Master, Lord, and Messiah! Refuse to let the “crowds” hinder you from praising and worshiping God!

Day 36: Mark 11:12-26

“Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.” (Mark 11:20)

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree and Clears the Temple

Today’s verses contain two miracles. The first is the cursing of a fig tree that Jesus noticed as He and His disciples were leaving Bethany. Being hungry, Jesus went to the tree to get some food. Even though Mark tells us that it was not the season for figs, these trees produced small edible buds that were followed by large green leaves. Prior to the appearance of the figs, these buds were a staple in the diet of the people of Palestine. This is far from just a story about Jesus and a tree! The tree is symbolic of Israel and its outward appearance of righteousness with no fruit to bear evidence thereof. It can also be a picture of any believer who claims to be a follower but brings forth no fruit for the Master. Next, we see Jesus entering the temple at Jerusalem and, singlehandedly, chasing out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the large, stone tables and benches that were used by the merchants and money changers who were profiting from the sale of doves and other sacrificial animals and turning what was to be a “house of prayer” into a “den of thieves” (v. 17). This miraculous exhibit of God’s mighty power helps us to understand better the miracle of the withered fig tree. Even the temple, and the sacrifices thereof, had become nothing more than a fruitless expression of hearts that were not truly committed to God. Read verses 23-26 to get an idea of the kind of **Kingdom Power** that Christ promised to those who will act and pray in faith.

Prayer Emphasis: Search your heart and ask God to reveal any insincerity that may lie within you. Seek to be a fruit-bearing believer that is a living witness of God’s **Kingdom Power**.

Day 37: Luke 22:39-54

“Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives...and His disciples also followed Him.” (Luke 22:39)

Praying in the Garden

This story is reported in detail in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Luke refers to this place of prayer as the Mount of Olives. Matthew and Mark both refer to it as Gethsemane. It is interesting that Jesus faced temptation in a garden during some of His final hours. Adam faced temptation in a garden and man fell into sin. Jesus faced temptation in a garden, and man was ultimately saved from sin. While His disciples slept, Jesus prayed alone. As He prayed, His concerns were not for Himself but with pleasing His Father and accomplishing the work that His Father had sent Him to do. Luke is the only one of the gospel writers to record the angel visiting Jesus and ministering to Him there. After spending some time in what must have been exhausting prayer, Jesus returned to find His disciples sleeping. As He questioned their lack of faithfulness in prayer, Judas came, leading a large crowd who had come to arrest Jesus. One of the disciples drew a sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. John tells us that this sword wielding disciple was Peter (John 18:10). In His final hours Jesus took the time to reach out and touch the man’s ear, healing it immediately. This would be His final healing miracle before His death and resurrection.

Prayer Emphasis: **Read** again verses 39–54 and **count** the number of times you see the words, “pray”, “prayed”, and “prayer”. **Commit** yourself to being faithful to daily prayer. **Pray** the words that Jesus prayed on His last day as a free man: “Not My will, but Yours be done” (v. 42).

Day 38: John 20:1-18

“Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early...” (John 20:1)

The Resurrection

Early on a Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed. She ran to tell Peter and the other disciples. Her first words were not an announcement of a resurrection, but a fearful statement that, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him” (v. 2). Two of the disciples immediately ran to the tomb. Peter is named as one of those disciples, and we believe the other was John, since he was frequently referred to as the disciple that Jesus loved. John outran Peter and bent over to look into the tomb. There he saw the strips of linen that had been used to hastily wrap the body of Jesus. Peter arrived and entered the tomb. He noticed the burial cloth that had been around Jesus’ head folded up neatly. John finally entered the tomb himself. The disciples eventually departed for their homes, but Mary remained outside the tomb crying. She looked in the tomb and saw two angels seated where the body of Jesus had been. She turned to leave the tomb and saw Jesus. She did not recognize him at first and even had a short conversation with Him before He called her name. Immediately she knew that it was Jesus and that He was alive. The resurrection is the keystone of our faith. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, then our faith would be in vain. If all of the evidence relating to an actual, physical resurrection of Jesus were presented in a court of law, there would be no question as to the verdict. We may not be able to say with Mary, “I have seen the Lord,” but we can live with complete confidence that He arose in complete and total victory over the grave.

Prayer Emphasis: **Ask** yourself, “How long has it been since I spoke to anyone outside of church services about the resurrection?” **Mention** the resurrection of Jesus in a conversation with someone today.

Day 39: John 21:1-14

“After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias...” (John 21:1)

The Miraculous Catch of Fish

Jesus was seen by many witnesses after His resurrection. He had already made several appearances to His disciples prior to appearing to them here at the Sea of Tiberias. Seven of the disciples were fishing but had not caught anything. They had obviously fished all night, because it was early in the morning when they returned to shore. Jesus was waiting for them, but they did not recognize Him. He called out to them, asking them if they had caught any fish. Just as He had done in an earlier miracle, He told them to throw their net on the right side of the boat. When they did, they found themselves unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. John (the disciple whom Jesus loved) recognized Jesus and said to Peter, “It is the Lord” (v. 7). No doubt, John recalled the first time that Jesus had helped them fish! He and his brother James, along with Peter, had obeyed Jesus’ command on that day and had caught a large number of fish. We understand that John was the first to realize that it was Christ on the shore, and we learned in the reading about the resurrection that John could run faster than Peter, but here we learn something about John that is most impressive. He knew that Peter had denied Jesus and that the great disciple was suffering as a result of his failures. John *wanted* to see Jesus, but he knew that Peter *needed* to see Jesus! So, it was with this in mind that he told Peter that it was Jesus that was speaking to them. We are told that this was the third time that Jesus appeared to His disciples after the resurrection.

Prayer Emphasis: **Intentionally** put someone else first today or at your first chance to do so. **Realize** that there will always be enough of Jesus to go around and that no one will ever leave Him hungry.

Day 40: Mark 16:9-20

“So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven...” (Mark 16:19a)

The Ascension

Acts 1:3 informs us that Jesus was seen by the disciples for 40 days after the resurrection and that He was “speaking” to them of “the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” The day that we read of today was the last of those wonderful days. We may not be able to explain the ascension of Christ, but we believe it and we certainly have no desire to be counted among those who choose to try to explain it away. Look at the list of the “Jesus sightings” that are mentioned in these important, closing verses of Mark’s Gospel. After His final conversation with the disciples was concluded, Jesus was “received up into heaven” (v. 19). He had come to this world in a miraculous way and He chose to leave it in a miraculous way! The ascension was the final piece of visible evidence that Jesus Christ was indeed all that He had presented Himself to be. Acts 1:9–11 tells us that Jesus was taken up before their very eyes, and that they watched Him ascend until a cloud finally hid Him from their sight. As they stood there, staring intently up into the sky, two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them. These men gave the disciples, and every Christian, one of the greatest promises in the Bible. They said, “This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

Prayer Emphasis: **Live** today, and every day, like it will be the day promised in these final verses of our **Kingdom Power** devotional guide. How would you choose to live today if you knew that it was your final day on earth? Thank you for reading with us and do not hesitate to contact us at gary@seminolebc.com if we can minister to you in any way!