

# Progressive Miracles

Daystar Church – 5/16/2004

*Phil 1:6 TLB*

*And I am sure that God who began the good work within you will keep right on helping you grow in his grace until his task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns.*

## **Introduction:**

A. We live in a world that is increasingly skeptical about the Word of God.

1. Although stats show that the vast majority of Americans believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the voice of the majority is not always heard.
2. Members of the media and entertainment industries promote an Anti-Christ message.

B. Just because they're on TV doesn't make them right.

1. Want proof?
2. The following are questions and answers from people in the public eye:

## **Miss Alabama in the 1994 Miss USA contest:**

Question: "If you could live forever, would you and why?"

Answer: "I would not live forever, because we should not live forever, because if we were supposed to live forever, then we would live forever, but we cannot live forever, which is why I would not live forever"

## **Mariah Carey:**

“Whenever I watch TV and see those poor starving kids all over the world, I can’t help but cry. I mean I’d love to be skinny like that, but not with all those flies and death and stuff.”

**Brooke Shields**, during an interview to become spokesperson for a federal anti-smoking campaign:

“Smoking kills. If you’re killed, you’ve lost a very important part of your life.”

**Mayor Marion Barry, Washington, DC:**

“Outside of the killings, Washington has one of the lowest crime rates in the country.”

**Congressional Candidate in Texas:**

“That lowdown scoundrel deserves to be kicked to death by a jackass, and I’m just the one to do it.”

**Vice President Al Gore:**

“It isn’t the pollution that’s harming the environment. It’s the impurities in our air and water that are doing it.”

**Department of Social Services (Greenville, SC):**

“Your food stamps will be stopped effective March 1992 because we received notice that you passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances.”<sup>1</sup>

- That group has some faith!!!

C. The Word of God has withstood thousands of years of scrutiny.

1. The only thing God cannot do is lie.
2. “If He has brought you to it, He will bring you through it!

*Phil 1:6 NKJV*

*He who has begun a good work in you will complete it*

3. DON’T GIVE UP!!!

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<sup>1</sup> Email dated 8/11/02

## I. Jesus Heals A Blind Man.

*Mark 8:22-26 NKJV*

*22 Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. 23 So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. 24 And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking." 25 Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly.*

- A. Why did Jesus only heal this man partially at first?
  - 1. Was He having a bad day? Did He goof?
  - 2. Not thinking clearly? – He did spit in his eyes?
- B. NO → Jesus was showing us an eternal truth that is still important today when you pray.
  - 1. God works progressively.
  - 2. The Christian life is not an event. It's a journey/lifestyle.
- C. Salvation is not an event!
  - 1. Why do we work so hard to beg someone to an altar, get a "commitment/decision" and then forget who they are next week?
  - 2. If you have not asked Jesus into your heart – DO IT TODAY!
  - 3. But don't be deceived into thinking you are "set" for life!
- D. The sinner's prayer is not the eternal equivalent to winning the spiritual lottery.
  - 1. God has begun something in you that will become the greatest thing your heart could imagine.
  - 2. But just like any beginning – it will take time to cultivate into all that it can become.

- E. The best decision I ever made (besides the decision to follow Christ) was to marry Leslie.
1. But even that has taken some work.
  2. It took her some time to realize that I am always right – my opinion should never be questioned (after all, I am the MAN OF GOD!!!)
- F. You need to realize today that you are on a journey that God has begun to bring you to HIS perfect will.
1. In this room are people at all different points on that journey.
  2. Some well into it – others just beginning – some not even knowing God is leading you...
- G. TODAY He is seeking to bring His plan to you!
1. No matter what has happened, HE IS NOT THROUGH WITH YOU!
  2. He is pushing you forward, reaching out to you.

*Ps 139:5 NIV*

*You hem me in--behind & before; you have laid your hand upon me.*

- H. You are here because God has a plan for your life.
1. Healing, salvation, deliverance, HOPE...
  2. He who began the work, WILL COMPLETE IT!!!!
  3. DON'T GIVE UP!!!

## **II. God's Move Is Progressive.**

*1 Kings 18:41 NKJV*

*41 Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain."*

A. This is the beginning of a bona fide miracle from the hand of God.

1. There had been no rain for some time.
2. People were praying to false gods, fasting, begging...

B. Elijah knows how to move God – been there, done that!

1. Elijah moves (speaks) in faith.
2. Elijah ends the fast before the answer comes - & before he even prays – FAITH!!!

*1 Kings 18:42-43 NKJV*

*42 So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, 43 and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again."*

C. He's running this boy to death – each time believing!

1. Why do we expect God to move for us on a whim when the Bible is explicit that God moves on HIS timetable?
2. It took 7 trips to see the BEGINNING of the answer.
3. Elijah had just decided that GOD CANNOT LIE, even if it doesn't happen when I want it to!

*1 Kings 18:44 NKJV*

*44 Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!"*

D. Here is where doubt begins to SHOUT!

1. "I've seen clouds like that before."

2. “That’s not enough to do anything.”
3. “That can’t be the miracle.”

E. Doubt screams the loudest just before it is destroyed!

1. REPEAT!!!!
2. You may be hearing a million reasons why it cannot happen in your life – GOOD!!!

F. GOD IS UP TO SOMETHING!

1. It may not look like much right now, but it’s the beginning of a miracle!
2. “He who began a good work...”
3. Now look at what the prophet says:

*1 Kings 18:44 NKJV*

*So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.'*

G. How’s that for faith? – *“You see that little tiny cloud? That cloud’s about to dump so much rain out that if you don’t hurry, you won’t be able to drive a chariot through the storm”*

*1 Kings 18:45 NKJV*

*45 Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel.*

### **III. God is More Interested in You than Your Need.**

A. What God really wants to do is bring you into perfect relationship with Himself.

1. That involves FAITH!
2. It is a Process!

B. Many people have been touched by God – circumstances taken care of, but they are still walking in bondage:

*John 11:41-44 NKJV*

*41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42 And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." 43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" 44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."*

C. Lazarus was brought from death to life (salvation imagery).

1. But Jesus was not satisfied with that.
2. Jesus wanted him freed from bondage!!!
3. Too many people think it's over after they walk the aisle to an altar.
4. That's not an ending, but a beginning!!!

*John 10:10 NKJV*

*I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

D. Jesus doesn't just want you rescued, He wants you FREE!

E. God didn't just want to give Elijah some rain – He could have let everything (& everyone) die without water only to bring them back to life.

1. The miracle was the small thing.
2. Moving on Elijah and touching him was the main point!
3. God was building Elijah's faith!

*1 Kings 18:46 NKJV*

*46 Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.*

F. Look what faith will do for you:

1. Not only did it bring answered prayer.
2. Elijah tightened up his skirt and outran a chariot!!!
3. FAITH MOVES GOD TO EMPOWER YOU!!!

G. Forget drive-thru windows, microwave ovens, high-speed internet access, 70 mph driving...“at your fingertips” culture.

1. God is timeless, ageless...He moves in His time.
2. He will move IF YOU HAVE FAITH!!!

### **Conclusion:**

A. God knows what you need before you ask! Promises:

1. “My God shall supply all your needs...”
2. “He is able to do exceeding, abundantly above...”
3. “Whatsoever things you ask in prayer...”

B. Don't let the delay, sap your faith!

1. God is always on time.
2. It may look bad at times, but trust in God.

*Isa 40:31 NKJV*

*But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.*

1. “Wait” – qavah (kaw-vaw') – to bind together (like twisting ropes) in expectation.



2. Another translation – “Hope.”

C. Illustration of Faith:

1. Dental floss – “Tiny Faith”
2. String – “Mediocre Faith”
3. Rope – “Overcoming Faith”
4. Let (fear, doubt, worry, depression, negativity, bad report) pull from both sides.

**Alter Call:**

- Another man almost missed his healing in 2 Kings 5.
  1. Naaman (Syrian commander) didn’t want to wash in Israeli waters 7 times.
  2. The process almost cost him a miracle.
- DON’T PUT LIMITS ON GOD!!!
  1. God has spoken!
  2. RESPOND IN HIS WAY!