
Do You Really Believe in Miracles?

By David Wilkerson

Dearly Beloved:

In prayer today, the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart about four expectations that God's people should trust him to bring to pass in 2006. These expectations are based on absolute promises God has made to us. God is a promise-maker and a promise-keeper.

1. EXPECT TO BE REWARDED AS YOU DILIGENTLY SEEK THE LORD IN 2006. "God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

You can ask in faith for a token for God to encourage and rekindle your confidence. God is always on time, and he knows you need a ray of hope and good news in your testing time. Expect him to keep his promise to reward you now when you are in greatest need. God cannot lie. He said he rewards those who diligently seek him. Seek him daily and truly believe 2006 will be your year of great spiritual blessing.

2. EXPECT TO SEE EVIDENCE OF A PROGRESSIVE MIRACLE IN YOUR LIFE IN 2006. "With God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27).

I have written about instantaneous miracles and progressive miracles. Progressive miracles start in unseen, quiet ways and unfold little by little, one small mercy act at a time. You are now in such a miracle. Expect to see God working in mysterious ways, unseen to the human eye. This should be the year you can say, "I don't know how; I don't see much happening; but I believe God set in motion an answer to my prayers the hour I first asked."

3. EXPECT TO ENTER INTO GOD'S PROMISED PLACE OF REST IN 2006. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God ... enter into that rest" (Hebrews 4:9, 11).

Last year was one of the most stressful for many believers. It was a year of incredible calamities, problems and trials. This year the Lord desires that you believe him to bring you into his promised rest. God never intended that his children live in fear and despair. We need a reckless faith, a trust in God in the face of fear, trouble and death itself. The year 2006 is the year to lay it all on Jesus.

4. EXPECT THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BE ALWAYS IN HIS TEMPLE IN 2006. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

The Holy Spirit abides in the heart of the believer. He is omnipresent throughout the world and universe. I face each day acknowledging that he is here in his temple to comfort me, guide me,

encourage me, anoint me, and to reveal the glory of Jesus Christ in ever-increasing revelations. In 2006 he desires that you expect him to make his presence manifest to you, and more so each passing day.

Believe these promises! Lay hold of these four expectations and you will see marvelous things this next year.

Your missions gift is so vital to the ongoing worldwide outreaches of our ministry to widows, orphans, the addicted and the poor and hungry.

God bless and keep you in all your ways.

In Christ,
DAVID WILKERSON

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Newsletter: Do You Really Believe in Miracles?

In Matthew 14, we find Jesus getting into a boat to leave for “a desert place apart” where he could be alone. He had just received word that John the Baptist had been beheaded and buried. And now he was so moved by this news that he felt the need to be by himself and pray.

Yet, when the multitudes heard Jesus was leaving, “They followed him on foot out of the cities” (Matthew 14:13). Imagine Christ looking up and seeing thousands of people coming toward him from all directions, in all types of physical conditions. The infirm were being carried on stretchers or wheeled toward him in homemade carts. Blind men and women were being led through the crowd, and the lame hobbled forward on makeshift canes and crutches. All were desperate to come near him for a healing touch from the one man who could provide it.

What was Christ’s response to this incredible scene? “Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick” (14:14). If you had been there that day, watching from the hillside, you would have been amazed at the events unfolding before you. Gnarled hands were strengthened, crooked legs were made straight, deaf ears were opened, mute tongues suddenly cried out with praises to God.

The sights and sounds of it all would have been overwhelming. Yet, at the end of that incredible day, after performing all those miracles of healing, Jesus decided to feed the multitudes. We’re told it was a crowd of five thousand, not including all the women and children present. And to feed them all, Jesus took five loaves of bread and two dried fishes, prayed over them, and began breaking them into fragments to be served to the people.

Basket after basket was filled with the quickly multiplying food. And somehow, as the disciples distributed it to the multitudes, the food just kept increasing. By the end of that massive feeding, everyone in the crowd had eaten till he was full, and the disciples ended up bringing back twelve baskets of leftover fragments.

Put yourself in that scene, as one of the crowd that day. Try to imagine it: you had just witnessed healing after healing, miracle after miracle, one incredible wonder after another. Don’t you think that after a day like that one, you’d be on your knees praising God? Wouldn’t you say to yourself, “Never again will I doubt the healing and miracle-working power of Christ”?

Then, after witnessing all those wonders, you had seen the miraculous feeding of five-thousand-plus people. You would be totally awed, filled with wonder, thinking, “What the Lord has done today is unbelievable. This has fortified my faith. From now on, I’m going to practice unwavering faith.”

Later, after the day’s remarkable events, you see Jesus “constraining” his disciples to get quietly into a boat, telling them, “Go, sail to the other side” (see Matthew 14:22). The Greek word for “constrained” here means “to compel, by entreaty, force or persuasion.” Jesus was urging his disciples in the strongest terms, “Brethren, just get in the boat. Go now.” He was going to dismiss the

multitudes and meet the disciples later.

Now, all this time, Jesus had been reading his disciples' thoughts. He knew they weren't understanding what was happening that day. The message of the miracles hadn't yet registered in their hearts and minds, and doubts still plagued them. As they pushed off from shore, I wonder if Jesus shook his head in amazement, wounded by their wavering faith after all they had seen.

What did Jesus have to do to bring his disciples into unshakable faith? Did Jesus actually have to walk on water to wake up his disciples? Of course, that's exactly what Christ did. A storm broke out, the boat was tossed, and "Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea" (14:25).

When his disciples saw him, they couldn't believe their eyes. In fact, they thought he was a ghost. "They supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: for they all saw him, and were troubled" (Mark 6:49-50). But Jesus told them not to be afraid. "And he went up unto them in the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered" (6:51).

Only at this point do we see some semblance of faith rising up in the disciples: "They that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God" (Matthew 14:33). As we read this, we let out a sigh of relief, thinking, "Finally, they get it. They believe in Jesus' miracle-working power. The miraculous has finally begun to register with them, and a foundation of faith is being built in them. Now they're ready to face any trial with unwavering faith."

But that wasn't the case. Mark suggests this was not a defining moment of faith for them at all: "They were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened" (Mark 6:52). The Greek word for "hardened" here means a thick, calloused skin. According to Mark, the disciples completely missed the message of the loaves and fishes. This is a very significant statement, because it has everything to do with trusting in God.

Remember, these were men who loved the Lord deeply and readily believed he could do miracles for others. They had no problem accepting the wonders that Jesus performed for the multitudes. But they couldn't believe that Christ would do the same for them. When it came to believing him to work miracles in their own crises, something important was missing.

It is possible to say, "I believe God can do the impossible," and yet still be so calloused that the Lord can't get through. We can grow so thick-skinned with doubts that the truth no longer registers with us. For example, we might become emotionally hardened over the years by trials, suffering, fears, doubts, mounting disappointments.

In Matthew 15, we read of yet another gathering of multitudes, where many more were miraculously healed and fed. This time, the crowd numbered four thousand, plus women and children. Once again, Jesus performed miracles of healing and then marvelously fed the masses from just seven loaves and

a few fishes. Afterward, everyone was filled, and the disciples brought back seven baskets full of leftovers.

When the day was done, Jesus again got into a boat with his disciples, this time to sail for Magdala. While en route, the disciples squabbled among themselves, asking, "Who forgot to bring bread?" Evidently, they had only one loaf among them (see Mark 8:14). Imagine it: Peter, James, John and the others were worried about bread, when they'd just come from the greatest bread-feeding in history!

When Jesus heard them, he was incredulous. He chided them: "Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand...?" (Matthew 16:9–11).

Then he asked, "When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?" (Mark 8:19–21).

Jesus was saying, in other words, "How can this be? I'm trying to build a foundation of faith in you. How could these miracles not register in your minds?"

I ask you: why did Jesus connect the disciples' meager, wavering faith here to the miracles of the loaves and fishes? Why did he attribute their doubts and hardness of heart to not understanding the meaning of these incredible feedings? Why didn't he simply remind them of his miracle of turning water into wine? Or, what about the leper who was instantly healed? What about the palsied, bedfast man who was let down to him through a roof, healed by Christ, and immediately took up his mat and walked? What about the unclean demons who saw Jesus and fell down before him, crying, "Thou art the Son of God"?

All of these incredible events happened prior to Christ's feeding of the multitudes. Yet Jesus twice refers the disciples back to those miracles. Why?

Let's go back to the feeding of the four thousand to see if we can understand its spiritual meaning. "Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way" (Matthew 15:32).

I believe Christ was making a statement to his disciples here. He was saying, in essence, "I'm going to do more for the people than heal them. I'll make sure they have enough bread to eat. I'm concerned about everything that affects their lives. You have to see that I am more than just power. I am also compassion. If you see me only as a healer, a mighty miracle-worker, you will fear me. But if you also see me as all-compassionate, you're going to love and trust me.

“I just showed you in front of separate crowds of 5,000 and 4,000 people that I care for my people. You men are the pillars of my church, but your hearts are still hardened on this matter. You have to believe I have compassion on my people at all times, in every crisis they face.”

Why were the disciples' hearts so calloused to this truth? They didn't doubt that Jesus could heal multitudes with a touch or a word. They didn't doubt his compassion for the fainting masses. In fact, they marveled and glorified him when he performed miracles for the people. But later, when they were all alone in the boat, away from the great congregation, they grew worried about their own needs. They weren't confident Jesus would provide miracles for them or their families.

I'm writing this message for all who are on the brink of exhaustion, about to faint, overwhelmed by your present situation. You've been a faithful servant, feeding others, confident that God can do the impossible for his people. Yet you have some lingering doubts about his willingness to intervene in your struggle.

The Holy Spirit is calling us, through these passages of Scripture, to remember the loaves, the fishes, the abundance. We are called to rely on the compassion of Jesus for our own physical needs, knowing he isn't willing to allow even one of us to faint.

I want to know: how many readers of this message have spoken words of faith and hope to others who are facing distressing, seemingly hopeless situations? You have urged them, “Hold on! The Lord is able. He's a miracle-working God, and his promises are true. So, don't lose hope. Be encouraged, because he's going to answer your cry.”

“Do you really believe in miracles?” That is the question the Holy Spirit asked of me. My answer was, “Yes, of course, Lord. I believe in every miracle I've read about in Scripture.” Yet this answer is not good enough. The Lord's question to each one of us really is, “Do you believe I can work a miracle *for you?*” And not just one miracle, but a miracle for every crisis, every situation we face. We need more than Old Testament miracles, New Testament miracles, by-gone miracles in history, but up-to-date, personal miracles that are designed just for us and our situation.

Think of the one difficulty you're facing right now, your greatest need, your most troubling problem. You've prayed about it for so long. Do you really believe the Lord can and will work it out, in ways you can't conceive? That kind of faith commands the heart to quit fretting or asking questions. It tells you to rest in the Father's care, trusting him to do it all in his way and time.

There are two kinds of miracles: instantaneous and progressive. I have already mentioned some of the wonders that Jesus performed in the New Testament. Likewise, the Old Testament is filled with God's miracle-working power, from the Red Sea opening, to God speaking to Moses from the burning bush. By faith, Elijah called down fire from heaven. And later, when the Lord spoke to him in the cave, there was wind, thunder, incredible sights and sounds.

These were all instantaneous miracles. The people involved could see them happening, feel them and thrill to them. And they're the kinds of miracles we all want to see today, causing awe and wonder. We want God to rend the heavens, come down to our situation and fix things with a sudden outburst of heavenly power and might.

But much of God's wonder-working power in his people's lives comes in what are called "progressive miracles." These are miracles that are hardly discernible to the eye. They're not accompanied by thunder, lightning or any visible movement or change. Rather, progressive miracles start quietly, without fanfare, and unfold slowly but surely, one step at a time.

Both kinds of miracles — instantaneous and progressive — were witnessed at Christ's two feedings of the multitudes. The healings he performed were immediate, visible, easily discerned by those present on those days. I think of the crippled man with a gnarled body, who suddenly had an outward, physical change so that he could run and leap. Here was a miracle that had to astonish and move all who saw it.

Yet the feedings that Christ did were progressive miracles. Jesus offered up a simple prayer of blessing, with no fire, thunder or earthquake. He merely broke the bread and the dried fish, never giving a sign or sound that a miracle was taking place. Yet, to feed that many people, there had to be thousands of breakings of that bread and those fish, all through the day. And every single piece of bread and fish was a part of the miracle.

This is just how Jesus performs many of his miracles in his people's lives today. We pray for instantaneous, visible wonders, but often our Lord is quietly at work, forming a miracle for us piece by piece, bit by bit. We may not be able to hear it or touch it, but he is at work, shaping our deliverance beyond what we can see.

And that is what Jesus wanted his disciples to see. He so wanted them to know that all along, he was at work on their behalf: shooting arrows at the enemy, silencing lying spirits, faithfully keeping and protecting each precious one whom the Father had given him.

You may be in the middle of a miracle right now and simply not be seeing it. Maybe right now you're waiting for your miracle. You're discouraged because things seem to be at a standstill. You don't see any evidence of God's supernatural work on your behalf.

Consider what David says in Psalm 18: "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken ... There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured ... He bowed the heavens also, and came down ... The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice ... He sent out his arrows ... he shot out lightnings" (Psalm 18:6-9, 13-14).

You have to realize, none of these things literally happened. It was all something that David saw in his spiritual eye. Beloved, that is faith. It's when you believe God has heard your cry, that he hasn't delayed, that he isn't ignoring your petition. Instead, he quietly began your miracle immediately when you prayed, and even now he's doing supernatural work on your behalf. That is truly believing in miracles, his marvelous progressive work in our lives.

David understood the foundational truth that was beneath it all: "He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me" (18:19). David declared, "I know why the Lord is doing all this for me. It's because he delights in me."

I truly believe in instantaneous miracles. God is still working glorious, instant wonders in the world today. Yet in these Gospel passages, Jesus asks us to remember and take note of his progressive miracles and their role in our own lives today.

I was greatly blessed by something I read in John's account of the feeding of the five thousand. "When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do" (John 6:5-6). Jesus took Philip aside, put his arm around him and said, "Brother Philip, take a look at the thousands of people here. They're all hungry. Tell me, where are we going to buy enough bread to feed them? What do you think we should do?"

How incredibly loving of Christ. Jesus knew all along what he was going to do; the verse above tells us so. Yet the Lord was trying to teach Philip something, and the lesson he was imparting to him applies to each of us today. Think about it: how many in Christ's body sit up half the night trying to figure out their problems? We think, "Maybe this will work. No, no ... Maybe that will solve it. No ... "

I picture Philip scratching his head, answering, "Lord, I've been talking to Andrew, Peter, James and John, and we only have two hundred pennies' worth in our common purse. That is totally insufficient for this pressing need. We've got a critical bread problem" (see 6:7).

Yet Philip and the apostles didn't have just a bread problem. They had a bakery problem ... and a money problem ... and a distribution problem ... and a transportation problem ... and a time problem. Add it all up, and they had problems they couldn't even imagine. Their situation was absolutely impossible.

But Jesus knew all along exactly what he was going to do. He had a plan. And the same is true of your troubles and difficulties today. There is a problem, but Jesus knows your whole situation. And he comes to you, asking, "What are we going to do about this?"

The correct answer from Philip would have been, "Jesus, you are God. Nothing is impossible with you. So, I'm giving this problem over to you. It's no longer mine, but yours."

That's just what we need to say to our Lord today, in the midst of our crisis: "Lord, you are the miracle worker. And I'm going to surrender all my doubts and fears to you. I entrust this entire situation, my whole life, into your care. I know you won't allow me to faint. In fact, you already know what you're going to do about my problem. I trust in your power." □

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