

**(For Monday, October 9, 2017) Do you understand the difference between magic and miracle?**

*“And he [Manasseh] burned his son as an offering and used fortune-telling and omens and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord.” (2Ki.21:6)*

Manasseh was one bad dude, perhaps the most evil of all the Kings of Israel. Here, we see in the starkest of terms the wickedness of sorcery. I have often been asked about the difference between magic and miracles, and the best definition I can come up with is this: Magic happens when a person tries to use the supernatural to oblige the spiritual to conform to human will. Miracles happen when God uses the supernatural to oblige the natural to conform to his will. The use of things like sorcery and seances clearly take us away from God’s will and separate us from his perfect plan for us. But to pray for miraculous intervention in our lives and in the lives of others is clearly one of the dearest of things God yearns to hear in his children’s prayers. And when these magical miracles of God happen, they are wondrous indeed to behold!

Are you praying enough for God’s magical miracles in your own life and those you love?

**(For Tuesday, October 10, 2017) ?**

*“Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of the maidservant look to the hands of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till he has mercy upon us.” (Ps.123:2, ESV)*

In ministry, you often have the chance to observe how God forges stronger and deeper relationships with his children through methods and actions which are totally unexpected. And it’s become my belief over the years that much of adversity in life is due to God bringing his children into a closer relationship with him. This verse from Psalm 123 sums up this process. We humans always have the inclination to pursue life through our own capabilities and for our own ends. And sometimes, God places us in situation where we are obliged to look to him, to talk with him, to depend on him until we have a stronger, deeper understanding of his love for us. C.S. Lewis said something to the effect of God whispering to us in our joy, but shouting to us in our pain, since it is in these times of adversity that stronger relationships with The Almighty are forged.

How is God using the challenges of these days to draw you into a stronger and deeper relationship with him?

**(For Wednesday, October 11, 2017) What’s the worthy manner to be in the presence of God?**

*“For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgement upon himself” (1Cor.11:29, ESV)*

Clearly, the Corinthians were not observing the Lord’s Supper in a worthy manner. What Paul means in this verse is a subject of debate. Some believe eating and drinking “without discerning the body” means not being humbly thankful for the Sacrifice Christ made, which is the main focus of The Lord’s Supper. Others hold that “not discerning the body” means not being truly focused on the faithful actions of the true church, understood by Paul as “the Body of Christ.” For me, this verse is best summed-up in the 3rd Eucharist Prayer we use in the Episcopal Church: “Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal.” (BCP 1979, p. 372) When we come into the presence of the Lord, we need to be willing to have our eyes opened to understand by revelation those things this world cannot impart. And we need to be willing to admit that it is only by God’s might that we live, and move, and have our being. We need to be ready not just to ask for forgiveness, but rather be willing to truly amend our lives.”

Isn’t that part of what “discerning the body” means when we are in God’s presence?

**(For Thursday, October 12, 2017) How often do we impede God's miracles?**

*"He said, 'Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him." (Mt.9:24, ESV)*

It's intriguing that Jesus sends the unbelieving mourners away before he lifts the little girl out of her comma. It has often been said, "He who laughs last, laughs best." And Jesus obviously has the last laugh in this passage, because the critically ill little girl awakes from her comma and is well. I can't help but wonder how many times in my life I've been right there with all those mourners, scoffing at what people have said God is getting ready to do. If we truly believe Jesus' statement that "With God all things are possible," shouldn't we be willing to believe that he is capable of accomplishing things beyond our wildest dreams?

How many times in our own lives have we impeded God's intent to work some marvelously inexplicable miracle in our lives or in the lives of those we love, just because we were either incapable or unwilling to have enough faith in God's amazing might and mercy?

**(For Friday, October 13, 2017) ) ?**

*"Then he touched [the blind men's] eyes, saying 'According to your faith be it done to you.' And his eyes were opened." (Mt.9:29-30a, ESV)*

This is the third time in just 15 verses in the Bible where Jesus is able to miraculously heal someone because of the faith that sick person had in the Son of God. I am often told of miraculous healings among Christians who live in the communities where our church's missionaries minister. In fact, in the challenged and under-developed regions of the globe, Christ seems to be working the most powerful and most frequent miracles for the Kingdom. I can't help but wonder if part of this is because it is in those regions where the people's faith in Jesus is strongest. It would seem that great adversity and the courage to meet it can produce abundant faith. That's certainly what Paul was telling the church in Rome in Chapter 5 of his letter.

So, would there be more marvelous miracles as everyday occurrences in our own lives if we had greater courage to set out in faith to meet the challenges of our days? Is our inability to fully believe in the infinite might of God impeding a deeper knowledge of him in our lives.?

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