

# Working of Miracles

#0789

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—May 6, 1983

Our text this evening is John 14 verse 12. That ought to be an easy number for us to remember. When you think of 14:12 what do you think about? Revelation 14:12:

“...Here are they that keep the commandments of God,  
and the faith of Jesus” Revelation 14:12.

Well now, if we have the faith of Jesus we'll believe what we're going to read now from the lips of our Lord, John 14 verse 12. Will you read it with me?

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me,  
the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works  
than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father”  
John 14:12.

Isn't that a wonderful promise? Now, I don't pretend to comprehend it, but I enjoy a great many things that I can't comprehend. I can't comprehend the light of the sun, but I enjoy what I get of it that I can absorb and appreciate. Don't you? I like to go down to the ocean and watch the waves roll in, but I've never seen all of it yet, but I can enjoy a little of it even if I haven't. What about you?

And as far as food is concerned, very few times am I able to surround even what I see on the table in front of me, let alone what I miss in all the rest of the homes on the place. But I enjoy what I do eat. What about you?

So, let us not lose time trying to comprehend this verse because it's too big to comprehend. Let's just enjoy what we can get of it. What do you say?

Once again, let's read:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me,  
the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works  
than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father”  
John 14:12.

In this text Jesus teaches us that He wants us to do the work that He did, and do it on a wider scale. You see, Jesus' work in this world was confined to quite a small area, Galilee and Judea largely. He never was very far away from the place where He was born. Large sections of this world were not touched by His personal ministry.

But He said to His disciples, "I want you to go out and reach" how many? Every one.

A greater, more extensive work was done by the early church. In fact, we're told by inspiration that more people were converted on the day of Pentecost under the preaching of the apostles than were during the entire period of Christ's public ministry.

We tend when we read this verse, if we're not careful, to think of things like raising the dead, or opening blind eyes, or cleansing lepers. It includes all that. But ah, my friends, there's something more wonderful than any miracle of physical healing. It is the miracle of a conversion of proud hearts that find humility at the foot of the cross, like Saul of Tarsus.

I like this statement in *Desire of Ages*, page 120:

"That which is greater than miracles, a firm reliance upon a 'thus saith the Lord,' was a sign that could not be controverted" *Desire of Ages*, page 120.

The demonstration that the Word of God is the power in our lives is greater than any miracle of physical healing.

I wish you'd turn now to John the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter verse 11. What's the second word in this text? "Beginning." What's the fourth word? "Miracles."

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him" John 2:11.

Now, looking at the first 10 verses of this chapter, what do we know was this first miracle that Jesus performed? Turning water into wine, the pure juice of the grape. That was called here the what? The beginning of His miracles.

How old was Jesus at this time? Thirty years of age. You mean Jesus spent 30 years in this world without working any miracles? That's what this teaches, doesn't it? That's right.

So, maybe the fulfillment of the first text depends upon our understanding of this second text. What I'm saying is that maybe if we'll learn the lessons Jesus learned during His 30 years, we'll have more power to do some of the miracles that He performed in His public ministry after the age of 30. Do you see what I mean?

We would like, I suppose in our humanity and our human weakness sometimes, to just jump right in to mighty miracles. We'd like to lay hold of somebody that has cancer and about to die and pull him out of the grave, open blind eyes. And God wants us to have that power, friends. But unless we travel the road that Jesus traveled from the beginning, we'll never get to those glorious experiences.

Is the church going to experience under the Latter Rain a mighty miracle-working power? We believe that, don't we?

*Great Controversy* says:

"Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed,  
and signs and wonders will follow the believers"  
*Great Controversy*, page 612.

But remember, Jesus lived 30 years as a child, as a youth, in His teens and twenties, and He was 30 years of age before He did what? Worked any miracles.

Now, mere passing of time will not enable us to work miracles. There were plenty of other people 30 and 40 and 50 years old around there that never worked a miracle. My point is this, the Son of God, who came to this world to reveal His Father's plan of life, lived here among us as we must live, and lived 30 years without working any miracles.

This is backed up by the statement in *Desire of Ages*, page 92. This is speaking of His kindly ministry when He was a boy and a young man in Nazareth, helping the poor, ministering to the sick and the sad and the discouraged.

"None could say that He had worked a miracle; but virtue—the healing power of love—went out from Him to the sick and distressed" *Desire of Ages*, page 92.

So, He was working without the miracle-working power. Did you ever feel as a medical missionary you wished you could have Christ's mighty power to heal the sick? Well, you can if you'll follow the road that He traveled. But He went for years and years and years limited by the same humanity that you and I have, and doing no more for them than you and I can do through the healing power of love. This was His preparation for that great outpouring of the Spirit that came upon Him when He was 30 years of age, and God used Him to work those wonderful miracles.

But now, let's look at something else about these miracles. Can you think of any instance when He performed these miracles merely for His own benefit? Can you? No. Every time Jesus worked a miracle it was to relieve a necessity of somebody else that needed help that could be relieved only in that way.

And that leads me to a very important principle in dealing with miracles. God works miracles never for our entertainment, never for our selfish benefit, and never when we can do it some other way. Do you know why? Because a miracle is not the best way to get something done.

You say, "That's strange. I wish I could always have a miracle."

In the wilderness the children of Israel ate manna for 40 years. Was that a miracle? Yes, that was a miracle. They got so used to it that they didn't think it was a miracle anymore.

A miracle to you and me is something so out of the ordinary, either we never saw it before, or we've seen it so seldom that we say, "This is marvelous. This is the finger of God."

You remember that when Jesus found those 5,000 men waiting, hungry at the end of the long day along with their families, He broke the five loaves and two fishes, they multiplied in His hands, and He fed the disciples after He'd fed the multitude. That whole experience was what we would call a what? A miracle.

I want to ask you a question. I want you to think about it. How do we ordinarily get food? How do we ordinarily get bread? Is it a miracle, or not? Well, it's all according to what we mean by a miracle.

How long does it take to make the bread that we eat? It usually takes at least a year, doesn't it, roughly, from the time the seed is sown and the crop is matured and gathered and processed, and the flour made from it. And finally, it gets into our eating troughs and ovens and gets on the table. It's at least a year, probably, sometimes more, sometimes less. My point is that all that time God is working to produce something that will bring strength to us.

Now, let me ask you, which do you think is harder for God, to do it in one day as He did with Jesus there on the mountain, or to take a year? Which do you think is harder? I'll ask it another way. Which do you think is the greater manifestation of divine power? Which one can *you* do without God?

Now, I asked you which was the greater. That's like my holding two pencils up here in my hands. You can't see the lower end of either one of them, and I ask you, "Which is the longer pencil?"

You'd have to do what? You'd either have to guess, or tell the truth and say you don't know.

My dear friends, I'm persuaded that either one is the power of God, whether He does it in one minute, one day, one year. What do you say? And from that standpoint both are miracles, if by "miracles" we mean the power of God working. But a miracle strictly speaking is not the making of bread over a years' time. The miracle is the unusual interposition of God to do things in an unusual way. But really, I doubt if it's any more power on His part, or any manifestation of power greater than the other way. We're just used to the other way.

Take this first miracle that Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee. He told the servants to pour what into the water jars? Water.

Then, He said, "Now, take these and draw out."

And what did they draw out? Wine. You chemists know that water is made up of what? Hydrogen and oxygen. Does grape juice have any hydrogen and oxygen in it? Yes. Does it have anything more? What else does it have as the main element besides that? Carbon, and of course it has some iron and other minerals and so forth.

My point is this, God marvelously and miraculously and instantly made a change there. Can we explain it? No. It was a what? Miracle. But can you explain the other? Can you explain how the vine reaches down into the ground and gets the water? And how the sunlight falls on the leaves and works through that chlorophyll? And the carbon dioxide coming from the air to mix together to make the sugar that makes the grape so sweet and delicious, can you explain that? No, you can't explain it. You may be able to recite it, but not explain it. You may be able to pass an examination in what happened. But to tell exactly how and why it happened—this is the creative work of God.

But He did it in how long there in Cana of Galilee? Did it in one minute. Jesus spoke. Ordinarily, it takes the better part of a year for it—more than that if you figure the time of growing the vine. My point is it's the same power of the same God.

And why, I ask again, does He take so long to do it, ordinarily? I know one of the reasons. He wants to give you and me something to do besides just looking and clapping our hands. If all the servants did that, just pour the water in, pour the grape juice out, that's all, my, my, wouldn't we get lazy if that was the usual program?

To tend the vines, to cultivate them and prune them, take care of them, to take the grapes and process them, this all takes what? Time and work and effort and thought. And that's what you and I need, not merely for physical health, but for mental development. And so God, if I may say it reverently, He knows what He's doing. He knows what He's doing. And this applies to many things in life.

I was reading in *Volume 1*, page 212, a very interesting statement about Brother B. Now, I don't know who Brother B was. All we have is an initial here. It's way back over a hundred years ago so he's dead and he won't hear it when I read it tonight. But you and I are alive and we'll hear it. Listen, about Brother B:

"I saw that in temporal matters Brother B was too easy and negligent. He has lacked energy, considering it a virtue to leave to the Lord that which the Lord has left to him. It is only in cases of great emergency that the Lord interposes for us. We have a work to do, burdens and responsibilities to bear, and in thus doing we obtain an experience" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1*, page 212.

How do we get an experience? Being challenged to put all we have into the work, whether it's growing corn, or grapes, washing dishes, building fires, hoeing in the garden, giving treatments, using our minds to think and plan the best ways to get things done. All this takes time and thought and effort, physical and mental and spiritual. And in this way we're developed and we obtain a what? An experience. This is an experience. And watching—don't miss this—watching God work what we call miracles will never give us that experience.

We may think it would be wonderful if we could just see manna fall every day. Friends, do you know that even in the falling of the manna God arranged it that they

had to do a number of things? What was the first thing they had to do with it? They had to gather it. Was that the end of it? No. They had to process it, they had to grind it and beat it out. And then what? Then cook it.

Do you know how they cooked it? Some of them liked it boiled and some liked it baked. You'll find that in Exodus 16. So, it was quite a process. It must have taken them several hours to get all that done to go out there.

And was it big like a watermelon? Like a hoar frost, we're told; little stuff, picking it up like seeds. My, my, they got back-bending exercises, didn't they, and then, the grinding and the cooking and all. My point is that even though that was a wonderful miracle for that manna to fall every day, yet God arranged that they'd have something to do. And so, it is in these ways that you and I get our food. We have something to do that takes exercise.

Now, I'm very interested in Brother B again. Do you know what the next sentence says? Listen:

"Brother B manifests the same character in spiritual matters as in his temporal affairs" *Ibid.*

This weakness, this attitude, carried over into what? Into what?

Will you all stand up? I want to help somebody that's a little sleepy. You that are awake don't mind. You'll help me help the sleepy one, won't you? All right.

Thank you. I don't want you to miss this.

Brother B's weakness was in leaving to God to do what God had left for him to do. Is that right? And he carried that weakness into what? Spiritual matters.

Oh, I think how much better that answer was after you stood up.

Right over into spiritual things. And safe to say, friends, if he'd lived long enough he'd have caught up with some of this theology that says that's the way to do it.

You know, there are people that think that that's real, real religion is to leave to God to do everything. In fact, you hear it said like this: "Let go and let God."

Another way of putting it is this: "I tried and I tried and I tried and it didn't do any good. So now, I've learned to just turn it all over to God and He does it."

I say try that on your garden, friends, try it on your garden. And while you're trying it on your garden, turn to Isaiah the 61<sup>st</sup> chapter the 11<sup>th</sup> verse. What is the second word in this verse? "As." What does that mean "as"? In this verse, what does it mean? I heard somebody say it. Say it loud. Like, yes, like; in the same way, in a similar way.

“For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations” Isaiah 61:11.

Are we looking for righteousness?

Somebody says, “Brother Frazee, I believe in righteousness by faith, not righteousness by works.”

I believe in righteousness by faith too, but my faith must be good enough to work. Faith is so good it works, friends. I garden by faith. My sister and I were out yesterday doing some planting. We planted by faith. We planted some beans in the ground. And we have faith that God is going to watch over those beans and cause them to sprout.

Over a few feet to the right, I saw some that we’d planted some days before, and they were just coming through the ground. Now, my text says that that’s the way God is going to grow righteousness in our lives is the same way He makes the seed sprout and spring forth in the garden. Is that what this says?

Read it with me. All together:

“For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations” Isaiah 61:11.

We can’t do it without Him; He won’t do it without us. Can we garden without God? Not a bit of it, friends. But will He grow the food for us without our participation? No. Some people might think that in your garden you have your choice of either having food, or weeds, or nothing, but you don’t. If you don’t grow the food, nature will take over and you’ll have what? Weeds. They grow without any effort.

And so, in our lives, friends, people who “let go and let God,” “let go and let God,” if they really mean what they’re saying, they’re saying, “I’m not going to make any effort. I’m not going to do anything about it. When God gets ready, He’s going to give me the victory over my temper, over my overeating, over my gossiping, or over my discouragement.”

Ah, dear ones, you and I have something to do to cooperate with God. And the greatest miracle in this world is the miracle of a surrendered life changed by the power of God. But God will not do it without our participation.

Let me read this wonderful statement in *Sanctified Life*, page 84. This is one of the most wonderful statements on this subject I ever read. Listen carefully:

“The prophets and apostles did not perfect Christian character by a miracle” *Sanctified Life*, page 84.

What? I read it right. Let me read it again:

“The prophets and apostles did not perfect Christian character by a miracle” *Ibid.*

Will you say it with me?

“The prophets and apostles did not perfect Christian character by a miracle” *Ibid.*

Again:

“The prophets and apostles did not perfect Christian character by a miracle” *Ibid.*

Now, this doesn't mean it isn't without God. The next sentence says:

“They used the means which God had placed within their reach; and all who will put forth the same effort will secure the same results” *Ibid.*

Praise the Lord, friends. How did John get changed from selfishness to love, from angry temper to meekness? Not by a direct miracle in the sense that like that something happened. Oh, no. It was the power of God; it was the power of God working with what? His efforts, his choices. Over and over and over again, John must choose.

What about Paul? Did he have any problems? He says:

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” 1 Corinthians 9:27.

And he said, “I die” how often?

“...I die daily” 1 Corinthians 15:31.

Think of it, friends. Every day Paul if he'd consulted his inclinations would have gone the wrong way, to selfishness. So, if I wait for God to change my feelings so everything is heavenly love in my heart, I'll wait too long. Praise God, He will give me the power to live His life as I read His word, as I search the Scriptures, as I pray and as I put my will on His side. That's not righteousness by works, that's righteousness by faith, because faith is believing God and if we believe God we'll do what He says. Right?

Let me read these two sentences again. This is *Sanctified Life*, page 84:

“The prophets and apostles did not perfect Christian character by a miracle. They used the means which



God had placed within their reach; and all who will put forth the same effort will secure the same results”  
*Sanctified Life*, page 84.

Garden by faith; live the Christian life by faith. Physical health habits are a part of righteousness by faith if we believe in what God says and do what He says because we love Him. It’s all a part of the same program.

But now, I come back to our beginning. This does not mean, this must not be interpreted to mean that all we have is the working of natural law. If Jesus that afternoon as the sun was setting and as there was that multitude of people, if He’d had to wait until they could grow their food, or even till they could go to the villages and buy food, it would have been not what He saw the people needed. So, God gave Him the power to do what? Work a miracle. And God will in emergencies help us to work miracles when He sees that it’s for our good; when He sees that it will make us kind and loving instead of lazy and selfish.

*Christian Service*, page 228:

“God does not generally work miracles to advance His truth” *Christian Service*, page 228.

What’s the word that’s used there to show that there are exceptions?  
“Generally,” He doesn’t “generally” work miracles.

“If the husbandman neglects to cultivate the soil, God works no miracle to counteract the sure results” *Ibid*.

I don’t want to be irreverent but I want to ask you something, friends. If I had a poor year last year with my wheat, or with my garden, or my corn, or tomatoes, or whatever, suppose I should say, “This year I’m going to do something different. I’m just going to pray. And the time that I used to spend out in gardening I’m going to get down on my knees and pray, pray, pray.”

Would that be a good substitution? Would it? No, it wouldn’t. You all see how foolish that would be. It’s equally foolish in health habits, or even in spiritual things for us to say—and don’t miss it—that someday, some way, God is going to do something for us suddenly and will take the place of our learning how to live spiritually, physically, mentally in harmony with His laws and ways.

“If the husbandman neglects to cultivate the soil, God works no miracle to counteract the sure results. He works according to great principles made know to us, and it is our part to mature wise plans and set in operation the means whereby God shall bring about certain results” *Ibid*.

I’m so glad that God has given us these great principles. One of the greatest reasons that God wants us in agriculture, friends, is because we learn these principles as we work with the soil. One of the great reasons that He wants us in

medical missionary work is that we see these laws of sowing and reaping working in human lives as well as in the garden.

We see that the man who smokes eventually may get lung cancer, or have a heart attack. We see that the people who live according to the Spirit of Prophecy diet program live on the average six years longer than the people that don't. I wonder how much longer we'd live if we carried the whole program through as a people. Do you see what I mean? We're learning as we follow out these principles, as we work with God in health lines and in agriculture, these great laws of sowing and reaping.

But remember, God wants us not to rule out miracles. He wants us to get ready for the Latter Rain and the Loud Cry. And even now from time to time, even in our poor, weak condition, He interposes, steps in in answer to prayer and heals the sick, or works some other miracle.

How many here tonight have found in your own experience sometime in the past something that you know was a direct miracle? May I see your hands? Scores of you. Thank God.

And so, my lesson tonight has two sides. One is, let's rejoice in those miracles and want more and more. But the other is, let's remember, that the greatest evidence of God's working is not necessarily what we call miracles. It's helping us to do according to His will in a day-by-day, shall I say, grind?

Jesus was carrying out His Father's plan just as much in the carpenter shop at Nazareth as He was healing the sick, or raising the dead, wasn't He? And He wants us to follow His example.

Now, let's turn back to John the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter verse 12, please:

"Verily, verily..." John 14:12.

"Truly, truly," He says.

"...I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father" John 14:12.

We're still going to school with Jesus at Nazareth. Let's be good apprentices. What do you say? Let's learn to be faithful. Let's learn to be dependable. Let's learn to be on time. Let's learn to turn out a good product, whether it's in the kitchen, or the farm, or the shop, or the treatment room, or the Bible studies. Let's learn to be in our work as nearly perfect as possible.

And remember, ahead of us is that glorious latter rain/loud cry time, which will be like Jesus' public ministry, when we will so learn these lessons that God can entrust to us those mighty miracles of the end time. I want both, don't you?

Now, sister, come.

Dr. Kim has been with us here for several days, or weeks. We're glad she's here. And Dr. Kim is from Korea. She has some precious things to share with us and I'm so glad she's here.

God bless you.

[Dr. Kim shares her testimony and closes with the following prayer.]

[Dr. Kim] Dear Loving Father, I'm so thankful this privilege to share with this wonderful sister and brother who prayed for my health. And I'm so thankful you lead me in Your way. And I'm so thankful that you gave us a special message tonight for me, John chapter 14 verse 12. I pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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