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Sunday, April 22, 2018  
Did You Know?

## Startled By Faith

I'm still personally reeling over last week's sermon on the invalid man in John 5:1-15 -- not because I delivered such an amazing sermon. I'm still finding it hard to believe that after the man in the story, who was unable to walk for 38 years, was healed by Jesus, expressed no faith, no love, no affection toward Jesus. It's unbelievable that he did not believe.

One of the things that this episode teaches is that if a person witnesses a miracle or even if they themselves are the recipients of the miracle, it is no guarantee that they will be saved. This has something important to say to those who say that if God would only show them a sign, a miracle, then they would believe. As much as this sounds like a good way to get a person to believe, it goes against what the Scriptures actually teach. Much of the teaching of Jesus goes against this kind of thinking. Take for instance Jesus' words in Matthew 12:39 after the religious leaders asked Jesus to perform another sign, he replied, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah."

Or, what about the story Jesus shared about poor Lazarus in Luke 16, who died and went to heaven, but the nameless rich man went to hell and he looked across the great chasm and begged Abraham to send Lazarus to his surviving family members, to warn them of going to hell. Father Abraham replied to him, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them." The rich man replied, "No, Father Abraham, if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent." To which Abraham said, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

Jesus performed signs primarily to declare that he was indeed the chosen Messiah, but he died to take care of our sins. What does this mean? It means this. People are not saved by witnessing or experiencing a miracle. You see, witnessing a miracle doesn't address the sin problem, and the human problem is a sin problem. The answer to the sin problem is not a miracle, per se, the answer is the Gospel. What sinners need is to hear the good news -- that Christ died for sinners. The man in John 15 didn't come to faith in Christ because he never saw his own sin. We, too, must be careful. It's very possible that we could misidentify our most important need by focusing on something else, anything else, and forget about our sin problem. In my opinion, those who say they won't believe until they have seen a miracle are not remaining in disbelief because of this. The real reason they don't believe is because they don't want to come to grips with their sin. They think they are not *that* bad and if they are not *that* bad, then they don't need a great Savior.

Thank God that despite our wrong thinking, He sent his one and only Son, to live the life we were supposed to live -- a perfect life, and to die the death we were supposed to die for our sins. This is the Gospel. Believe.

Soli Deo Gloria.  
*Pastor Peter*