

Sabbath School Lesson #5 – Miracles Around the Lake – 27 July-2 August 2024

Christ performed many miracles. We focus on the miracles He performed around the lake. One healed man wanted to follow Him, “Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee” (Mark 5:19). What was the overarching characteristic of these miracles? These miracles were wrought for a definite purpose. After having told of many miracles that Jesus did, and His resurrection as the crowning one of the whole series, the apostle John said: “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name” (John 20:30-31). Every miracle of Jesus, therefore, was for the purpose of showing us how we may receive His life, and have the same miracle wrought in us. It is truly said that His miracles of healing were the natural outgrowth of His sympathetic loving nature: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Love to man prompted every step in the plan of salvation. Christ did not perform the miracles simply for the purpose of calling attention to Himself, but to show the love and the power of God toward man. The healing of the bodies of men was only an object lesson. They were aids to faith, to enable men to grasp unseen realities; to show them the power of Christ to heal the disease of the soul. Whoever reads the accounts of the miracles of Jesus with this in mind, and not as stories told for our entertainment, will receive of the life which was manifested in the doing of those miracles. Each one illustrates some phase of the work of Christ in supplying man’s spiritual needs.

Sunday: Calming a Storm – “What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (Mark 4:41). This was but a manifestation of the original creative power. He who created the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is, retains full control over all. In those words, “Peace, be still,” we hear the same voice that said, “Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place” (Genesis 1:9). And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto us; so we are to learn from the Lord’s power over the sea, which is His because He made it, His power over the waves of strife that surge through human hearts. For the angry sea represents the wicked. “The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt” (Isaiah 57:20). Christ is our peace. The word which He spoke to the sea of Galilee that night is the word which He speaks to us. It is not only the Lord’s power over the sea a symbol of His power to save men from the tide of sin, but it is also a pledge and surety of their final complete deliverance. It also shows the power with which the Lord is going to clothe the preaching of the Gospel message in the last struggle preceding His second coming. It is the Son of God that led His people from Egypt through the red sea. “Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?” (Isaiah 51:10). The fact that “the sea is His and He made it” (Psalm 95:5), and that He “hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand” (Isaiah 40:12), is sufficient grounds for confidence in Him by any of His people, whether it be for deliverance from danger, for overcoming grace, or for help in carrying on the gospel work to which He has called them.

Monday: Can You Hear a Whisper Above a Shout? – We read of the demoniac in Mark 5:1-20. After Jesus freed him from demons, the former demoniac asked if he could follow Jesus, but Jesus told him to go home and witness to his friends. It would certainly have been more pleasant for the restored man to have remained with Christ; but great blessings bring great obligations. As Christ had released him from the bondage of Satan he became Christ’s servant, and it was therefore his duty to do Christ’s work. Jesus told him to “go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.” This he cheerfully did, and the result was that those who would not accept Jesus in person because they did not know Him, listened with wonder as He was lifted up in the life and testimony of the restored demoniac. There is no testimony so powerful as that which comes from a heart which has been cleansed from sin by the power of Christ. Let us always ever remember that Christ calls us and cleanses us for service.

Tuesday: On the Roller Coaster With Jesus – How does the power of Christ to resurrect help our faith in His power to resurrect us now from our sins? Both the raising of the son of the widow of Nain, and of the daughter of Jairus, are instances of the life-giving power of the word of Christ. To the first Jesus said, “Young man, I say unto thee, Arise” (Luke 7:15). To the other He said, “Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise” (Mark 5:41). In both instances life was instantaneous. The signs were done that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing we might have life through His name (John 20:31). They were done that we might see how easily Jesus can raise us from the deadness of sin to the life of righteousness. What do we learn of these miracles? “If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10). Christ came, that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly (John 10:10). Our salvation is simply the effect of the more abundant life of Christ through the cross. This was illustrated in His miracles of healing, which were recorded “that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name” (John 20:31). Healing is salvation. When Jesus had healed a person, he often said, “Thy faith hath saved thee” (Luke 7:50; 18:42). The word “heal,” meaning to make whole, comes from the Greek word (sozo) to save. The healing of disease is by the giving of life, for disease is but the beginning of death. Whenever Jesus healed the sick or raised the dead, He did it by importing His own life. He was the living bread that came down from heaven, to give His life for the life of the world. The healing of the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:24-34) is a typical instance illustrating this truth. There was a poor woman with her life blood ebbing away. When she had heard of Jesus, she came in the press behind, and touched His garment; “for she said, If I may but touch His clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus immediately knowing in Himself that virtue [power] had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched My clothes?” We see by this that the healing of the afflicted was a demand upon His life. In healing them He gave His own life to them. His fulness supplied their lack. This case of the woman was not an isolated one; for we read that when He came down from the mountain “all the multitudes sought to touch Him; for power came forth from Him, and healed them all” (Luke 6:19). Since He felt the strain upon His life force when only one touched Him, think what it must have been when multitudes drew healing power from Him. What a great draft was made upon His life. It is evident that since life went from Him in response to each touch, the inevitable result of the touch of multitudes would have been His death, if He had not been in constant connection with the fountain of life. “All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father’s life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life” {DA 21.2}. He gave His life, and yet He lived. We have here is the mystery of the cross before Calvary. As He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, He was laying down His life for the brethren, just as truly when He breathed out His life on Calvary. So also He did when after His resurrection He breathed on His disciples, and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:22). It is all so simple, and yet so wonderful. We see the cross at work giving life, and recognise that it is in the cross that we live, and move, and have our being; for the cross is the revelation of God creating all things, and upholding and restoring the things created.

Wednesday: Rejection and Reception – Why did Jesus’ hometown people reject Him? They did not recognise Him as the literal Son of God, but as Joseph’s son, He said to them, “And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian” (Luke 4:27). They were like lepers in Elisha’s time.

Thursday: A Different Kind of Messiah – How different was Jesus the Messiah the people expected? After the miracle of loaves, they wanted to make Him king (John 6:15), but not long after were eager for His death. They raised their voices in shouts of “Hosanna to the Son of David” (Mark 11:9-10), but shouted “Crucify Him! crucify Him!” Mark 15:13-14).