

And God Said What?



Miracle Stories

Session 6

The Direction of Intention

**My God, give me the grace to perform this
action with you
and through love for you.**

**In advance, I offer to you all the good that I
will do and accept
all the difficulty I may meet therein.**

**Our Lady of Good Counsel, Pray for us.
St. Francis de Sales, Pray for us.**

The Miracle Stories

- **What is a Miracle?**
 - What is a miracle as recorded in the Gospels?
 - A Literary Form
 - The Miracle Stories are recorded to tell a story to a particular Post-Resurrection Community
 - Miracle Stories, like Legends, are based on a historical event which then speak to a particular community about the Good News of Jesus Christ
 - The Gospels are recorded during a time when people did not distinguish between the natural and supernatural.

The Miracle Stories

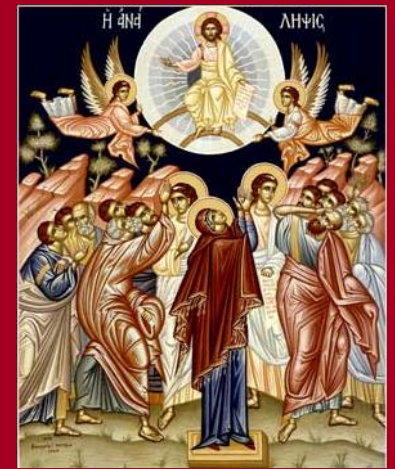
- Understanding the word Miracle
 - Modern: Magical, Marvelous – **one sided**
 - Biblical: Dynameis – Act of Power - **relational**
 - **The Difference?**
 - Modern Understanding focuses on the Act itself.
 - Biblical Understanding focuses on the Power behind the Act and what it says to a particular community
 - **Why Acts of Power and NOT miracles?**
 - Acts of Power are more clearly understood as a sign of the Messiah.
 - Acts of Power are more clearly understood as Divine Attributes and not merely magical acts.

The Miracle Stories

- Miracles of Nature
 - Wedding Feast
 - Calming the seas
 - Feeding 5000
- Miracles of Healing
 - Ten Lepers
 - Centurions Servant
 - woman with Hemorrhage
- Miracles of Exorcism
 - Swine Herd
 - Mary Magdalena
- Miracles of resurrection
 - Widow's son
 - Lazarus
 - Centurions Servant

The Miracle Stories

- Fifth Type of Miracle
 - The Incarnation
 - The Transfiguration
 - The Resurrection of Jesus
 - The Ascension



The Miracle Stories

- Why did Jesus Perform Acts of Power?
- Why did the early church record the miracle stories?
- How do we understand the miracle stories today?



The Event

Mark 4:35-41

The Calming of the Sea



The Original Meaning

Messianic Sign

Restore Balance to natural world



First Stage – Oral Tradition – Post Resurrection

Who was this Jesus ?

Divine attributes – Power over
nature

Second Stage of Oral Tradition

Mark's Community
under attack

Guidance and
reassurance



How is the story re-presented?

Stormy seas
(Persecutions)

Belief in Jesus will restore order
and bring salvation



Written Tradition

Records Original Event

Understood by community at
different levels

The Miracle Stories

- The Form of Miracle Stories
 - A Problem is clearly stated
 - The problem is brought to Jesus' attention
 - Jesus is described as acting to solve the problem
 - Jesus action resolves the problem
 - The crowd reacts to Jesus' act of power

BUT

Not all miracle stories are about the MIRACLE

The Gerasene demoniac - The Feeding of the 5000

The Miracle Stories

- In the Synoptic Gospels
 - **teras = a wonder.** the *effect produced* on those who witnessed the mighty work.
 - **dunamis = power.** Manifestation of power of Jesus as the Son of God – The Christ – The Messiah
- In the Gospel of John
 - **semeion = a sign.**
 - The *significance* of the work
 - In itself, or in the reason, object, design, and teaching intended to be conveyed by it.
 - It occurs in the Gospels 48 times (41 x's in John)

The Miracle Stories

- In the Synoptic Gospels

- ***teras* = a wonder.**

- Mostly Mark
 - Who is this who speaks with Authority?
 - Who is this that forgives sins?

- ***dunamis* = power.**

- Mostly Matthew and Luke
 - Reality of the Messianic Age

- In the Gospel of John

- ***semeion* = a sign.**

- The Divinity of Jesus



The Miracle Stories

- **The 7 SIGNS in St. John Gospel**

- Ch. 2 - Cana: water into wine
- Ch. 4 - Raising the son of the royal official
- Ch. 5 - Paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda
- **Ch. 6 - Multiplication of the loaves**
- Ch. 6 - Walking on the water
- Ch. 9 - Healing of the man born blind
- Ch. 11 - Raising of Lazarus

The Paschal Mystery

Summary

- Miracle Stories based on events in Jesus' Life
- Different kinds of Miracles
- Development in understanding miracles
- Not all miracles are about the Miracle
 - Affirmation of faith of the individual
- The Feeding of the 5000
- How do we interpret miracle stories today?
 - Affirmation of the Kingdom of God
 - Affirmation of Jesus as Messiah
 - Speak to us about our faith