

Galatians 3:28



***There is neither Jew nor Greek,
there is neither male nor female:
for are all one in Christ Jesus.***

MIRACLES

Carl's Story

Mark 10:27

***Jesus looked at them and said,
"With man this is impossible, but
not with God; all things are possible
with God."***

Job 5:9

**He performs wonders that cannot be
fathomed, miracles that cannot be
counted.**

What Is A Miracle?

Ladies and gentlemen, have you ever asked a friend or stranger to define a miracle; a question that prompted an immediate response of, "Oh, those are events that happened In Bible times, not now!" Then, as you continued the discussion and encouraged those around to examine their beliefs at a deeper level, an application of miracles only to physical healings of the body might have come into play.

Perhaps, this belief stems from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition of a miracle as being, *"an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs; the healing miracles described in the Gospels."*

However, exploring variations on thoughts regarding miracles, St. Augustine viewed it from an approach that might invite us down a totally different path with the words, *"Miracles are not contrary to nature but contrary to what we know about nature."*

Certainly, when one views the wonderful gradation and harmony that exist in nature; whether it be the charming contrast of land and water, or that of the low sunken valleys and majestic snowcapped mountain tops, methinks there is absolutely no doubt but what the Great Creator is the wonderful Artesian of such beauty and drama; facts that add dimension to Augustine's thoughts above.

Then, when in just a fore night, it is possible for mere human eyes to visually witness the fact that the hardness of winter has relaxed, allowing the silent footsteps of spring to decorate bare twigs with young shoots contending in a race for becoming a shady canopy that will conceal an array of beautiful birds ready to break forth into a concert of musical notes that will calm the soul of those that walk beneath, while cooling him with a fluttering and rustling breeze, is there any doubt as to their origin?

Ladies and gentlemen, *doesn't Psalm 104: 24-25- "How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. There is sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number-living things both large and small,"* describe the gift of creation beautifully? And to think... mere human beings have been appointed as caretakers for this remarkable gift from God; our earthly home that we take for granted every day.

Yet, if we allow the mind to explore the mystery of our existence in this place of beauty, it is almost overwhelming to contemplate. Why are we here in this place at this moment in time on a planet called earth that is exactly the right size, shape, and weight to support human life, with the sun, moon, and stars placed and sized appropriately? Puzzling, isn't it?

Folks, as the writer researched and ruminated over the mystery of these lofty thoughts, a quote from the book written by Eric Metaxas titled, "Miracles", seemed to speak to these questions best with the words, *"Our existence is an outrageous and astonishing miracle, one so startlingly and perhaps so disturbingly miraculous that it makes any miracle like the parting of the Red Sea pale in such insignificance that it almost becomes unworthy of our consideration, as though*

it were something done easily by a small child, half-asleep. It is something to which the most truly human response is some combination of terror and wonder, of ancient awe and childhood joy."

Then, Metaxas continues by giving his own definition of a miracle with: *"The Greek word for miracle is "simaios", which means "sign." Miracles are signs, and like all signs, they are never about themselves; they're about whatever they are pointing toward. Miracles point to something beyond themselves. But to what? To God himself. That's the point of miracles---- to point us beyond our world to another world. They are clues that that other world is not in our imaginations but is actually out there, wherever "out there" actually is."*

Given this definition, have you concluded that miracles may transpire in a variety of settings, in times of happiness and despair, and manifest in different ways to individuals? Although many people may have never received a miracle, the fact that God created them, is in itself, one to behold.

Consequently, after much deliberation on the subject, one thing that became abundantly clear to the writer was how simple it would be for God, out of love for his creation, to reach through the thin veil between heaven and earth and touch anyone or anything he formed. In other words, not only does he keep everything in working order but can touch the lives of his children when he desires.

Additionally, it is important to succinctly stress that, just because you have never received a miracle, certainly doesn't mean something is wrong. Since each person is equally loved by him, it is simply an indication that our thoughts are not his thoughts. In other words, there is no answer as to why some folks feel they've never received or identified a miracle that happened in their lives, while others excitedly recount theirs in great detail.

After exploring descriptions of miracles reported by man on this earth, one thing that needs to be addressed is the textures of such. Certainly, the misconception that miracles occur in beautiful settings with backdrops of ethereal music and lights all around, is actually man trying to place limitations on God's ability to intervene in human affairs. Instead, dungeons, darkness as black as ebony, bottomless pits of despair, times of desperation, and when guns of war blaze and fire unceasingly on the battlefield, are all examples of settings and places when individuals have reported miracles as having occurred in mysterious, mindboggling ways.

Dear reader, now that you are scratching your head in puzzlement as to the miraculous wonders of this world, and the depth of this subject, Carl's story that follows will prompt even greater mystery regarding this complicated topic; especially given the long-lasting impact, as well as the setting in which it occurred.

Carl's Story

One spring day at Glendale Gardens Nursing Home, this writer was asked as a volunteer to lead the residents in a devotional time; a gathering of about 35 people that usually had a love for

their Savior, and an immense desire to study his Word. Thus, looking out on the group, it was obvious from their sweet faces, they were eager to talk about the Lord. Some wore expressions of peace, while others sat quietly appearing to be full of expectation, just waiting to sing and pray together.

Thus, on this particular morning, given the wisdom they always displayed toward life in general, the writer decided to tackle the difficult subject of miracles as a way of tapping the wealth of information they would impart on the subject.

Therefore, as an introduction to the subject, the writer opened, first with prayer, followed by a series of short stories about miracles that had transpired in an array of settings to individuals of all ages; a topic that immediately stirred the interest of each one present. Some leaned forward in their wheelchairs, wearing expressions of anticipation in their eyes, while others never seemed to blink because of concentrating so intently.

Then, at the conclusion of each story, some would burst into praises of thanksgiving to God for intervening in the person's life, while others seemed thrilled beyond measure. Additionally, through the comments offered at the conclusion, it was apparent that some of these sweet old souls had such a strong belief in their Creator that it was obvious they had not placed limitations on what he could do in life.

Thus, having concluded this phase of devotional time, the writer then asked them to give a definition for the word miracle, and heard them exclaim:

- 1) The smile of a child
- 2) The birth of a child
- 3) The beauty of the earth
- 4) Every breath we take
- 5) The change of seasons
- 6) Healing of our bodies
- 7) The fact that I wake up every morning
- 8) The songs of birds
- 9) Food to eat during the depression
- 10) That I have lived this long
- 11) My family
- 12) My husband

At this point, these old folks were really turned on, and literally shouting out with such enthusiasm, that a sense of exhilaration in the room was so thick that one could almost dip it out with a spoon.

However, suddenly, amidst all this, entered a mournful sound of a deep painful wave of sobbing, resembling that of a giant tsunami, which suddenly rose above the joyful noises, bringing the celebration to an abrupt halt.

Consequently, instead of smiles and clapping, a silence of solemnness took its place, accompanied by grave, worried expressions all worn by those present. First, looking at one another to identify the source of the noise, the old folks began rotating their bodies, the most their physical condition would allow, wildly searching for the desperate soul in such agony.

Then, locating the individual, all eyes suddenly focused on a thin man, named Carl, sitting in a corner all alone whose body was bent in half, shaking uncontrollably, as harsh raw sobs erupted from him with such intensity that all present recognized his soul was, without doubt, in a total state of brokenness.

Huddled together in shock, and totally paralyzed, what occurred from one sweet little old resident in this depth of trauma, was truly a gift from God. Displaying great compassion and faith, she began to utter a soft prayer to the Lord on behalf of her fellow resident, Carl. Continuing this behavior, in spite of the loud moans and waves of sorrow that accompanied the flow from her lips, she just kept on keeping on.

As a result, the moaning suddenly stopped, and Carl began his story that had occurred when he was serving as a medic in the army as a young man; an age when he was without the foundation or experience necessary to face the nightmare of his life; one that was still so vivid that the memories and suffering oozed from his soul with an intense, raw pain, even now, during this his winter season of life; a burden he had been carrying his entire adult life; one that was engraved in his heart and could never be erased.

Folks, as tear filled words began awkwardly to come from his lips, all wheelchairs were facing toward him, whose occupants sat wearing such expressions of support and compassion, that it felt as if his fellow residents had physically wrapped him in a blanket of their love.

However, appearing to still be on the field of battle, totally removed from this moment in time, all present could see that he was about to relive an instance in his life when God bestowed on the most unlikely people, and in the midst of hell on earth, a miracle that pointed directly toward Him.

Setting the stage for his own story, Carl began by telling how awful the horrors of war were to all those involved; so much that many soldiers were so traumatized that they either were unable to ever recount the happenings, or worse yet, lost their minds without hope of ever recovering. He recounted witnessing young boys arrive with great enthusiasm, and turn into old men after just one scrimmage in battle; to the point of being almost unrecognizable in appearance. They not only wore haggard expressions but moved as if the world had just been placed on their shoulders; looking straight ahead through empty eyes without light.

Carl then went on to describe how important, yet extremely perilous, the job of a medic was because of having to literally take care of the wounded as they were falling at his feet; all occurring in the midst of fighting. He saw bodies shot to pieces, while others lost limbs that flew through the air; all while he kept running in a frantic effort to tend to those the best he

could. He stated no other words could describe the scene but that of being in a “living hell” without end.

Then, taking a deep quivering breath, he told of kneeling to attend to the needs of a soldier that obviously had little time to live, due to having been shot so many times that his body was raw and bloody. Then, upon closer scrutiny, to his shock, Carl realized that he was looking into the disfigured face of someone he was supposed to hate; that of a young blond German soldier whose eyes were filled with terror; those belonging to the ENEMY!

After a quick assessment of the young fellow’s condition, it was evident he had only moments before taking his last breath. So, being an individual of great faith, Carl placed his hand on the young man and prayed for God to take him safely home. As he prayed, the young German soldier’s eyes never left those belonging to Carl; a pose that continued until the wounded man took his final breath. Just imagine, folks, the fear filled eyes of one that was alive and healthy, were peering into the fear filled eyes of one that was dying; a situation when God reached through the veil toward two people and provided a miracle that demonstrated how to love all fellowmen; a miraculous instance that pointed both to the love of the Father for all creatures great and small; those from all corners of the earth, no matter their race, skin color, or lineage. He was asking a young soldier named Carl to “Love God with all his heart soul and mind, and to love his German neighbor as himself.” Have you heard those words somewhere before... perhaps in Scripture?

At this point, Carl peered out toward his fellow residents and said, “On that day, there on the battlefield, two soldiers that were supposed to be enemies to one another, both recognized they were brothers in Christ; in spite of the fact that they both spoke different languages. From me he sought courage, and in me he placed his trust; a bond that can never be broken; all because my enemy also belonged to the great Creator. He loved my enemy equally. On that day, as the young German soldier died in my arms, it was evident that God had bestowed on both his children, a miracle that taught us about our Lord’s true character.”

As Carl’s voice became only a whisper, one sweet resident raised her arms above her head, and with tears running down her cheeks, broke into shouts of joy and praise to the Lord. We then sang the old hymn, “Amazing Grace”, as an ending to a very inspiring and unforgettable devotional time together.

Dear readers, the following Scripture will add credence to Carl’s touching story of a miracle that was bestowed on him during the darkest of hours, and shared equally with the most inconceivable individual imaginable; that being a person labeled as “the enemy”.

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles.... (Proverbs 24:17)

Folks, the best closing as to the belief in miracles comes from “Desire of the Everlasting Hills” by Thomas Cahill:

“In the final analysis, the modern problem with miracles is little different from what the ancient one would have been. If one believes in a God who heals, then healing in itself---whether of the quotidian (occurring every day) kind or of an uncommon and spectacular sort---will hardly seem inconceivable or out of reach.”

He then continues with, “As LarFarge, son of the American painter said it best with the words, “For those who believe in God, no explanation is necessary. For those who do not, no explanation is possible.”

In closing, dear child, if you are reading or hearing these words, and do not believe in God, it is the writer’s greatest hope that you will bow your head and say, “Lord, please erase my unbelief.” Amen!



(Christ Healing the Sick 1813, by Washington Allston, commons.wikimedia.org)