

Fil-Am Community Church

Pastor Rolly Estabillo

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Miracles Are Everywhere

“Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe[a] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

John 20:30-31

Good morning. Today I invite you to join me and Pastor Dave as we begin a journey that will take us through the next few weeks. The new movie, *Miracles from Heaven*, starring Jennifer Garner, will serve as our backdrop. The film is based on the true story of a little girl named Annabel Beam who was miraculously healed from a life-threatening illness through unexpected events. Her story is recounted by her mom, Christy Beam, in a book with the same title that came out in April of this year. The events, however, happened in 2011.

If you remember, last year, right around the same month, we also did a series on miracles. We called it “It’s a Miracle!” So, what’s the difference? The difference is that, last year, we looked at a few of the specific miracles of Jesus mentioned in the Bible and tried to relate them to our lives today. In the series we’re going to do for the next few weeks, we’re going to focus on three aspects of our lives that can be considered miracles from heaven. Then, you’ll begin to see that the things you take for granted, they can make a big difference in your lives.

If you haven’t already seen the movie, I hope you will take the time to watch the movie in its entirety. My wife and I watched it last Friday and it will truly

inspire you. The miracles, big and small, that you'll find in the movie will assure you that there's a God who cares for you, who knows every detail of your lives. Just don't forget to bring a box of Kleenex.

BTW, to motivate you, we'll run an incentive during this entire series. Bring a friend or friends with you to see the movie and your friend can watch it for free. Just keep your friend's ticket, give it to Kuya Rey, and he will refund you the price of the ticket. The only condition is that your friend must not be a Christian. If they become a Christian because of that movie, Kuya Rey will give you a free ticket every month for the same movie. Seriously, invite your friend to church, too, after seeing the movie. Tell them we're doing a series.

Anyway, over the next three weeks, we will be using short clips from this film to help us dive deeper into God's Word and into each of our own stories of faith. We begin today by watching once more the trailer of the movie. It serves as an introduction to some of the themes of *Miracles from Heaven* and some of the themes we'll be examining together. Let's watch:

VIDEO: *Miracles from Heaven*

Miracles. What do you think of miracles?

There was this CEO of a large company who was walking to the cafeteria along with two of his secretaries. Upon tripping on a bottle, a genie appeared and asked the threesome if they would like to each make a wish. This is a true story, btw. The first secretary excitedly exclaimed, "I wish I was on a beach in a tropical island!" Immediately her wish was granted. The next secretary proclaimed, "I wish I was on a tour of France!" Immediately her wish too, was granted. Being that it was now his turn to make a wish the CEO exclaimed "I want the two of them back in their offices right after lunch!"

Some people recognize a miracle and learn from it. Anyway, there are a lot of questions surrounding miracles in our culture today. What are miracles? Are

they real? Do they still happen? In a survey conducted in 2013, majority of people in America believe in miracles – 72%. But that is down from 79% in 2005.

As Christians, however, we believe that God, especially, when he came down to earth as Jesus, performed numerous miracles. What is God's purpose then in a miracle? Why did he perform miracles?

Often these questions are raised as we look at a specific miracle—a moment in time, an event that can't be explained by natural means. The Bible has plenty of accounts of miraculous events, many of them in the Gospels.

The first account of Jesus performing a miracle comes in John 2. I'm sure you know the story. In it, we find Jesus at a wedding feast with His family and disciples. Part way through the celebration it becomes clear that the host has run out of wine for the wedding party. Jesus's mother, Mary, makes sure Jesus knows this. And though the Bible language is very straightforward, telling us that Mary says, "They have no more wine," there's much more motherspeak to the statement than that—kind of an implied sense of *Son, what are you going to do about this situation, because I think You should do something to fix it right about now*. Then even when Jesus protests a bit, Mary gives the servants a knowing directive: *You guys do whatever He says*. I think she probably had a smile on her face when she said that. So Jesus tells the servants to fill jugs of water and then to take some to the master of the banquet, who declares it to be the best wine of the night.

Why did Jesus do this? Perhaps out of compassion for the wedding host who faced humiliation at not having enough to serve his guests. Maybe Jesus did this miracle because His mother asked Him to. We aren't told all the reasons involved, but verse 11 says, "*What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.*" It was the beginning of the revelation of who He was, and in experiencing the miraculous, Jesus's disciples believed.

The changing of water to wine was only the beginning of many more miracles throughout Jesus's ministry. There are more than 30 of them.

I counted about 37. We can categorize the miracles of Jesus according to the following. These are the common categories for the miracles of Jesus:

1. Miracles of Healing

For example, in the same area of Cana where Jesus transformed the water into wine, a certain royal official came to Jesus and asked that He heal his son who was sick and close to dying. In John 4 we are told of how Jesus healed this man's son. The Gospels contain many more accounts of healing for the sick, the blind, the deaf, and the demon-possessed.

2. Miracles of Provision

Jesus also performed *miracles of provision*. We see His provision in the feeding of 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish as recorded in Matthew 14. Luke 5 tells of Jesus on a boat with His disciples, who had fished all night without catching any fish. But at Jesus's instruction, the nets are dropped and the disciples experience abundant provision. Luke 5:6-7 tells us, "When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink." Jesus provided these fishermen with food, with means for their livelihood, and with a sign to fill them with faith. It was provision in every way.

3. Miracles of Protection

Then there are *miracles of protection*. The calming of the storm is a miracle of protection. Mark 4 tells the story of the disciples, experienced on the water but finding themselves in a storm so fierce that they fear for their lives. But in the midst of that chaos, Jesus calms the storm and demonstrates His power over nature

simply by speaking. Mark 4:39 says, *“He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, ‘Quiet! Be still!’ Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.”*

Of course, all of these miracles culminate in the ultimate.

4. Miracles of Life

These are the miracles wherein Jesus brought to life those who were dead, like Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus, and the widow’s son. But they all died again. Jesus, however, when he raised himself from the dead defeated death itself. It is the greatest miracle of all that echoes triumphantly through eternity. And through his resurrection, those who believe in him will never taste death again when they leave this world.

So why did Jesus perform these miracles? What was their purpose and why are they written down in the Bible for us to read today? The answer is in our text this morning. It says, *“Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”*

This is an important key to understanding miracles. Let’s read that last part again: *“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”*

Miracles are amazing. They cannot be explained. Science itself has no answers. In fact, in the movie, Dr. Nurko was as befuddled as Annabel’s mom with regards to the healing that took place in the girl’s body. Miracles are mind-blowing events and occurrences that twist or defy the natural laws of our world and existence—but miracles are not an end in and of themselves. God’s purpose in miracles is not to show off. His purpose is to cause people to believe in Him, to come into relationship with Him, and to receive the eternal life He offers.

So, you see, miracles are part of a much bigger story! But sometimes when we become too focused on miraculous moments, we risk missing that larger purpose of receiving “life in his name.” And when we miss that, we miss the bigger miracle of life. It’s like the old saying about missing the forest for the trees. By becoming too focused on the details of one miracle, we can miss God’s larger message. So, there’s more than meets the eye in a miracle.

In *Miracles from Heaven*, the Beam family experiences a miraculous moment, an unexplainable healing. But the bigger and more powerful story in the film is the way their family discovers God’s miracles all around them.

There’s a part in the movie where Jennifer Garner quotes Albert Einstein: “There are only two ways to live. One is as if nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything were a miracle.”

At first glance, it may seem as if this approach cheapens miracles. If everything is a miracle, then don’t miracles lose their meaning and their extraordinary nature? But when you consider this quote in terms of a way of living rather than a method for labeling events, it is clear that this is what God intends for us all. It’s an outlook of wonder and gratitude and worship. It’s an attitude of listening and joining with all of God’s creation around us in praise. After all, Scripture tells us that, “*The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands*” (Psalm 19:1). You see, the whole world, all of creation, each one of our lives really, is a miracle created and sustained by a living and loving God. Miracles truly are all around us, and our response is to believe. When our eyes are opened to the miraculous, we see God at work throughout the world every day.

If you only hear one thing today, hear this: Don’t miss the miracle that the God of the universe loves you and cares about you each and every day. Out of that love, He sent His Son to die on a cross so that you could have life, true life,

restored life, forgiven life, transformed life, eternal life. Every day is a miracle—not because of some unexplainable moment, but because God takes the commonplace moments of our lives, redeems them, and sets them aside as holy.

When we trust in Him, He not only performs specific miracles on occasion, but He continuously fills us with the miracle of His life and His love. I like the quote from Wayne Dwyer, author of “Your Erroneous Zones”, *“I am realistic – I expect miracles.”*

What does it look like to live our lives daily in a way that embraces the bigger picture of God’s miraculous work? Over the next few weeks we are going to look closer at three themes, three aspects of our lives, but we can learn from them today in a brief overview.

The first theme is the

Miracle of Community

As believers, we are called to be like Jesus. And we are called to live together as the body of Christ. Romans 12:4-5 says, *“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”*

We are made to live in community with one another. And God calls us to extend that community by showing God’s love to those around us—that includes our friends and neighbors as well as strangers. First John 4:19 sums it up by saying, *“We love because he first loved us.”* Through our actions, we have the amazing opportunity to be part of sharing God’s miraculous love with the world.

David Carr, a member of the band THIRD DAY which was the Worship Team in the movie, said, *“Sometimes a miracle is someone stepping into a situation at the right time and being a miracle for somebody.”* That is the miracle of community.

Another theme we will explore is the

Miracle of Faith

God in His grace takes our weakness and our doubt and works within them to produce strength and faith. Hebrews 11:1 tells us, *“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”* But it doesn’t say that confidence and assurance don’t come without struggle. When we struggle with life’s circumstances and with the deep questions of faith, it is not a sign of weakness but an opportunity to experience God in deeper ways.

In an interview, Jennifer Garner refers to the journey of faith in the life of her character, Christy. Garner talks about how her character comes to realize that, *“When I don’t feel you as a presence, I have to work that much harder to know and trust that you’re with me, and that’s what faith is.”*

You see, faith is not the absence of doubt. And faith doesn’t depend on us, but on God. There is one famous preacher in Houston, Texas who states that it is our faith that activates the power of God. That directly contradicts what the Bible says, *“If we are faithless, he remains faithful.”* (2 Tim. 2:13) That’s reassuring especially when I don’t feel like loving God. He still loves me. I know some doubters will say that Jesus talks about how our faith can move mountains. That’s another matter and we’ll talk about that in a couple of weeks. In any case, we can take encouragement from 2 Corinthians 12:9-10: *“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”*

Wherever you find yourself on the journey of faith today, know that the miracle of faith is that God meets us where we are, and that His grace and power are enough.

Finally, we'll also look at the theme of the

Miracle of Love

As we look at God's love for us and for the world, we see that His love is truly beyond explanation. His love defies the brokenness of our world. It cannot be contained by the limits of our world.

In future weeks, we will explore how, even in the midst of life's greatest pain, we can trust in who God is, not just in what He does. God doesn't just do loving things, *God is love*. First John 4:16 says, "*And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.*"

Before I end this message, I'd like to show you a video of the interview conducted by Fox News with Christy Beam and her daughter Annabel. Let's watch.

VIDEO: Interview

What I find interesting is Annabel's response to the question: What would you say to those who are skeptical? She says, "I would say 'You don't have to believe that what I'm saying is true.' I won't shove it down their throat. But this is an opportunity for them to get closer to God."

Some of us may believe her story. Some of us may not. But this is an opportunity for each of us to get closer to God. Some of us may have become calloused in our hearts because of what's happening in our lives. But this story I hope will instill new hope in your hearts and rekindle the fire you once had. I hope you will see yourself in the center of this adventure as we unpack the miracle of God's story in our lives. I hope you'll join us next week as we continue this journey together. In the meantime, let's open our eyes and our hearts to God's love in and around us. Let's wonder and rejoice at the miraculous truth that the God of

the universe stands with arms and heart open to draw us into His true, ultimate, eternal life through His Son Jesus.