

UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

“*So That You May Believe*”

Scripture Reading: JOHN 20:30-31

-) **SLIDES 1-6**. Bible Jeopardy!
-) **SLIDE 7**. Read today’s Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 8**. Today we continue in our sermon series on Understanding Spiritual Gifts. This is week #9 in this series. I have titled today’s message “*So That You May Believe*” (v31).
-) **SLIDE 9**. We have covered the Spiritual sign gifts of Prophecy (fore-telling) and Apostles.
-) **SLIDE 10**. Today we will cover the gifts of Healing and the Effecting of Miracles.
-) The gift of Prophecy (fore-telling) and speaking in tongues were indeed miraculous gifts. But these two gifts of Healing and Effecting of Miracles were certainly the most prominent gifts that were demonstrated before the people and classified as signs and wonders. And without a doubt these were the signs that John was referring to in today’s text.
-) **SLIDE 11**. I am a cessationist. I believe the Bible teaches that these six SIGN gifts ceased with the end of the apostolic age which would be around 100 AD. They are no longer for today. The Bible is now our witness.
-) Mike, are you saying you do not believe in miracles and healings today? No, I’m not saying that. I very much believe in miracles and healings today. I just don’t believe certain gifted people have the gift of healing today as they did during the apostolic age. So let’s dig into God’s Word and see what we can conclude about miracles.

-) **SLIDE 12.** We will answer these two questions this morning. What is a miracle? What is the purpose of a miracle?
-) **SLIDE 13.** First, what is a miracle? *“An event that involves the direct and powerful action of God, transcending the ordinary laws of nature and defying common expectations of behavior.”* You just don’t start with five loaves and two fish and feed 5000+ people. That is a miracle. It transcends the ordinary laws of nature.
-) **SLIDE 14.** Please note that all miracles and healings recorded in the Bible were immediate and complete. MARK 1:40-42.
-) Now let’s answer our second question. What is the purpose of a miracle? And once we know and understand this, the rest becomes easy to understand.
-) The Bible describes miracles using three terms: *signs, wonders, and mighty works.* A few weeks ago we talked about God giving Moses three signs (miracles) to take back to the Israelites in Egypt to validate that Moses was indeed sent by God. Name all three. Three more quick examples.
-) **SLIDE 15.** In JOHN 2:1-10, Jesus turns water into wine. JOHN 2:11. Let’s exegete this verse.
-) **SLIDE 16.** The purpose of a miracle is to act as a **SIGN**. A sign for what? Well, what does a sign do? It points us in a certain direction. Let’s look at two of those directions.
-) **SLIDE 17.** The miraculous sign of turning water into wine in Cana revealed the **GLORY** of Jesus. It revealed that He was the Messiah, the fulfillment of OT prophecy.
-) **SLIDE 18.** Because of this sign, the disciples **BELIEVED** in Him. We know, however, that these miraculous signs did not convince everyone. Many of the Pharisees claimed Jesus was doing these things by the power of Beelzebub. But we know that these sign miracles were Jesus’ fulfillment of OT prophecy to prove He was the expected Messiah.

-) But some people don't want or need a Messiah. They want to be their own messiah.
-) A second example. In 1KINGS 17:11-24 there is a story about a widow at Zarephath. (Explain).
-) **SLIDE 19**. 1KINGS 17:24. The miracles Elijah performed would validate the messenger and therefore validate his message. Just as the disciples believed after seeing water turned into wine, so this widow believed too.
-) **SLIDE 20**. Example #3. In ACTS 16:25-34 we read the story of the Philippian Jailer. ACTS 16:25-26. There was a miracle that occurred. Right? What did that miracle lead to?
-) **SLIDE 21**. ACTS 16:32-34. A miracle is a sign to validate the messenger and the message to the unbeliever. Just as the disciples believed after seeing water turned into wine, so this Philippian jailer believed too.
-) **SLIDE 22**. You will never see a case in the NT where Jesus or an apostle **HEALS** a believer. Why? If the purpose of a miracle is a sign to point a person to Christ, every believer has already been pointed to Christ. There's no need for a miracle.
-) So do certain people have the gift of healing and the effecting of miracles today? As a cessationist I have my answer for that. No. That gift has ceased. No one person today has that gift. But as we all know, there are those who say they do.
-) Since the beginning of the Charismatic/Pentecostal movement in the early 1900s, there are those who claim to have this gift of healing and miracles. People such as John G. Lake, Smith Wigglesworth, Aimee Semple McPherson, William Branham, Oral Roberts, Kathryn Kuhlman, Jack Coe, Todd Bentley, Kenneth Copeland, Pat Robertson, Benny Hinn, Peter Popoff, Todd White, Bill Johnson, WV Grant, and Robert Tilton.
-) And so many more.

-) Does God really use these people today to heal other people on a consistent, immediate, and complete way? I believe if He did, these faith healers would use the gift in the exact same way and for the exact same purpose as was done 2000 years ago by Jesus and the apostles. Not to heal the believer of his/her infirmity, but to lead the unbeliever to Christ through the sign. The question then becomes, “*Are they?*”
-) I’m sure most of the people who show up at a healing crusade are believers. Let’s look at the apostle Paul.
-) **SLIDE 23.** In ACTS 15 we have the Jerusalem Council. ACTS 15:12.
-) Barnabas and Paul were performing signs and wonders among the Gentiles. Among who? The Gentiles. The Gentiles were what? Unbelievers. So this was the right place and in front of the right people to be performing signs and wonders.
-) **SLIDE 24.** 1TIM 5:23. Paul never healed Timothy, a believer. Because that is not the purpose of a miracle sign.
-) **SLIDE 25.** 2TIM 4:20. Paul never healed Trophimus, a believer. Because that is not the purpose of a miracle sign.
-) **SLIDE 26.** There is a church in Redding CA called Bethel Church. The leaders of this church are Bill and Beni Johnson. They are part of the NAR. She changed her name from Brenda to Beni after Beni Hinn. They and their church believe the SIGN gifts are all still valid today. They have captured the hearts of many young people.
-) **SLIDE 27.** This church also has a school called BSSM (Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry) where they teach the undiscerning students how to prophesy, how to speak in tongues, and how to perform miracles. The tuition is \$5250 for years 1 (1300) and 2 (650). \$900 for year #3.
-) **SLIDE 28.** These truths right here immediately disqualify this school from being even remotely credible.

-) **SLIDE 29**. Both wear glasses. Beni died of cancer in July of 2022 at the age of 67. Where are the miracles? Where are the healings? Answer. They don't exist and these people know it.
-) The BSSM school closed down in 2020 due to the outbreak of COVID-19.
-) **SLIDE 30**. Question. Did Jesus have authority over the seas and the winds? Yes. Gloria Copeland video.
-) She has power over the weather and so does her husband Ken but they don't fly in bad weather. Amazing.
-) Who attends a faith-healing crusade? Possibly the curious. But I believe it is mostly the desperate. The needy. The down and out. People who are at the end of their rope and need a miracle because science and medicine do not bring any relief. And most if not all walk away from that crusade disappointed, discouraged, and still broken.
-) Do I believe in healing and miracles today? Absolutely. Again, I do not believe any one person has that apostolic gift today.
-) I have now suffered over 7 months with my vertigo issues and headaches and fatigue and ear-ringing, and depression on top of that. But, faith healers never were an option. I prayed and asked you to pray for me too. I was OK with God's will.
-) That's how we do it here at BGCC. If a situation requires a miraculous act from God, which I firmly believe miracles still occur today, they will only be brought about by prayer (LUKE 11:5-8 (boldness); LUKE 18:1-8 (persistence)); JAMES 5:14 (righteous man); 1 JOHN 5:14 (by the sovereign will of God) which trumps everything else.
-) Praying for Brenda Wills.
-) I have about 10 hours' worth of material on this subject. I will summarize that down to 4 quick facts I need to share about modern-day miracles and healing crusades.

-) **SLIDE 31.** Most people who have a genuine and serious medical condition are never called up on stage to be healed. The reason for that should be obvious.
-) **SLIDE 32.** Some faith healers tell the people to sow their seed money into their ministry before a healing can ever take place.
-) **SLIDE 33.** Is the healing crusade all about the healing or is it to present a sign to the unbeliever? If the miracles are fake (which they all are), there's a good chance any conversions might be too.
-) **SLIDE 34.** Satan can and does and will continue to perform counterfeit and deceiving miracles. Just saying.
-) **SLIDE 35.** JOHN 20:30,31. The ultimate healing and miracle comes when a lost sinner repents and trusts Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
-) Next week we will conclude this series and talk about speaking in tongues. Please come back.

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