

“What’s a Miracle For?”

A sermon delivered by Timothy J. Mulder at
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Isaiah 6:1-8 and Luke 5: 1-11

What’s a miracle for? Do you suppose God was bored one day and just wanted to have some fun? Or perhaps, God saw someone in misery or wanted to right some wrong? Why did God fill the nets with fish that day - just so Peter and Company had a good payday at the market? What’s a miracle for?

Let’s start by realizing that one person’s miracle may not be a miracle to the next. I was standing next to Dr. Lenny Nicosea who performed the cesarean for the birth of my son, Thomas. As that child came out of his mother’s body I saw this life that I had loved before he had even taken a breath and I gasped, “It’s a miracle.” To which Lenny replied, “No, Tim, it’s just another day at work.” I saw God in that moment but for Lenny, it wasn’t the same. And that’s OK. God probably did a different miracle for Lenny. I believe that a great deal of faith has to do with perspective, what we see when we look at the world, or even more, what we are looking to see. Do we see God? Do we see good?

Miracles are how God gets our attention.

Let’s go back to our Old Testament lesson. The King Uzziah had just died and the country was in a rotten mess. A poor farmer was feeling helpless in the midst of it all. Then one day he had a dream, a vision. Suddenly he was in a grand hall where the ceiling, walls and floor were shaking the plaster loose. The strangest animals were flying all over the place, with six wings. There was so much smoke that one struggled to breathe. The place was saturated with prayer (smoke). Then he heard an awesome voice, and fell to his knees, confessing God’s greatness and his own unworthiness. The coal that was brought to his lips was symbolic of purifying his speech. Why? Because of what is was about to have to go do, to say – truth to power.

Yahweh was calling this simple farmer to go to the princes of the land, the corrupt priests, generals and ordinary folk and to call them to return to the Lord. Isaiah fell to his knees and said, “Here am I Lord, send me.”

Men and women, I believe God sent that vision to Isaiah knowing just how much he needed to be reassured that God is real, and that God is mighty, and that God is not to be mocked, turned from or forgotten. God is to be worshipped, followed, obeyed and praised. Isaiah had a huge job, bigger than he ever imagined he would ever, could ever do or be asked to do. But with the power of that experience he almost shouted, “Here I am, send me.” The miracle propelled the motion.

Peter may have been a good fisherman, but that day when his empty nets were filled to bursting, he fell to his knees. It was not his skill or luck; it was God, and Peter realized that. Jesus said, I’ve got a job for you and it won’t be because you’re so smart, good or strong. It will be because I am, but I need you to go find people. That miracle propelled Peter into motion and the Church that came as a result has never stopped since. Jesus built the church on the rock of Peter the feckless fisherman.

The miracle itself is never the point. The thousands on the hillside who got fed by a few loaves and fish became hungry the next day, but they knew, oh they knew that it was God who

had fed them. The sick man who was healed knew there were other sick people, but he would testify for the rest of his life to what God had done in his life. Lazarus was raised from the dead and then he died again after that, but everyone who saw him come out of that grave would forever realize that it is God who gives life.

You may meet someone at work or on vacation or something may happen to you when you are least expecting it. Not everyone experiences the same miracle. But the world is full of them and that at some point along life's road, a miracle may hit you over the head that you cannot but realize, this must be God. God wants your attention, God grabs your heart.

God still looks for people who will fall to their knees and say, "Send me," to feed the hungry at Lighthouse Shelter, to tutor the kids at Stanton Center, to give the needy family that bank loan they need or to befriend that unpopular person. Send me, Lord to stand up for justice or to walk away from violence or to sacrifice some of my wealth for the sake of others. Send me go fishing for people to bring to St. Anne's for hope, for forgiveness, inspiration, compassion.

Miracles happen, not everyday, but in every life. Then be ready to fall to your knees. What's a miracle for? God is calling you, inviting you, needing you to be moved to action for the sake of love in this world. Send me. Send us all.