

“Walking, Talking Miracles!”—1 Corinthians 1:26-31

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Walking, Talking Miracles!”, is 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 → *Consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, Whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Therefore, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Don't you just love all the wonderful miracles God is doing in your life every day? Some may think: “What miracles? What are you talking about?” Many people who hear the word “miracle” tend to think of some “extra-ordinary” activity of God which defies the laws of nature. They think of something special, not necessarily the “hum-drum, ho-hum, boredom” stuff that we go

through each day. Such a limited understanding causes many to ask: “What miracles did God do in my life today?”

A struggle we face in our sin is the many times in a given day when we don't recognize that God is the great miracle worker. This happens when we perceive our lives from only our own perspectives. Therefore, if a “miracle” is going to be recognized as a “miracle” **for me**, it has to be something that really impresses me, grabs my attention and is something out of the ordinary. Actually, this perspective implies that if God is going to work in my life He's got to work in an extra-ordinary way because He's working with such an “extra-ordinary” person. It is actually quite a prideful attitude with which to function and hits deep into the heart of my sin!

In our text Paul basically describes us as walking, talking miracles. However, the only way that we can recognize this is by recognizing who we are **in Christ** and remembering who we were without Christ.

Paul admonished these Christians in Corinth about the “great” wisdom they believed they possessed. However, their so-called “wisdom” had caused all kinds of divisions and struggles among the members of the congregation. They needed to re-focus on **God's** wisdom to recognize His miraculous work in their congregation, a focus needed for every congregation of believers in Christ.

Paul wants us to recognize God's power and methods by contrasting who we are now in Christ to what we were when we were called to faith in Christ. Asking us to consider when we were called into this faith relationship with Jesus, he mentions characteristics which would make a person look “special” from the world’s perspective—the *wise* and *powerful* and those *of noble birth*.

We can see the attention which such people receive in our world on a daily basis. Education, power and pedigree seem to have quite the influence in our society. The world gives much credence to the famous and their opinions carry a lot of weight for many. Their influence can never be underestimated, especially when it comes to the sinful influences which they have on people!

So . . . if wisdom, influence and the family into which you are born would be so important to being a Christian, then why did God chose you and I? It’s a reminder that God has no perfect people with whom to work, since everyone is a sinner no matter how great a person may think he is. It reinforces the power of God’s grace with His desire to work through sinners such as us.

In verses 27-28 of our text other reasons are given for God’s choice of us: *God chose what is foolish in the world **to shame the wise**; God chose what is weak in the world **to shame the strong**; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, **to bring to nothing things that are***. In other words, God does things in our lives **to completely “knock**

down” what is important in our own eyes and see what is important in His eyes! Let’s look at each of these characteristics.

What is foolish in the world → When we read much of the Jesus’ teachings in the Gospels from a worldly perspective they sound like foolishness. In Matthew 5 Jesus talked about *the poor in spirit . . . the meek and those who are persecuted* as being *blessed*. From the world’s perspective it’s the powerful who inherit the earth, appear to succeed in life and are “blessed.” It’s just the opposite of what Jesus was saying.

Our text says God works through *what is weak in the world*. This could be anything that appears to be insufficient to get the job done. It’s actually a picture of us frail sinners whom Paul later referred to as *jars of clay* (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:7) which are easily cracked and broken. God’s working through *what is weak in the world* can remind us of the many frail means He uses to bring about His blessings and miracles: a rib to create a woman (cf. Genesis 2:21), five loaves of bread and two small fish to feed 5,000 people (cf. Matthew 14:16-21), a log to sweeten bitter waters (cf. Exodus 15:23-25), water to bestow eternal life (cf. 1 Peter 3:21), bread and wine to give the forgiveness of sins (cf. Matthew 26:26-28), just to name a few. It is the nature of a miracle for God to use *what is weak in the world* to display His power!

God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not

→ We experience God's working through such humble means especially in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Allowing Himself to be unjustly *despised*, beaten, mocked and crucified looked like total foolishness, not only in the eyes of unbelievers, but even to His own disciples. Many of them thought Jesus should He have exerted His divine power and fought back. At this point they could not see God's miracle amidst the madness.

So God chooses these ways to completely “knock down” what is important in our own eyes and give us complete trust in Him. Yahweh says in Isaiah 55:8-9 → *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.* Do you see the challenge before us? Since God's *ways* and *thoughts* are so different than what we're used to dealing with in our worldly ways of thinking, how are we going to be able to get on the same “wave length” as God? It demands a miracle!

Paul does this contrasting because He had a great sense of God's fantastic miracle in his own life—not just once, but every moment of every day! It is the miracle of **grace**! By remembering what he was before his conversion, Paul could keep his faith in a proper perspective as He served the Lord. Listen to his reflections in 1 Timothy 1:12-15 → *I thank Him Who has given me*

strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because He judged me faithful, appointing me to His service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

He kept a miracle perspective! Later in this epistle he described his hard work as not him working *but the grace of God that is with him* at work and considered himself *unworthy to be called an apostle!* (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:9-10) In every one of His letters to the churches every greeting begins with **grace** to you and peace . . .

You want to see miracles? Look around you! **Everyone of us is here because God's grace, love and forgiveness in Jesus Christ is at work!**

We are disciples of Jesus **totally** because of God's grace shown us in the Person & Work of Jesus Christ! In other words, it is a miracle to take someone who by nature in sin is an enemy of God and then give him the desire to serve God. That's every single one of us. Such a miracle brings us to worship, thank and praise God!

Because God has done His great miracle in our lives by choosing us sinners to be His people we will boast greatly *in the Lord*. (cf. verse 31). It's

boasting ***in the Lord*** because of His **grace**. It's not a boasting of what we do or how wise we may think we are or how faithful we think we may be. It's a boasting ***in the Lord***, because of His love for us in Jesus, *the source of your life . . . Whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.* (cf. verse 30)

God is still producing miracles in our lives as we see Him using us and working through us every day. One of the greatest miracles I see happen every day is the fact that we are even here as a fellowship of believers in this congregation. In the midst of the spiritual battles and struggles with sin that we all face every single day we are still able to accomplish the ministry of Jesus Christ as we depend totally on the work of Christ for us and the Holy Spirit's working through us! Not only does God give us His Holy Spirit *that we might understand the things freely given us by God* (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:12), but His Holy Spirit gifts us to share the grace with others. (cf. 1 Corinthians 12)

As we experience God's presence in our lives daily through faith in Jesus Christ we discover that we are walking, talking miracles. We are also walking, talking miracles for others so that they too can come to know Jesus Christ and how He can take something that is so full of sin and looks useless and bring it forth into new life and produce His power and His work. Why? Because we are so competent? Because we're so knowledgeable? Because we've been

trained? No. Our competence is not what matters. What matters is the Holy Spirit's power working through us by God's grace in Jesus Christ to give us faith in Christ, keep us in that faith and express that faith in **His** miraculous way. Amen.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Corinthians 1:3)

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