

Chapter 29

He is the Same Yesterday, Today, and Forever

It seems to be a human characteristic that few of us are capable of steadily sustained effort toward a goal. We move in impulses like alternating electric current – sometimes these impulses are close together, sometimes spread over a wider period. We receive sudden inspiration, a fresh drive, and we accomplish a great deal in a short time. Then there comes a static period until the next impulse comes, when we advance slowly if at all.

Not everyone, but most of us climb to God in a series of stages actuated by some special grace or revelation that inspires us to vigorously mount to the next height. For example, we may be instrumental in saving a difficult soul, a new road may be suddenly revealed to us, a different insight into a question which may be troubling us, a signal of God's omniscience and omnipotence may be demonstrated to us in some dramatic way. Then with joy and great encouragement in His goodness and power, we leap ahead with enthusiasm and new energy to do His service.

In this regard I have often said that there is nothing in the world that gives a person a new impetus in carrying on God's work than the miracle of a divine healing or deliverance. However, our tendency is to think of God's miracles as events more or less related to olden times, ancient history occurring in the pages of the Old and New Testaments when saints and prophets walked the earth, and God was very close to man. The old Biblical faith, trust, and hope in God as our only refuge and relief from cataclysms of nature, the ravages of mysterious diseases, and the tragic consequences of accident have been transferred by many to the achievements of science, medicine, and invention. The "miracles" accomplished by these lofty pursuits of man in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are not to be denied nor their results in the increased health, happiness, and safety of today's common man.

But all of us are aware that there are times when all of man's worldly knowledge becomes bewildered and powerless, and we turn to God as

our final desperate hope. In the old days man turned to God more frequently, believing in and appealing to Him in every suffering, frustration, and disappointment. Today with our habit of seeking human help in many of our daily difficulties, we do not go so often to God, and we wonder sometimes if perhaps God, too, has gotten out of the habit of miracles.

As I have put pen and paper retracing my journey with the Lord, I can state with full conviction that God is not out of the habit of miracles. Throughout my life and ministry, God has proven His faithfulness by performing miracles of provision, deliverance, and divine healing. To underscore this conviction, I want to share yet two more instances of God's miracle-working power in my life.

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Shortly after I was saved and about two months before our last child was born, I endeavored to climb up a chair when the rung broke beneath my feet, and its jagged end pierced my limb, causing a deep, nasty wound that later developed into a running ulcer. After repeated visits to the doctor, after many treatments in an effort to relieve and cure the condition without any success, the doctor reluctantly informed me that I had an ulcer which would probably give me trouble the rest of my life.

On each visit he would clean out the wound, treat and dress it, and make it comfortable under an elastic stocking. He said this was all that could be done for me. Then he invariably followed this with a warning of what an awful thing I could expect for the rest of my life because of this unfortunate accident. This man was a scientist and his conclusions were based on up-to-date medical knowledge. He desire was not to frighten or depress me but merely prepare my mind for a condition I would have to put up with in the future. Some years before, I would have believed him without question and accepted the fact that I would have to live with this painful and troublesome thing for all the years to come.

But at this time I had just found Jesus Christ as my Savior and Baptizer. I was told that He was also a Healer just as He was when He was upon the earth. I believed, and I was prayed for by one of God's servants and assured that God had heard our prayers. By the time I was due to make the next visit to the doctor, it appeared to me certainly as

though God had definitely heard us and that the healing was surely taking place.

In the modern, scientific atmosphere of the doctor's office, while waiting to be called, it was difficult to maintain the spiritual conviction which I had had before I left my home for this visit. Surely I thought this place is one the shrines of modern medicine, and this man's knowledge, training, experience, and research qualifies him more than I to decide whether this condition was capable of healing. But then I reflected that his point of view did not take into consideration the spiritual fact of a miracle; it was based on worldly logic and reasoning only. Besides, had I not seen the evidence with my own eyes in the changed appearance of the wound? So when I entered his private office as he was making ready to dress the limb as usual, I said to him, "Doctor, I believe that my limb is healed."

He laughed and said kindly, "There is no use in doing any wishful thinking about this. You have something here for the rest of your life."

Then he opened up the bandages and looked at the wound. His eyes opened wide in amazement and with a low whistle he remarked incredulously, "Why, this is certainly a healing scab."

And then, in a half-embarrassed effort to laugh it off, he said, "That sure is some Vaseline that I have been using on this limb."

I said to him, "Doctor, do you honestly believe it was the Vaseline that has accomplished this remarkable cure?"

He answered with a sober frankness, "No, but I wouldn't know what else to credit it to."

Then I told him how I had found the Lord Jesus Christ to be the same today as He was when He would heal all who came to Him. I related how I had been prayed for by one of the servants of God and had noticed a definite improvement in my condition after a lack of success by his medical efforts.

He was very much impressed and said, "Well, more power to you."

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During one particular winter season I was suffering with sinus trouble. The pain and distress were indescribable. There seemed to be no respite or relief for me no matter what I did. Those who have gone through this type of illness will understand what I mean when I say that attack followed attack with the excruciating pain. I finally consented to

visit a sinus specialist, because I feared I might lose my mind due to the terrific pain.

The doctor examined me thoroughly and discovered I had a blocked nasal atrium. The secretions discharged by the infected area had hardened in the channel between my nose and ear. As past sinus sufferers are unhappily aware, this location is very difficult to access for treatment. The specialist tried the lights and everything else he knew for external treatment until it seemed that my eyeball was being forced out of the socket. In fact, so terrible was the pressure and so sure was I that my eye was actually protruding, I would look in the mirror for verification that the eye was in its proper position.

This treatment went on for some time. Before I was persuaded to go to this doctor, I had been prayed for and was reluctant to ask for medical help because I believed I would be delivered of my misery through divine intervention. However, because of the continuous, unbearable pain it seemed I was forced to be willing to appeal for medical help. After my initial visit to the doctor, I returned home and remained in bed until what little relief he had been able to give me wore off. Then I would struggle out of bed and return for another treatment.

This routine went on for some time until it became evident to both the doctor and myself that it was of no use. Finally he confessed that the treatment was not accomplishing any lasting good and the cause of the trouble was not being reached. On this occasion he informed me that the only thing left to do was to operate the following morning.

Before I left his office, he gave me some pills and instructed me to take them just before I left the house the next morning and was to eat no breakfast in preparation for the operation. I told him I could not promise to appear for the operation. He could not understand my reluctance to be operated, but I had not yet given up faith that God would Himself intervene. However, I did assure the doctor that I would telephone him first thing in the morning and advise him of my decision.

I returned home and was helped back into bed, simply beside myself with pain and worry. I was in company of many young Christians who could not understand why there had not been an answer to the supplications which had been poured out in my behalf. I have since learned that God's delays are not denials!

That afternoon, Sister Metler, came to visit and pray for me. When she saw the agony I was going through, both physical and spiritual, she knelt down by my bed. I have never seen nor heard since then anything to compare with the compassion with which she appealed to the Lord

for me. She sobbed out the compassion of her heart before God, and no one could have asked for a more devoted, sincere, and passionate advocate. When she left we both knew beyond question, with a witness in our hearts, that the Lord had heard her prayer.

Finally the time came when she had to leave and my husband offered to drive her home. I lay there in bed still suffering and with mixed emotions. I was convinced that God had undoubtedly heard the moving appeal which Sister Metler had poured out for me, and yet the pain had not subsided. Every passing moment brought me closer to the time when I would have to admit defeat and submit to the operation. After a time I had another visitor, a friend who was a practical nurse. As she came into the room and sat down beside my bed she looked at me curiously and asked why I was using so much Kleenex. I replied that it seemed necessary. Then I realized it had only been in the past little while since Sister Metler had left that my consumption of the paper tissues had grown so profuse.

My visitor looked at me closely. Then her face brightened and she declared, "Well, praise God. It's opened!" And indeed it had. The obstruction had begun to dissolve and discharge itself normally. God had performed a miracle! The pain began to ease gradually, and in an amazingly short time I was completely without pain.

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When Jesus Christ walked this earth, he performed great miracles of forgiveness, deliverance, and healing. And, He still has the power and inclination to do the same today. Over and over again throughout my life, God had proved to me, my friends, and loved ones that "He is the same yesterday, today, and forever."²⁶ He isn't just a God of the past; He is the God of our present.

²⁶ Heb. 13:8