

Expect A Miracle Part 5

All Living Things Submit To Christ

Matthew 21:18-22

Memory Verses: Matthew 21:21-22

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Jesus can do miracles in our bodies. Whether healing disease, curing disabilities, or casting out demons, Jesus is sovereign over our bodies and we can trust him to do a miracle in us. But as we saw last week, Jesus can also do miracles with nature. He can create food from nothing. He can turn water into wine. He can calm stormy seas and He can walk on water. Jesus allows our disease and disabilities to show that in our brokenness he can make us whole. And as we saw last week, Jesus breaks the natural order of this world to show us that this world can't break us. If you haven't been able to tell yet, all of the miracles are to show that we can place our trust in Jesus.

Today we continue to see Jesus' sovereign power over nature. Today we will look at the miracles that prove that all living things submit to Christ. Trees do what he wants. Fish do what he wants. As we have heard in the Exodus account, Frogs, Gnats, Locusts, and Flies also do whatever he wants. Ultimately, every living thing is under his control. Look with me at **Job 12:7-10**.

But, as in all miracles we ask, what does that have to do with me? It's interesting, but as we see Jesus doing miracles we never see him make someone do something that they don't want to do. Yes, we have Old Testament examples where God hardened Pharaoh's heart, or turned Nebuchadnezzar into a wild beast for a time, but in the New Testament we do not see that. Yes, Jesus beckons Nicodemus to follow him, but he doesn't force him. Yes, Jesus calls the Rich Young Ruler to sell all that he has, but he doesn't make him do it.

So, why would Jesus make nature, trees, and animals do what he wills, but not us? Again, your answer is simple. He is doing all of these miracles for you! For you to see that he is good and for you to see his power and place your trust in Him. **Though Jesus makes the animals and plants obey his every command, He has given us free will to follow Him by faith.**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first set of miracles that we will look at this morning shows us... **Jesus' Power Over Trees Teaches Us The Power Of Praying With Faith.** Jesus likes his trees; mustard trees, mulberry trees, fig

trees, it don't matter. I could see Jesus walking around with the disciples being just like my father in law or my friend Doug, asking, "do you know what tree this is? Do you know what tree this is?" You know tree guys right? They ask you if you know what every single tree is and I'm always like... I have no idea... it looks to me like a..... uh..... tree! Who has time to memorize what all the trees are? Jesus I guess.

In **Luke 17:5-6** we see that Jesus likes to talk about trees in order to increase our faith. He wants us to have mustard seed sized faith which according to **Matthew 13:32** is the smallest of seeds but grows to be the biggest of all garden plants so that the birds nest in its branches. Not only that but if you have enough faith; just the faith equivalent to a mustard seed you can say to a mulberry tree; "be uprooted and planted in the sea." That's crazy; mulberry trees can grow as tall as 70 feet.

One of Jesus miracles begins with the parable of a fig tree in **Luke 13:6-9**. The basis of the parable is that if a tree doesn't bear fruit then it is no good, but Jesus is patient and willing to allow for growth where there is none yet. This sets up Jesus' actual encounter with the fig tree in **Matthew 21:18-22**. You can also find this miracle in **Mark 11:12-14**, and **20-25**. Jesus wants some figs, but when he comes upon this fig tree it has no fruit. Jesus curses the fig tree and it immediately withers. In accordance with the parable in Luke it is apparent that Jesus has patience but even Jesus' patience will one day run out on those who do not produce spiritual fruit. One thing I find interesting here is that the disciples don't ask Jesus why he cursed the fig tree. It's as if they already understand it because of the parable. What they are interested in is the power which says be cursed and withers trees on command. Jesus tells them that it's a matter of faith. Mustard seed/tree faith. Mulberry tree moving faith. Fig tree withering faith. If you have faith you can also do things like this; move mountains, mulberry trees, whatever...

Jesus puts a finer point on the whole issue in **vs22** where he says **whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith**. The trees point to faith and faith points to prayer. It's interesting the path that Jesus takes us down through his miraculous power of plants. Whether uprooting and planting in the sea, or cursing to a withered stump, Jesus is showing us that his power over plants and living things means we can put our trust in Him in prayer. We may even say, as the disciples, "Lord, how can we do this?" And Jesus says, if you pray with faith you will receive whatever you ask. Is Jesus telling us we can actually move and curse trees with our faith? Possibly, however I've never seen it and we don't even hear of the Apostles doing miracles like that. It is more likely.... **Jesus is using physical living things to point us to the faith necessary for spiritual living**. Perhaps it's time to stretch our prayer muscles. When is the last time you prayed tree moving, tree withering sized prayers? When is the last time you prayed for God to do something so spiritually transformative in your life that it would

literally change your life and the lives of those around you? Jesus, says, when you pray those prayers, he answers big time! Jesus won't just increase your faith for you, he wants you to increase your faith by trusting in Him! **Though Jesus makes the animals and plants obey his every command, He has given us free will to follow Him by faith.**

The second set of miracles we will look at this morning shows us... **Jesus' Power Over Fish Teaches Us Of His Power To Provide Our Every Need.** Just like Jesus likes his trees, he loves his fish. I'll just be honest, I'm not a big fish guy either. And, I know that's a shame because my dad is a fishers biologist. To my dad, fishing is life. Me, fishing is boring. How much cooler would it have been if Jesus had used wolves and bears. I guess fish were easier to handle. There are two miracles that bring to mind Jesus' power over fish. The first story starts with taxes. Who is excited about taxes... I mean.. come on... they're the best. In **Luke 20:19-26** Jesus is confronted with whether we should pay taxes. We see this story also in **Mark 12:13-17**, and **Matthew 22:15-22**. Jesus says it is right to pay what is expected of us in society and to also pay to God what is expected of God. Jesus gives the perfect answer and the pharisees are astounded. Notice they were trying to "catch" Jesus in a trap with his words so they could have reason to kill him. No dice here.

But later we see that Caesar's not the only one after taxes. So are the religious who demanded a temple tax. Look with me at **Matthew 17:24-27**. Jesus asks Simon Peter, does kings take taxes from their sons or others? Peter says, "others." The Point being, God is king and doesn't tax his own people, so Jesus and Peter shouldn't have to pay a temple tax because they are sons of God. But, Jesus pays it anyway... by sending Peter to get a coin out of the first fish he catches. Now, this whole illustration could point to our offerings. When we give in church we don't give because it is required; we give out of faith. And... **sometimes we give to God what we don't have... but then God always provides.** Regardless, Jesus is telling us to have faith. He will pay our way someday.

Jesus not only provides what we are to give to God, but also what we need to live. Now we make it to my favorite miracle of the bunch. We talked about this earlier in Year of the Gospels but we will look at it again right here in **Luke 5:1-11**. Let's watch this **clip** to see what this may have been like. Jesus proves that no catch is too big for him and no need is too out of his reach to give. The miracle causes Simon to bend on his knees and repent of his sin. He knows Jesus is the Messiah and that he is not worthy of his love. **When you recognize the power of God working for you... it should drive you to repentance, worship, and commitment.**

Jesus then asks Peter to step out in faith and follow him. Sometimes Jesus does miracles because of our faith, Sometimes Jesus

does miracles to strengthen our faith. This morning our prayer is that you would see the power of Christ and be strengthened in your faith to follow him. **Though Jesus makes the animals and plants obey his every command, He has given us free will to follow Him by faith.**

Application

Disease obeys. Disabilities obey. Demons obey. Waves obey. Water obeys. Trees obey. Fish obey. There is literally nothing that is not under the sovereign control of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The only thing he is not willing to make happen right now is your response. He won't make you follow him... but he is asking you to trust him and place your faith in him. And it's not blind faith. He has shown you his power. He has proven his ability. And all he says to do is pray and follow him by faith!

Conclusion

So, where is your prayer life right now and how can it be strengthened in faith today? What is the big catch you need Jesus to bring you today? What is the tree moving prayer you need answered? Pray a big prayer right now. Also, where is your walk right now and how can it be strengthened to follow Jesus even more today? What power has Jesus shown you? Is it enough for you to step out in faith and follow him? **Though Jesus makes the animals and plants obey his every command, He has given us free will to follow Him by faith.**