

Miracles

By Ty Blackburn

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Providence Church
2146 Buford Hwy
Buford Hwy, Duluth, GA 30097

Website: www.providenceduluth.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/providencechurch

Please turn with me in your Bibles to the book of 1 Kings 17. We're going to be looking at this chapter as really sort of our point of departure for the message. We've been looking at messages from Kings the last couple of Sundays and today is our third message from this book. 1 & 2 Kings kind of considered as one book.

We noted that this book was given to the people of God in exile. It was given to the nation of Israel at a time when they were experiencing great hardship in Babylon. They were under the oppression of their enemies. They were far from the place of God's presence. They were far from the place of God's blessing and so they were under difficult times and in many ways it relates to, I think what a Christian can feel like at any time in history, and maybe in American history right now. It seems to be becoming more similar to us, that as the culture gets darker and darker, we see that we live in exile, as it were, not under just outward blessings. And the challenge of living for faith, for them to live for God, to walk by faith, was something that was more difficult away from the outward blessings of God. It wasn't like the time when they had the glory cloud traveling with them through the wilderness. They didn't have the temple and its splendor. But they were under the domination physically, governmentally, of the nation of Babylon and the people around them thought that their God and their way of life was foolishness. And so to live for God in the midst of that culture, that's the challenge that they faced and I think Kings was written to encourage them in that. It was to say to them as we looked at two weeks ago, that what we need to do when the world is getting darker and darker. What do you do? You don't fret over the fact that the world is darker and darker, you return to true worship. You make worship the central priority of your life.

That's what we saw from our first message in Kings two weeks ago and last week we saw that the one essential thing to help us become true worshipers is the word of God. Last time, we were really looking at the word of God from the sense of why you need the word, why we need the word, because we will become idolaters. We turn away so quickly from God if we are not instructed from the word every day, moment by moment. "Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." So we looked at really why you need it more last time and today we're going to look at more why you should trust it, the word of God and its trustworthiness.

The title of the message, though, is something that doesn't necessarily, you wouldn't necessarily associate with that theme but the title of the message is "Miracles." Miracles. One of the extraordinary things about this book is that we talked about last time that though it's about the kings, it's about basically 40 kings of Israel and Judah; the two kingdoms of God's people, the northern kingdom of Israel, the southern kingdom of Judah, and God's dealings with them and it's a record of those various reigns. But what becomes clear is that the real human focal points of the book are two prophets, not kings, the two prophets Elijah and Elisha, that they dominate the center of the book. Elijah, his name occurs 77 times in the book of Kings, 1 & 2 Kings. Elisha is 58. That is an interesting thing to note is that in Chronicles, remember 2 Chronicles tells the same story as 1 & 2 Kings. It is given probably about 150-160 years after Kings and Chronicles gives the same story but with different emphases and in Chronicles you find Elijah's name mentioned one time and Elisha zero.

The point was in Kings, God was trying to emphasize the importance of the prophetic ministry. Now, Chronicles already had that revelation so he's emphasizing something else. "You know from what I told you, what God told us before in Kings, to listen to the prophets, and now you need to focus on the kingship and the things that Chronicles really focuses on, looking for the Messiah." Okay? But Kings, it's always important to look at that kind of thing and see the emphasis in Kings then, in exile what we need is to trust the prophetic word. We need to build our lives upon it. Even when everything around us cries out against it, build your life upon the word of God. You can trust it. And that's essentially what we're going to see is the purpose of miracles is essentially to validate the trustworthiness of God's written word. We'll see that as we go forward and you see it in the passage that we are going to look at this morning.

So, the title of the message is "Miracles," and we're going to look at the very first chapter where Elijah comes on the scene and the focus begins to be the prophet. Then he hands off his mantle or, as it were, the baton to the prophet Elisha. So, chapter 17 of 1 Kings, I'm going to read the entire chapter and note the occurrence of the phrase "the word of the LORD" which also occurs 49 times in the book of Kings. The word of the LORD, the word of the LORD, the word of the LORD as we read the chapter.

1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." 2 The word of the LORD came to him, saying, 3 "Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there." 5 So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and lived by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he would drink from the brook. 7 It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 9 "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and

stay there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, "Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink." 11 As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand." 12 But she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." 13 Then Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it first and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son. 14 For thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain on the face of the earth.'" 15 So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for many days. 16 The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through Elijah. 17 Now it came about after these things that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became sick; and his sickness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. 18 So she said to Elijah, "What do I have to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my iniquity to remembrance and to put my son to death!" 19 He said to her, "Give me your son." Then he took him from her bosom and carried him up to the upper room where he was living, and laid him on his own bed. 20 He called to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die?" 21 Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray You, let this child's life return to him." 22 The LORD heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived. 23 Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house and gave him to his mother; and Elijah said, "See, your son is alive." 24 Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth."

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we ask now that you might speak to us through the word of the Lord, that you might help open the eyes of our hearts that we might affirm even with this widow that lived so long ago, that the word of the Lord from your mouth is truth. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

One of the interesting things about the book of Kings, as I said, is the number of miracles. When you work through the book of Kings, I did some counting myself and it depends on exactly how you define certain miracles like, for instance, the account of one miracle is the fact that Elisha knew what was being done when he wasn't even there. Is that a

miracle? Yes, it really is so you can count it but sometimes people don't count it, they kind of lump it together with what happened afterwards. So anyway, basically no matter how you number them, you're going to come up with about 14 to 15 miracles for Elijah in the book of Kings. You have three here we just read. He causes a drought to come on the land. Then he tells the woman to obey God's word, "because the Lord said he's going to provide for me through you so obviously if you've got flour and oil, I'm telling you, you're not going to run out." And she didn't run out, second miracle. And thirdly, he raised her son. So, he's off to a start of three miracles here in this first chapter.

Now, it's interesting when Elisha takes the mantle, do you remember what Elisha prayed or asked? He said, "What would you like me to give you?" Elijah says as he's about to be taken up by the Lord into heaven, his last miracle. He didn't die. He was taken directly into heaven with a chariot of fire. Elisha said, "I'd like a double portion of your blessing, a double portion of your spirit." And when you count the miracles up, basically you come up with Elisha with about 28 miracles, about double the miracles of Elijah. Like I said, if you look at different lists they'll say, "Well, 12, 13, 16," and usually whatever they say they acknowledge because of the way they counted them, double for Elisha.

Now, let's go with my number 14 and 28. Like I said, you can look and count yourself and you may come back and say, "Ty, I really think it's 15 and 30 or whatever." Okay. It's a lot. We can agree on that. So if it's 42 miracles, what you have is this amazing cluster of the outpouring of God's miraculous working in visible demonstrative ways among his people and it begs the question why? Why did you do this at this point in time? Because for so long through history, God's people, though there are occasional miraculous things that happened, there is not the flurry of miracles like that. You basically as you look at redemptive history, you read the Bible carefully, you see there is basically three concentrations of visible manifestations of God's power in redemptive history. First, Moses and Joshua. There are dozens of miraculous things that happened in the ministries of Moses and Joshua. Then you have Elijah and Elisha. And the third period is Jesus and the apostles. Now, what's interesting is you have these three sort of explosions of miracles and then you have basically not a complete absence from there but pretty much a dramatic drop off, an occasional miracle and they won't be quite the same nature. It will be a little more understated in ways.

So why is that? What's going on? That's the question that I want to ask as it gets to the first point of our message today. We have two points this morning and the first is: the purpose of visible miracles. The purpose of visible miracles. Visible miracles and I mentioned the three clusters. I want you to turn with me in your Bibles to Exodus 4. I think we have here clear indication of what the purpose of visible miracles is in the plan of God and we are going to see from this, we can see why he doesn't keep doing these kinds of signs and wonders over time. He's basically getting our attention, getting our focus to trust the word of God and he says, "Now walk by faith not by sight," and that's what the godly follower of God and Jesus Christ does.

Now, look with me, though, at Exodus 4. Moses has just encountered the Lord at the burning bush. They are still having the discussion. God is telling him, "I'm going to send

you to Pharaoh to tell him to let my people go," and Moses then says, "I've got to go to the people and tell them, first of all, that I'm speaking for you," and he says in verse 1 of Exodus 4, "Then Moses said, 'What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, "The LORD has not appeared to you."'" Here I am coming saying that God has got a message for you, he's going to deliver you from Egypt, how are they going to believe me? I say I saw the Lord in a burning bush, how are they going to know? How are they going to trust my word?

Verse 2, "The LORD said to him, 'What is that in your hand?' And he said, 'A staff.' Then He said, 'Throw it on the ground.' So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it." I would too. I don't like snakes. "But the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail'--so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand-- 'that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.' The LORD furthermore said to him, 'Now put your hand into your bosom.' So he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. Then He said, 'Put your hand into your bosom again.' So he put his hand into his bosom again, and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh." Verse 8, "'If they will not believe you or heed the witness of the first sign, they may believe the witness of the last sign.'" Do you see that? These things are not just, hey, cool tricks – to authenticate the fact that he is the prophet of God speaking the word of God. Verse 9, "'But if they will not believe even these two signs or heed what you say, then you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water which you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.'" So he gives him those three signs and he does those things and they know he is speaking from the Lord.

So now, think about what happens after that. He goes down, God uses him to bring 10 plagues upon Egypt, including the death of the firstborn, these mighty plagues of God, God showing his hand, his might, his mighty power to deliver his people from darkness. Then he leads them through the Red Sea killing the Egyptian army. He gives them water from the rock in the desert when they have no water. He feeds them with manna from heaven for 40 years. And miracle after miracle throughout Moses' ministry and life.

Then Joshua takes up the mantle and Joshua, one of the first things he does is lead the people into the Promised Land. How does that happen? God allows Joshua to dry up the river, to cause the waters to separate just like the Red Sea and they walk through because the Lord is saying, "Here is my prophet. You follow him." And you see that in the first chapter of Joshua. They know the Lord is with him the way he was with Moses. The battle of Jericho, other miracles, but there is basically a tapering off. Why is that? Well, it is to authenticate the beginning of the Canon. Moses gives the first five books of the Canon, Joshua is going to continue that and now prophets are going to follow in his train, Samuel and Nathan and others that will continue writing. So basically the idea is Moses is now giving us the written word. We trust the written word because of the explosion of signs that came to authenticate that.

But there is a dramatic decrease in frequency and intensity. Why is that? I mean, haven't you thought to yourself, you've read some of the Old Testament stories, "I wish I could see something like that." It's a normal thing, isn't it? Wouldn't it be awesome to see a pillar of fire and cloud? It would be awesome to see the Red Sea open up. Can you imagine what that was like to see it? And there are people, believers today who act like we should see things like that, who are always preoccupied with signs and wonders and trying to drum up this sort of miraculous thing and what's with that?

I think one of the things that we see as we look at the Bible, God has this basic direction that runs throughout Scripture from the Old Testament to the New Testament. You see as the Old Testament unfolds, God is redeeming for himself a people and he's working through a physical nation, Israel, but what's happening over time is he's moving from the physical to the spiritual, from the visible to the invisible. There is this progression, this movement. This is what makes sense of things like the rite of circumcision. If you weren't circumcised as an Israelite, you were to be cut off from your people. But what's with circumcision? Why that? Well, when you read through the Old Testament, you follow it through, it is given in Genesis 17 but then Moses comes along and explains in Deuteronomy 10:16 that circumcision is really about the heart. He says, "Circumcise your hearts." You see, God gave the outward visible type as a picture of the inner spiritual reality. Jeremiah 4:4, "Circumcise the foreskins of your hearts." What's going to happen? Jess read earlier from Ezekiel 37 where the Lord causes dead people to rise. The chapter before that in Ezekiel 36, he said, "Listen, I'm going to take out your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. That's what's going to make you my people." You see the movement from the outward and visible toward the invisible and that is the movement that really concerns what God is doing to save us. We need to see that.

So, we see it again in Elijah and Elisha. Their ministries were basically about 862 BC to 797 BC, 65 years or so. Elijah, 10 to 15-year ministry. And Elisha, about a 50-year ministry. Why did God give this explosion of miracles to them? I mean, why not Nathan and Samuel? Why Elijah and Elisha? Because they are inaugurating a new section of the Canon of Scripture. I mentioned their ministry ends around 797, 780 Jonah writes the first prophetic book, and Hosea not long after him, and then Isaiah and Micah and all the prophets at the end of the Old Testament starting with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, etc. all the way down to Malachi. Those ministries all start and are inaugurated by Elijah and Elisha who are the first prophets to come along who basically prosecute the people for departing from the law of Moses. So, God gives that next realm of revelation. That's why these miracles are there.

So it's also, and as we saw, we saw this in our text, back to 1 Kings 17:24, what did the woman say when she saw the miracle? We have seen word of the LORD, word of the LORD, word of the LORD, but in 1 Kings 17:24 when Elijah gives her her son, she says, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth." That's how you know that my word is truth.

Now, the third explosion of miracles is going to come with Jesus when he comes on the scene and then his disciples, the same way, because the New Testament is now given to

us. So we see this pattern but the gaps are pretty big and why are the gaps big? Because God is trying to move us from the outward and visible glorious thing to the inward and spiritual greater glory. The greater glory is the inward and spiritual miracle because how great is an outward and temporal miracle versus an inward spiritual miracle? Take, for instance, Elijah raised that little boy from the dead. That was awesome, right, that his mother, widow, brokenhearted. Elisha comes along and has a double portion of the blessing. He has a woman, a Shunamite woman who used to take care of him, fixed up a room for him. She's an older woman and her husband, they never had children and one day the Lord gives Elisha, the word of Lord, he says, "This time next year, you're going to have a baby." It's almost like an Abraham/Sarah thing. "Wait a minute. No." "This time next year, you're going to have a baby," and sure enough they do have a son. And not long after that, the son dies and so she sends word to Elisha, "My son is very sick," and she can see he's dying. Elisha gets the word. He sends his servant ahead. He goes on and basically resurrects, the Lord uses him to resurrect the son the same way. He brings the son down. There he is.

Then a really cool thing. At the end of Elisha's life, he is buried. You know, they weren't buried like we are here. Most of us get buried under the earth, right? Your casket is there, a really nice casket, the casket is going to last forever. Jesus is going to have to call you out of the casket nowadays. It used to be wooden boxes they would just disintegrate, but now you're going to come out of that. But anyway, we are put in dirt, they would be put in tombs that were caves and so they put several bodies in a tomb. Well, one day they are burying a man, they are having a funeral, and a band of, I think it was Arameans or Moabites are coming over and they are going to basically raid the land. They used to come in and just ravage things so they see them coming and they've got to go and get their weapons and stuff and so they have the body, the pallbearers throw him into the tomb. He lands on the bones of Elisha. He gets up and walks out alive. Elisha healed him after he's been dead for a number of years, long enough for him just to be bones. It's pretty awesome, right? But is that something that's going to make an eternal difference in the lives of those three people that were resurrected? No, they're all going to die again.

So that brings us to the second point: the preeminence of invisible miracles. We talked about the purpose of visible miracles, now the preeminence of invisible miracles. The purpose of visible miracles was to make us attend to the word of God. Actually, let me go back there for a second. I jumped ahead. I need to say some more about point 1. So I don't know how you have to do it on your notes but anyway, we're going back to point 1 for a minute. The Lord is glorified when we see what we really need. We don't just need to have our lives' work in this world, we don't just need to be healed of physical problems in this world, we have massive spiritual problems that are a matter of eternal significance. That if you had everything in your life go well outwardly but you didn't deal with the inner spiritual problems, Jesus says, "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul?" So we need to work on the spiritual and so the Lord gives us the visible miracles to make us attend to the word of God so that we then can learn that it's not about this world, it's about what God is saying we need. We need a new heart. We need to be transformed inwardly spiritually by the renewing of our minds.

So that's the movement and so the people in Kings and they got this revelation, I mean, God writes this down for them when they are in exile. I'm talking about people that received the book, not the people the book is about, the people that received the revelation of 1 & 2 Kings. They were in the exile in Babylon and there they are, life is hard. They are hopeless in many ways, especially looking at external things, but the message to them is, "Keep trusting the word of God. Keep trusting the word of the prophets. Build all of your hope on it. Forget about the fact that the people around you are telling you that Bel and Marduk are greater than Yahweh." In fact, we are told that when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the temple, he took the articles of the temple and he took them to Babylon and he put them in the temple of his god. This was standard practice. When one country would conquer another country, they would take the articles of the other country's temple and basically bring them back like plunder to their god so in essence saying, "Our god is greater than your god. Our god has defeated your god."

So the Israelites in this culture surrounding them are being told, "The God that you follow is not the true and living God." And their circumstances seem to argue for the fact that even if he were, he seems to have forgotten us. Why be faithful? Why continue to walk with him and to walk in obedience and heed his commands? What does it matter? What is it going to profit? So the Lord gives them this reminder of what he had done in the past and says look what he did in the past at a time also of spiritual darkness in the northern kingdom, of all places. I'm still pondering why all these miracles happened in the north and not the south because this is where they all happened. Elijah and Elisha's ministries are in the northern kingdom. So in the midst of darkness, God is still showing his glory. So now you're in the midst of darkness, look at how God has shown his glory in the past. Even though you may not see it visibly now, know that the God who did these things is still at work today and if you'll trust him, he'll be doing greater things today because he'll be doing spiritual things that you can't see but which are of far greater worth.

So that's the point and look at how this works out in history. Imagine you lived before the exile around 570, 560, whenever the book of Kings is given. Moses writes in 1400. The law is there and you have some other books added but the people basically, think about how you read the Psalms, probably written around 1000, 900, 1100 BC. They are looking at their life saying, "Wow, look how bad things are." What do they continually do? They go back and look at what God did in the Exodus. Just read them. "Look what the Lord did." And their confidence in God's faithfulness in the past gives them confidence to walk obediently in the present. This is the way God works. It's not that he forgot to do miracles. "I was doing some other things and I forgot to do some miracles for you guys. I'm sorry about that." No, he did the miracles to authenticate his message and the really mighty thing is the word of God. "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of God stands forever."

So that's how he did it and that's how they lived. Think about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The glory of their obedience, their faith was that they didn't look at what they could see, they looked at what they could not see. This is what makes a Christian authentically a

Christian. Our eyes are looking to the one who is to come. We're not living for this present age. So that's the way that God has revealed himself and so the people in the exile are getting that same message, a second installment. Then when Jesus comes and does his incredible miracles, the greatest miracles of all, I mean, Elijah and Elisha and Moses all added up nothing compared to Jesus and then he himself resurrected from the dead to never die again. The greatest miracle of all. Then the apostles are given some miracles, kind of like Joshua after Moses. There is a flurry. "Keep this going for a little while so you can keep authenticating that these guys are just like the prophets of the Old Testament and Moses." You see God's pattern is there.

But what would we expect? We would expect, again, the petering out of those miracles so that God's people could trust the word. This is why Jesus says, even though he's going around doing miracles, think about this, the irony of this statement: "a wicked and perverse generation asks for a sign." Do you see that? It's wicked to want the sign. He has given the signs but if you're still wanting more signs, you are not walking in faith. We walk by faith not by sight. Our eyes are on the things that are invisible, not the things that are visible.

Now, the preeminence of invisible miracles. We see that God has always been about doing something about the heart and that focus becomes clearer and clearer throughout the unfolding of his word. In the New Testament, it becomes clear. Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my people would be fighting, but as it is, my kingdom is not of this world. I'm doing something spiritual. I'm building a spiritual kingdom."

So now we come to people today that are confused about this. This is where so many of our friends in the charismatic movement are askew. They are missing out on this basic premise that God is teaching a people to walk by faith and not by sight so that we are not to be looking for more signs and wonders. We are not to be longing for them and the reason is because those who have been trained through practice in looking at the word of God see that a visible miracle pales in comparison to an invisible miracle.

I mentioned those three people that were resurrected by Elijah and Elisha. If you went back sometime after, I don't know how much, it would be really cool, I can't wait to talk, I hope this guy, I imagine he's in heaven or God wouldn't have done it, but we talked to that guy that was being buried and then he comes back to life. Can you imagine that? He goes out and the funeral stopped, everyone ran away and here he comes back. "I'm alive!" Incredible. But 15 or 20 years later, there was another funeral procession that took that same guy and buried him. It didn't last that long. The same thing with those two little boys. At some point, they died and God didn't raise them again. So though the miracle was impressive, the miracle isn't enough. What should have happened to that guy that got raised and this is what I think did happen to the guy that fell into the tomb of Elisha and he comes out, man, "Elisha spoke the word of God. I'm going to build my life on the word of God," and he attended the word of God and the word of God gave him life, eternal life.

That's what we need to see. I mean, think about it: is it better to be healed physically of a disease, of a crippling malady? I mean that's wonderful and there is nothing wrong with praying for these things and God might do it, but we shouldn't expect it or even long for it. It's the exception. Is that better or is it better to be delivered from life dominating sin? Is it more wonderful for a person to have their physical cancer taken away or to have a person who has been overwhelmed by lust become a pure follower of Christ, faithful husband or wife? There is no question, it's so much better. Is it better to be resurrected physically and then die again or is it better to have Jesus say to your spirit like he says in 2 Corinthians 4? This is what happens when a person becomes a believer, we were dead in trespasses and sins, that is, dead spiritually to God. 2 Corinthians 4:6, "For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." What he's saying is, "In the same way, imagine the miracle when there is darkness over the face of the earth and the Lord says let there be light and suddenly there is light." For the first time light, ex nihilo, out of nothing. Bam, there is light! What power that is. He says that the power when God looks at a darkened heart that does not know him and brings them to life through the Gospel, that what's happening is the creative power of that new life is every bit as glorious than the creation. That is what we ought to want.

So this idea of wanting the miraculous is good but you just don't want to waste your time with the trivial miraculous. I mean, I want the ultimate eternal miraculous, something greater. And the people of God ought to be cultivating a taste for that which is greater. This is what the word of God does for you. Yeah, it's titillating, it's scintillating to see something, pow! That's the way the world thinks. The person who is walking in God's word over time is developing a taste for something far greater and delighting in that and marveling in that. I mean, to see a person who was formerly godless in every way and now today they are loving Jesus, loving people, that is incredible. Marriages that were broken because of sin of one or usually both parties at some level, obviously always at some level, but maybe mostly with one person, to see that marriage restored and now looking like Jesus and the church. That is glorious.

That's what we want and that's what God is determined to give to his people. He's so good. He's like the most wonderful parent. You know, a good parent doesn't give his children what they want all the time, right? If you did, they'd be eating M&Ms and Snickers bars for dinner, lunch, breakfast. Ice cream. It sounds pretty good, actually. But a loving parent knows that, "That's not what's best for you. I'm going to give you something better than that." Then when you start learning to cultivate a taste for things, mom says, "Eat this." "I don't like that." "Just eat, okay, three bites today." And you eat three bites and the next time you eat a little more and before you know it, that's one of your favorite things to eat. I'm talking about like turnip greens, for instance. That to me, turnip greens may well be one of my favorite things. You just haven't had them. Those of you, sorry, you just don't know. But anyway, you eat turnip greens, they are fantastic and they are life-giving. Better than a Snickers bar. So, God is cultivating in us, his people who really belong to him, a hunger to see him do incredible things but the incredible things are far greater than the worldly focus around us tends to want.

So now when we are living in a world that outwardly seems to be rejecting God and his word, arguing with it, when people are saying that you can't trust it and saying things that the word says are irrelevant and outdated, what do you know? You look back at Moses. You look back at Elijah and Elisha. You look back at Jesus and at the empty tomb and say, "I will stand with him. His word, that's my life."

You think about the beauty of how God's whole word fits together. At the transfiguration, who was there? Moses and Elijah. Do you see that? And Jesus and what did the Father say? "Listen to Him. Moses and Elijah were my people and I sent them and here they are, they were testifying to him. They are the three great pillars of my revelation but they are not three great pillars, they are really two supports to the one author and finisher of our faith. Listen to Jesus." We can build our lives upon his word and if we build our lives upon his word, we will see him move mountains. He says, "Yeah, say to that mountain be moved into the heart of the sea and it will." He's talking about spiritual mountains, things far greater than moving a physical mountain, things moving sin and darkness and death. May God help us be people who are more and more delighted to follow such a glorious Savior and such a wonderful God.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, as we consider this perfection of your word and the power of your word, we thank you that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. It is the place where the power of God comes and re-creates. And we pray for those that are here that need to experience the new birth, the new creation, that you would bring them to life through your word. Even now, help them to reach out to Jesus, repent of their sins and believe the Gospel. Put all of their hope in a Savior who came into this world to live a perfect life, to offer himself as an atoning sacrifice, paying for our sins, resurrected to live forever as our Savior. Help them place all of their trust in him. And Father, we pray that you would help all of us to be delighted by what delights you; to love and treasure your word above everything else and to become more and more faithful followers of such a wonderful Savior. We pray in his name. Amen.