



TAKEAWAY: Miracles are real, and we get to experience them in our lives.

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 14:15-26

INTRO

When was a time when you felt filled with hope? When was the time that you felt inspired? Filled with wonder? What if I told you that God is inviting you into a life filled with inspiration, hope, and wonder? God created us to live a life in close proximity with Him, and living a life with God requires us to be so aware of who God is and what He is doing in our lives and the world around us. I think that a lot of time we get so caught up in the patterns of the day to day that we forget that we are living with a God that wants us to encounter Him in radical ways.

One thing that leaves me filled with inspiration, curiosity, and wonder is God's Word. Sometimes, when I am reading the Bible, I feel like I am reading the greatest story ever told, and the best part is that these stories actually happened! In Scripture we get to read about things like people having their sight restored, diseases healed, and prophecies being fulfilled, a guy who lived in a fish for days, God speaking through burning flames, and so much more. There are so many things that we read about in Scripture that we would deem as impossible and unexplainable. These are things that could only happen when God intervened. When these things happen, we have a name for it. We call these things *miracles*. For the next few weeks, we are going to define a miracle as:

God's hand at work in our lives in ways that we cannot explain.

TENSION

As we read about the miracles that are in the Bible, although we are all reading the same thing, we all probably respond a little bit differently. Some of us in this room respond with doubt, some with caution, and some with excitement. Doubt might look like assuming that the things that we read about never actually happened; believing that the Bible is a book of fairy

tales that simply exist with the goal of teaching us good morals. If that's the case, you might believe that the things that we read about never happened, and nothing like them ever will. Responding with caution might look like believing that God can do the impossible, but only believing the impossible happened thousands of years ago. If this is the case, you may not have any expectation to see God's hand at work in miraculous ways in your life today. Maybe you just think it could happen, but it couldn't happen for you. Lastly, some respond with excitement, believing that the God that performed those miracles then is the same God active in our lives today. Because of this, you most likely have an expectation to see God's hand at work in that way in your life today. Although this last perspective might sound the most exciting to some, it might also be the most difficult. It can be scary to let ourselves hope for big things, because the more we hope, the more we risk being disappointed.

[Author's note: Tell a story about a time that you have been disappointed or let down.]

My Dad, although he loved me a ton, would tend to make promises that he couldn't follow through on. He would dream big dreams, and I learned the hard way that I couldn't always trust what he had to say. Interactions with my dad would very commonly look something like this:

“Hey Kiddo!!! How do you feel about going on a cruise?!” He would follow this sentence by showing me dozens of pictures of a cruise we were supposedly going on, and he told me about all of the fun adventures we would encounter on the cruise. The idea normally would seem too good to be true, so I would be skeptical at first. He would then find some way to convince me to believe that he was telling the truth, and I would get my hopes up and begin to get excited for this adventure that we were going to go on together. Sadly though, more often than not, he would find some reason not to follow through. The pattern looked something like this: my dad had a big dream, I would be skeptical, he would get my hopes up, then he wouldn't follow through, and I would be disappointed. This used to lead to a lot of disappointment and frustration towards my dad. My dad always

had the best intentions, but he usually didn't have the time, motivation, or resources needed to follow through on his big idea. Maybe you have had similar interactions with someone in your life before? If that's the case, maybe you have learned to expect the worst so that you can protect yourself from getting hurt.

I bet every person in here has been disappointed at some point or another in your life. You can identify with the feelings I experienced. Because of this, you most likely want to protect yourself from feeling that way again. I know that I have a natural tendency to avoid setting myself up to experience that and feel that way.

TRUTH

So, it probably feels the safest to assume that miracles don't happen, and to believe that God is real but He probably only interacts in small ways. That protects us from getting hurt, right? We live in a world that tells us to set our bar low, and that tells us to expect the worst so that we will be pleasantly surprised if things turn out better than we expected.

Although this is such a common way to think, I actually don't think that it is the stance that God is inviting us to take with Him. God invites us to actively pursue Him and actively trust Him. God invites us to actively experience the fullness of the life that He has in store for us. Most of the time this does not involve playing it safe, or living in the mundane.

One of my favorite books in the Bible is Exodus. In Exodus, we see God do many things that we would deem as impossible in hopes of bringing His people into a life filled with freedom, and a life in close proximity to Him.

Today, we are going to spend some time in Exodus 14, starting in verse 15. We pick up the story right after the Israelites escaped Egypt after almost 500 years of living in slavery. God did the impossible; He made a way where there was no way, and provided the ability for nearly two million Israelites to leave Egypt peacefully. This in itself is a miracle, and I could

only imagine that the Israelites were filled with excitement and hope for what the future held for them.

But then something happened. The Israelites turned to see the Egyptians, who they thought they had just escaped from, chasing after them to bring them back into slavery. Imagine what must have been going through their minds: the God they thought they could trust, now didn't seem quite so good. They even said that they would rather live lives serving the Egyptians than to die in the desert. And this is where we pick up the story.

15 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to get moving! 16 Pick up your staff and raise your hand over the sea. Divide the water so the Israelites can walk through the middle of the sea on dry ground. 17 And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they will charge in after the Israelites. My great glory will be displayed through Pharaoh and his troops, his chariots, and his charioteers. 18 When my glory is displayed through them, all Egypt will see my glory and know that I am the Lord! - Exodus 14:15-18 (NLT)

21 Then Moses raised his hand over the sea, and the Lord opened up a path through the water with a strong east wind. The wind blew all that night, turning the seabed into dry land. 22 So the people of Israel walked through the middle of the sea on dry ground, with walls of water on each side! 23 Then the Egyptians—all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and charioteers—chased them into the middle of the sea. 24 But just before dawn the Lord looked down on the Egyptian army from the pillar of fire and cloud, and he threw their forces into total confusion. 25 He twisted their chariot wheels, making their chariots difficult to drive. "Let's get out of here—away from these Israelites!" the Egyptians shouted. "The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt!" 26 When all the Israelites had reached the other side, the Lord said to Moses, "Raise your hand over the sea again. Then the waters will rush back and cover the Egyptians and their chariots and charioteers."

Exodus 14:21-26 (NLT)



TAKEAWAY: Miracles are cool, but it's all still about Jesus.

SCRIPTURE: John 6 (NLT) with a focus on John 6:66-69 (NLT)

SURFACE

- What's the coolest thing you've ever seen someone else do?
- What show (or movie sequel) are you looking forward to the most?

SERIOUS

- Have you ever been in a relationship (or friendship) where it felt like the other person was more focused on what they wanted rather than what you wanted? How did that make you feel? What advice would you give to someone in the same situation?

SPIRITUAL

- Why do you think the crowd was more focused on Jesus' miracles than on Jesus Himself? Do you think it's possible for us to be the same way? If so, what might that look like?
- One of the things that Josh [\[Insert your own name here\]](#) said was that when it comes to our relationship with Jesus, "it's not about you," and, "it's not about the miracles." Do you think it's difficult to keep our focus on Jesus instead of ourselves or what Jesus can do for us? Explain.
- What are some things our group can do to help each other keep our focus on Jesus?

This preview includes a select number of pages from this resource.

If you like what you see, download the entire resource today!

downloadyouthministry.com