

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

WHO IS JESUS?

LESSON 3: THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Disciple Essentials module titled *Who is Jesus?* This series of seven lessons introduces the person and work of Jesus from a Christian perspective, considering His identity, work, teachings and death. Because Jesus is central to the Christian faith and religion, it is vital for the disciple to know Jesus, and for those exploring Christianity to know what makes Jesus Christ unique, and worthy of our discipleship and devotion. You may have participants from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds who have differing ideas about who Jesus is and what He taught. This series will be an excellent foundation for their future studies in discipleship.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.



WHO IS JESUS?

LESSON 3: THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

PURPOSE

This lesson examines the miracles Jesus performed during His time on earth, and what these miracles show us about who Jesus is and why He came.

LEADER'S NOTE

The miracles of Jesus were a unique part of His ministry on earth. Jesus didn't just perform miracles because He had the power to help people and was moved with compassion. No. He had a message behind every action and every word. Miracles pointed towards who Jesus was, and what mattered most to Him. As we study these miracles we learn more about Jesus' compassion, and how we ought to respond to the suffering and needs of those around us. If you have participants from a religious background, they may be more inclined to understand miraculous events. For those who are skeptical of the supernatural actions of Jesus, pray that God would reveal truth to them. Show how each miracle had many witnesses and cannot be explained away as a clever trick.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ When something amazing or surprising happens, we might say, "It's a miracle!" What is a miracle, and what makes it different from a special event?
- ❖ Have you experienced a miracle in your life – something that was supernatural that you attribute to the work of God?
- ❖ What did Jesus do that was miraculous? How did people react when He did it?
- ❖ When Jesus did miracles, He always drew a crowd. Why would actions draw people more than His teachings?

STUDY

Instruct the group on the following points.

TEACH

- ❖ **What is a Miracle?** The accounts of Jesus in the Gospels are filled with miracles! Jesus was often using His supernatural power in surprising ways. This power came in the form of miracles, signs and wonders.



- Hebrews 2:2-4 tells us that these miracles, signs and wonders accompanied the Gospel message to prove that the message was true. The extraordinary and unexplainable actions of Jesus fall into three categories:
 - Miracles are acts of a supernatural being that defy the laws of nature.
 - Wonders are unusual events done to draw attention and inspire awe.
 - Signs are significant events with a purpose to instruct or convict.
- The actions of Jesus were accomplished by the power of God (as Jesus Himself is God) and were sometimes either a wonder or a sign. Their purpose was never to entertain a crowd or to make Jesus look more powerful; they served a different purpose.
- ❖ **Why did Jesus Perform Miracles?** When Jesus began what we call His public ministry, He was around 30 years old (Luke 3:23). At that time Jesus began to teach people as well. Each miracle demonstrated something about Jesus, and was a critical part of his teaching ministry. Several reasons why Jesus performed miracles are:
 - **To Demonstrate His Compassion:** Jesus had a heart full of compassion, concern and love for the individual people He met every day. Jesus could have concentrated on large spectacular events that would have drawn the attention of many, but instead He changed one life at a time. God's heart for people's needs, both big and small, were demonstrated by His actions.
 - The first miracle Jesus performed was changing water to wine at a wedding. This was not a deep need; however, the host would have been embarrassed if they had run out of wine at such an important celebration (John 2:1-11)!
 - Jesus had compassion on the sick and healed them (Matthew 14:14).
 - Jesus felt compassion for the spiritually lost (Mark 6:34).
 - Jesus felt compassion for those who were hungry (Matthew 15:32).
 - Each miracle speaks to the moral character of Jesus.
 - **To Demonstrate His Power and Authority:** Of all the things Jesus did and said, His healing ministry drew the largest crowds. It demonstrated that Jesus was, in fact, God. No physical ailment or demon possession could hinder Jesus – He could rid all of them with a word.
 - Jesus did not have to swear by a name greater than his own to perform miracles, He simply gave His word. This demonstrated His authority and power. Each miracle testified to the divine nature of Jesus, – that He is God.
 - Jesus performed miracles that could not be explained or replicated.
 - Without the signs and wonders, people would not believe the message. Jesus healed an official's son, deeming it necessary in order for the man to believe (John 4:46-54).
 - People learned they only needed to touch Jesus' robe to be healed (Matthew 9:20-22).



- o Jesus not only healed, but forgave sins to demonstrate His power and authority (Matthew 9:1-8).
- **To Demonstrate His Message:** One of the reasons Jesus came was to announce the Kingdom of God, and to proclaim that salvation was possible only through Him. Jesus demonstrated God's love for people, especially those who were rejected by others. He demonstrated forgiveness, servant-hood, and love for even our enemies through His miracles.
 - o Jesus forgave sinners, showing that He loved them in spite of their sins. Perhaps the greatest miracle is receiving God's forgiveness. He called sinners to repentance and as a result, many believed (John 4:1-45).
 - o Jesus demonstrated love for enemies by healing a centurion's servant, who was a Roman employee and an enemy of God's people (Luke 7:1-10).
 - o Jesus raised the dead to life and in so doing, pointed to the resurrection that is to come for all people (Luke 7:11-17; John 11:24-27).
- ❖ **What did Jesus' Miracles Demonstrate:** Jesus revealed the heart of God through His miracles – His desires and His love for us. Each miracle revealed Jesus' power and increased the faith of those who observed.
 - **Power over the natural world:** No physical force could stop Jesus. His miracles over the natural world showed His power as God, the creator of the world.
 - o Jesus calms the storm (Matthew 8:23-27).
 - o Jesus walks on water (Matthew 14:22-33).
 - o Jesus withers a fig tree (Matthew 21:18-22).
 - **Power over illness & death:** Jesus had compassion on those who were sick, the suffering, and for the relatives of those who died. Even though Jesus had an eternal perspective and could see that all people would eventually die, He healed people wherever he went, and was often broken hearted for the people who were suffering.
 - o Jesus healed many illnesses, including leprosy, and He cast out demons (Matthew 9:35; Luke 17:11-19).
 - o Jesus healed diseases even when His robe was touched (Luke 8:43-48).
 - o Jesus demonstrated power over death by raising Lazarus- as well as others from the dead (John 11:1-44; Matthew 9:18-26).
 - **Power to meet our every need:** Jesus didn't just perform large spectacular miracles, nor did He heal only horrible illnesses. He was also concerned with people's every day needs. Jesus proved that God was able to take care of every need through any means He desired.
 - o Jesus turned water into wine to prevent embarrassment at a wedding feast (John 2:1-11).
 - o Jesus provided a miraculous catch of fish (Luke 5:4-11).



- o Jesus fed 5,000 men, plus women and children (Matthew 14:14-21)!
- ❖ **The Meaning behind the Miracles:** Jesus demonstrated His compassion, His power and His message through miracles in order to gain the attention of people so they would listen to His message. Jesus provided these signs and wonders so that people would believe who He was, and the power of God who sent Him.
 - “Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves” (John 14:11).
 - John 4:48 says, “So Jesus said to him, ‘Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.’”
 - Jesus performed miracles in the presence of many people, and especially the disciples so that they would have faith in Him. These miracles are written down for us in God’s Word so that we can know who God is and believe in Him.
 - Jesus miracles all point to proof of His identity and the reason He came.
 - o Jesus healing the blind allows us to see the truth.
 - o Jesus healing the sick frees us from our greatest sickness – sin.
 - o Jesus’ pursuit of the poor and powerless shows us His desire to seek and save the lost.
 - o Jesus providing food and drink provides us with true spiritual food and living water.
 - o Jesus raising people from the dead pointed to His own resurrection as well as all people at the end of time.

DISCUSSION

- ❖ Of all the miracles discussed in this lesson, which one would have seemed the most amazing to you if you had witnessed it?
- ❖ Why do you think Jesus sometimes told people to not tell anyone about the miracle, and at other times he allowed people to tell others and draw a crowd? Why was He cautious about letting His ability to heal be known to everyone so quickly?
- ❖ Since Jesus, has anyone demonstrated the ability to heal and perform miracles like He did?
- ❖ Why did Jesus’ miracles so often benefit the poor, outcast, widows, children and the powerless of society? Why did He not perform more miracles for the rich and powerful? Summarize what you know to be true about Jesus because of the types of miracles He performed.
- ❖ What did Jesus require of people for whom He performed miracles? Did they have to pay Him in any way (actions or money), or was their belief sufficient?



PRAYER

Pray for your participants. Pray that they, too, would believe in the powerful, merciful Jesus Christ who provides for our needs, but even more has the power to forgive us of our sins.