

Welcome

to this year's presentation of Miracles of the Bible!

The Aglow Muskegon team is pleased to present the 12th year of our interactive, drama/Bible study series. This year, we will watch and witness, along with the crowds that followed Jesus, five unique miraculous encounters that illustrate Jesus' great compassion.

Our presenters will take you on a journey, through drama and the arts, to discover some of the greatest Biblical accounts of God's miraculous power!

We believe that we are entering into a season of miracles. In today's world, we all need them! Through this five-session study, we'll learn together the keys to unlocking the miraculous in our lives.

This study guide is meant to be used in conjunction with Aglow Muskegon's presentations of Miracles of the Bible. Because our small group study time is limited, we encourage you to do additional study at home.

Below are a few suggestions that will help make the evening a more meaningful experience.

- We suggest that you read the included scripture assignments before you come to Miracles of the Bible each week. We find that participants get the most out of the lessons if they've prepared and studied ahead of time.
- Bring your Bible, your study guide, your notes, and a friend!
- Each table will have a facilitator who will help guide the flow of the discussion to maximize group participation. We will provide extra chairs so that if you bring a guest, you may add them to your own table. There will be a table for teens, and one for men.
- There will be no experts in our group, just men and women eager to learn and agreeing that these events in the Bible are worth studying. God's Word, the Bible, will be the final authority to all our questions.

Have you Checked In?

To be eligible for our weekly door prize drawings,
you must check in **EACH WEEK**



Scan the QR Code above with your phone camera and check in now!

Please share your prayer needs with us by filling out a prayer request form located at your table. Be assured that we WILL pray over your needs. We have seen God answer many prayers over the past several years!

Read: Mark 1:40-45

A LEPER IS CLEANSED

The Gospel of Mark tells us that Jesus was moved with compassion toward a leper. Jesus sympathized with this man’s horrible condition, He felt the agony of the man’s isolation and distress. Jesus’ compassion moved Him to act. Throughout the Gospels you will find Jesus being moved by compassion. Jesus is a compassionate Lord. Please note that for the purpose of this study, the leper will be referred to as “he/him” to stay true to the Biblical text, even though in our portrayal, a woman played the role of the leper.

1 What do you think motivated the leper to approach Jesus? Read Mark 1:40. Do his actions convey that the leper believed Jesus had the power to do what he was asking?

2 In Mark 1:41, what was Jesus’ response to the Leper? In this verse, what four did Jesus do? Why were these things remarkable? Note: The Greek word translated as “pity” or “compassion” in this verse is *splagchizomai*. This word conveys a meaning of sympathy, deep compassion, or mercy. It is often used in the New Testament to describe Jesus’ compassionate response to the suffering and needs of others. In this specific verse, it describes Jesus’ emotional response to the leper’s request for cleansing. How often do we see a need in someone but remain unmoved and uninvolved, instead of being moved to act with compassion? Discuss examples.

3 The leper didn't ask for healing, but rather for cleansing. Why is this distinction important? What are the social and religious implications of being declared "unclean" in the Old Testament? Note that Leviticus 13 and 14 are two whole chapters devoted to dealing with defiling skin diseases! Read Leviticus 13:45-46. Discuss how Jesus' willingness to touch and heal the leper challenged social norms and religious regulations.

4 Read Mark 1:43-44. What strong warning did Jesus give the leper? Why did Jesus want the leper to say nothing? Why did he want the leper to show himself to the priests? See Leviticus 14.

Read: Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30; Isaiah 42:5-12

A GENTILE (SYROPHOENICIAN) WOMAN'S DAUGHTER IS SET FREE

“Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.” –Matthew 15:25

In this portrayal, we see once again, the exchange of the Pharisees and the Scribes with Jesus and the Disciples. The Pharisees continue to question as to why the disciples are violating the traditions of the elders and now the disciples in turn say to Jesus, “Lord, don’t you realize you offended the Pharisee and Scribes by your statement?” (Matthew 15:12) Could it be that in this beautiful, yet perplexing story, Jesus wanted to expose, and bring revelation to those still blinded and steeped in deep tradition and prejudice? Even those closest to Jesus, the disciples, were about to get a life lesson in truth, mercy, compassion, penitence, reverence, persistence, and faith.



Who is speaking in Isaiah 42: 5-6? Who will bring forth justice to the Nations? (Isaiah 42:1) Who will bring the light? (Isaiah 42:6) Who did God say will receive the light?



Jesus and the disciples withdrew from the western shore of Galilee to the district of what cities? (Matthew 15:21; Mark 7:24) What did Jesus say about Tyre and Sidon (Matthew 11:20 -24)

Tyre and Sidon, where the encounter with the gentile woman took place, were in upper Galilee, about 20 miles apart, and deep in Gentile territory. It should be noted that this region was 120-150 miles from where the first part of our skit (taken from Matthew 15:1-20) took place, where Jesus challenges the Pharisees regarding vain traditions and what defiles a person. Could it be that the disciples were about to get a life lesson in how they, too, might be holding on to prejudice and the true mission that was set before them?

3

What do we know, or can we assume about the Canaanite Woman? Why do you suppose she called Jesus, "O Lord, Son of David?" (Matthew 15:22)

Mark 7:26 adds that the woman was of the Syrophenician race. That means she was a Gentile, someone a "good" Jew would have despised, rejected, and wanted to ignore. What is worse, from an ancient Jewish perspective, she was a woman. As a Syrophenician woman, she would have known that the Jews would not want to have anything to do with her. Yet, she came to Jesus anyway. What a bold woman!

4

What is her request of Jesus? What was wrong with her daughter? (Matthew 15:22)

5

What did the disciples want Jesus to do with her? (Verse 23)

6

Who was Jesus referencing as the “Lost sheep of the house of Israel?” (Matthew 15:24) Who did the Children’s bread belong? (Acts 10:36)

7

Be real. What are your first thoughts regarding his answer to her?
There are several thoughts concerning what first appears as Jesus being lacking in compassion and empathy and coming off as harsh and rude. It may help to know that “dogs” in these passages of Scriptures mean “puppies” or “little dogs” in the original Greek – κυνάρια (kynariois) Noun . A *house pet*. While it is true that all Gentiles, and especially this woman, would be deeply looked down upon by the Jews and often were referred to as dogs, do you think Jesus looked down on her? Why or why not?

8

How does Jesus answer the woman in Matthew 15:28?

Encouragement to take home:

What an amazing story. He used the penitent (“Have Mercy”), reverent (O Lord, Son of David), persistent (relentless), faith of this woman to reveal even further who He is and why He had come into this world. He came to save, heal, and deliver. Being no respecter of persons, to save all who were lost. Jesus **did** begin with the “Lost sheep of Israel” and then the 12, and then the 120; followed by the 3,000, 4,000 and on and on. All were added to the Kingdom of God. Those who received Him took the message, the Good News, to all who would believe. Rejection by those like the Pharisees, Scribes and unbelieving Jews, meant only that the opportunity had come for the Gentiles to believe and receive Jesus as the one true Lord and Savior for all of mankind! This mother suffered continual anguish for her daughter, and in desperation she humbled herself and cried out to Jesus for mercy. She said, “Lord, out of your abundance.... I’ll take even the crumbs!” He rewarded her by saying, “Great is your faith!” and by the healing of her daughter! I believe more than what Jesus “taught” on this day, it was “caught” by the on-looking disciples. Oh, may it be that I, we don’t stop sharing the “Good news” and we’ll be willing to put aside all of our vain traditions that do not matter in the light of eternity.

Read: Luke 5:17-26

A PARALYZED MAN WALKS

In this account, we learn that not only does Jesus see and know the hearts of the friends who would stop at nothing to bring the paralytic to Jesus, but he also knows the hearts of the religious leaders, who considered his words blasphemy. Ultimately, this passage underscores that Jesus is the source of both physical and spiritual healing.

1

The paralyzed man was brought to Jesus by his friends. What does this reveal about their faith? How important is faith in approaching Jesus for healing or forgiveness? Can you find other instances in the Gospels where Jesus is moved with compassion to forgive, heal and deliver in response to people's faith?

2

Read verses 21 and 22 in different Bible translations. Did the religious leaders express their concerns out loud? The theme of this week's study is, "You are known." Jesus "knew" the faith of the paralytic's friends, but he also knew the very *thoughts* of the skeptics. Read Psalm 139:2-23, Psalm 26:2, John 2:24-25. How do these passages reflect the idea of being fully known by God? How does the awareness of being known by Jesus impact our relationship with Him and our daily walk of faith?

3

The religious leaders questioned Jesus' authority to forgive sins. How did Jesus respond to their doubts? What does this reveal about his identity as the Son of God? How does this encounter demonstrate Jesus' divine authority?

4

Jesus not only heals the paralyzed man physically, but also forgives his sins. Why is the forgiveness of sins considered to be a greater miracle than physical healing in this context? What does this teach us about the priority of spiritual well-being?

5

How does Luke 5:17-26 illustrate the compassion that Jesus had for those he singled out for one-on-one encounters amid the crowds?

Encouragement to take home:

The paralyzed man’s friends in Luke 5 exemplify the kind of radical, unwavering faith and commitment that inspire awe. Not deterred when the house was too crowded to get through, these friends tore open the roof to get their friend to the presence of Jesus. When our friends are weak, they need us to demonstrate that kind of determination - offering our support and affection, and helping them draw close to the source of ultimate healing and renewal, which is Christ. When we choose to be the kind of friend who stands by others with unwavering faith and compassion, we not only strengthen our relationships, but also become vessels of God’s love and transformative power in the lives of those we hold dear.

Read: Luke 13:10-17

A CRIPPLED WOMAN IS HEALED

The heart of this week’s study is best summed up in the following excerpt from an audio devotional: “The Bible says the woman was bent over and could not straighten at all. This means she could not look up and see the sky or see the smiles on people’s faces. She couldn’t even be embraced or hugged properly. I believe her physical state is symbolic of someone who may not be able to see their future. Someone who may be looking around but can’t find anyone concerned about how they’re doing. You may be there, and all you need is to be embraced or held. But the wonderful thing about this short passage of scripture is not the fact that Jesus said ‘you are set free from your infirmity,’ or that He healed her. I’m particularly touched by three words: ‘**Jesus saw her**’. God saw her. True love saw her. The King of Kings saw her. And that’s the word to encourage you today. Jesus sees you. God sees you.”

Grace for Purpose: Prayers to Break Spiritual Strongholds | Powerful Prayers for Healing

1 Luke 13:10-11 states, “On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues...”. The Pharisees and synagogue rulers often stood behind their own laws and rules on what they believed could and could not be done on the Sabbath. They believed that healing on a Sabbath was “work” and objected to the compassion and healing that Jesus performed, particularly on the Sabbath. Read Matthew 23:1-13 and Mark 2:27-28. What do these passages say about the heart of Jesus and what he believed? Do you believe Jesus was a rule breaker? It may help to familiarize yourself with what the Word of God says about the sabbath. (Genesis 2:2-3, Exodus 20:8)

2 Jesus continued to demonstrate compassion through many other miracles. What other miracles did Jesus perform on a Sabbath? Read Mark 1:21-28, Mark 1:29-31, John 5:1-18, Mark 3:1-6, Luke 14:1-6, John 9:1-16. Why do you think Jesus continued to heal on the Sabbath?

3 The crippled woman had lived with her infirmity for eighteen long years. How do you think the crippled woman felt after all those years? When you've endured a trial that lasted much longer than desired, how did you handle it? What does scripture say about how we should endure trials? Read James 1:2-4 and 2 Timothy 4:5. What fruits of the Spirit are often required to endure trials? Read Galatians 5:22-23.

4 As mentioned above, three particular words stand out in Luke 13:12: "JESUS SAW HER". Do you believe God sees you? What makes you believe this? Share an example of a time where you felt God's presence in a situation in a way that made you feel seen.

5

Read Genesis 16:1-15. Note how Hagar refers to God in verse 13: “She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her. ‘You are the God who sees me,’ for she said, ‘I have now seen the One who sees me.’ The Hebrew word for “the God who sees” is called El Roi. What does it mean to you to be seen by God? What other names are used to refer to God in the Bible? Read Psalm 8:1, Exodus 3:14, Genesis 21:33, Genesis 17:1 and Psalm 30:10.

Encouragement to take home:

After her encounter with Jesus, the crippled woman was finally able to see more than the ground at her feet. This expanded view allowed her to see the world from a new and elevated perspective through faith in Jesus. This mirrors the spiritual liberation and restoration that Jesus brings to those who follow Him, freeing them from the burdens of sin and suffering.

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;
indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
The LORD watches over you—
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.
The LORD will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;
the LORD will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

Psalm 121

Read: Luke 22:39-54; Matthew 26:36-56; John 18:4-10

A SEVERED EAR IS RESTORED

This miracle takes place during the time of Passover, which celebrates the exodus, the freedom from slavery of the Israelites from ancient Egypt. Because of the hard heart of Pharaoh, Egypt endured ten plagues – each more devastating than the one before. The tenth and last plague was the death of the firstborn. The Israelites were commanded to mark above their doors with lambs' blood so that the angel of death would *pass over* them.

1

Do you find anything significant about the timing of what was about to happen?

2

Jesus and his disciples had just eaten the Passover meal. There was talk of the Kingdom of God, and there were disputes among the disciples about who was the “greatest”.

Do you think the disciples understood what was about to happen (the arrest and crucifixion)? If not, what were they expecting?

3

Read Luke 22:39 -

The Mount of Olives was a regular place where Jesus went to “get away”. Do you have a place where you like to retreat... to get away? Describe it. Why did Jesus need to get away and pray?

4

How was He feeling? What does the Word say about the physical manifestations of these emotions?

Hematidrosis is a condition in which capillary blood vessels that feed the sweat glands rupture, causing them to exude blood, occurring under conditions of extreme physical or emotional stress.

5

How does God answer Jesus’ prayer? How does He strengthen Him? What does this teach us?

6

Read Luke 22:2 and Matthew 26:47. Who was behind the lynch mob coming after Jesus? They came with many and armed. What were they afraid of? Why were their fears unfounded (Luke 22:52-53, John 18:4-6)?

7

Why do you think the mob drew back and fell to the ground at Jesus' response?

8

When the men stepped forward to seize Jesus, Peter reached for his sword and cut off the servant's ear. Jesus told him to stop, reached forward, placed His hand over the severed ear and healed it.

Can you explain why there is such a difference in the mindset of Peter and Jesus? One's reaction is to defend and fight, the other's, compassion and healing. The healing wasn't the only act of compassion that Christ demonstrated that night... can you think of another?



Compassion is defined as a **deep yearning from within that moves us to respond with deep concern for sufferings of others.**

Jesus demonstrated complete obedience to the Father and deep compassion for us all that night.

What is one step of obedience you can take to become more compassionate toward others?

