

# Focus on Jesus

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## JESUS' FIRST RECORDED MIRACLE

### **John 2:6-10 ( NRSV ) –Parson tech.**

*Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now."*

## TODAY'S MIRACLES

Most of us know about the miracles Jesus performed during His three-year ministry here on earth. Changing water into wine, raising Lazarus from the dead, walking on water and healing the woman with the issue of blood are four of His recorded miracles.

Why do we no longer see or hear about miracles? Has Jesus deserted us? Of course not! I believe we just don't recognize miracles when they do occur. Many amazing things happen that we take for granted. We seem to think these things

are the result of good luck or happenstance.

To refute this I want to tell you about miracles I have seen during my years as a lay speaker witnessing for Christ, things that could not have been the luck of the draw.

Each time I present a happening I will identify its location but in some cases not the names of the people involved.

## WESTMINSTER CHAPEL

(This chapel was organized by Mrs. Mabel Clyde Browder who was a member of Westminster Presbyterian church in Bluefield, West Virginia. The congregation was about thirty in number and lived in a settlement just out of the city limits of Bluefield. I served this group for a total of eleven years.)

## "TURN THEM AWAY!"

One Sunday morning I drove into the chapel parking lot and found three men of the congregation waiting for me. As they approached me one of them said, "Jim, we need to talk with you. You know about the white woman living with the black man around the hill. Well, our kids tell us that two of their half-breed children are coming here to attend Sunday school today. We want you to stand out here and when they show up turn them away! Tell

them they can't come in! There are places for their kind, but this is not one of them."

I looked at the three of them and I realized they were serious enough about these mixed race youngsters that they might cause some real trouble.

I said, "I'm sorry, but I can't deny anyone entrance here. This isn't my house. This is God's house. You better take it up with Him."

With that the leader snorted, whirled and headed for the chapel entrance. All three of these guys looked as if they could bite the heads off of ten-penny nails.

I proceeded to a place inside the church door to wait for the little guys to come. I wanted to make sure no one jumped them or ordered them to leave.

Just before Sunday school was over two little black boys came up from the basement class rooms and started toward the door. I stopped them and asked where they had been. They told me they had slipped into Sunday school and were leaving to go home. I asked them to stay for church and, after some persuasion and a promise that I would not let anyone harm them, they agreed to stay.

I took each one by the hand and pushed open the swinging doors leading into the sanctuary. When we stepped in a sudden hush descended on the setting. The three of us continued down the aisle to the front row. I seated the boys on the left and I sat on the right so I could see what was going on and would be free to make a move of any kind that might be necessary.

Each service began with the singing of a hymn which called for

stopping in the middle of each verse to give folks a few moments to shake hands and speak to each other. The man who demanded that I deny the boys entrance to the church was also the song leader.

The leader began the hymn, then halted as usual but no greetings were given nor was there any movement. Everyone was silent with their eyes fixed on the song leader's scowling face. Suddenly the singing began again and continued to the end of the verse.

I had been watching the song leader and I noticed a change of his scowl. His face looked more relaxed and softer than when he first began the hymn. We started the second verse and I could see a wisp of a smile on his face. We stopped for the greetings portion and the man was actually smiling. Suddenly he stepped down from the platform and walked to the little boys. He put an arm around each youngster and hugged them tightly. The people left their pews and came forward to hug and kiss the two little souls who had been rejected moments before.

God worked in many hearts that morning. Two of his little children were welcomed by a group who had hated them only moments before. Only God could have opened the hearts of this group of people. It was a miracle!

That is not all God did. Some time later the song leader and his wife moved to Florida. They organized a church and worked for the Lord for a number of years. When this servant of God died, his family got in touch with me and asked me to come and take part in the funeral. Quite an honor, but I was not able to attend.

I praise the Lord for letting me see one of His miracles. A miracle that was truly amazing. God can use any of us if we just let Him.

Never forget that our God is a great God. **The only God!**

### BILL O'REILLY

As you may know, this gentleman is one of the star commentators on FOX television. In addition to his commentary assignments he has written several books. A couple of them have to do with the life and times of Jesus.

Several days ago Mr. O'Reilly made a statement that is absolutely false. He said that we all know we must earn our right to go to heaven.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Salvation is a gift from God. We are saved by God's grace, not by our good works.

All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Here are two passages of scripture giving us our answer about salvation.

Johm 3:16 (NIV)

<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 6:23 (NIV)

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in <sup>[a]</sup> Christ Jesus our Lord.

Of course there are many other passages dealing with salvation. The New Testament is our guide to life with Jesus. We all need to thank God for His love and His Son.

### YOUR VERY OWN MIRACLE

Most of us have had miracles in our lives. Do you have one that you would like to share with others? If so, call me and we will arrange to print it in our news letter. This is a great way to be a witness even unto the ends of the earth.

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