

**“Faith and Miracles”**  
Message by DD Adams  
7<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
Kemptown Providence UM Church  
July 8, 2018

The New Testament lesson is from Mark’s gospel, chapter 6, verses 1 through 6. Jesus left that place and came to his hometown. His disciples followed him. On the Sabbath, he began to teach in the synagogue. Many who heard him were surprised. “Where did this man get all this? What’s this wisdom he’s been given? What about the powerful acts accomplished through him?”

Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t he Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph (Hoseas), Judas, and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” They were repulsed by him and fell into sin. Jesus said to them, “Prophets are honored everywhere except in their own hometowns, among their relatives, and in their own households.” He was unable to do any miracles there, except that he placed his hands on a few sick people and healed them. He was appalled by their disbelief. This is God’s word for God’s people.

Please pray with me. Jehovah who is our Lord, Master, and relational God, Rapha, who is our Lord who heals, restores, and makes healthful. Lord, you yearn to heal us of the things that hurt our heart and others.’ We pray, take your living hands and touch our living hearts that we might recognize our need for them to not be resentful, or bitter, or prideful. Help us to release the pride to You that rises up

in us. Help us dear Lord to examine our hearts today and to heal us of the diseases that inflict and inhibit all we do and are. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Peace be with you! In the gospels we read that many people seemed to accept Christ, but later rejected him. They took offense and fell away. In Jesus' hometown of Nazareth we have examples of Jesus being “. . . unable to do any miracles there, except that he placed his hands on a few sick people and healed them. [Jesus] was appalled by their disbelief.”

Jesus did miracles like healing a leper, a paralytic, he healed the woman with the issue of blood, and he raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. We see Jesus performing many miracles. We see that the faith of the recipient is mentioned prior to Jesus' healing touch. So, the question arises, is faith necessary as a *precondition* for Jesus to do miracles of healing or for that matter, any petition brought to God?

In Mark 6:5-6, [Jesus] was “*unable*” or rather, [Jesus] “*did not* many mighty works, except that he placed his hands on a few sick people and healed them. He was appalled by their disbelief.” Now we all agree, God *is not* hindered and He does anything He pleases; it's not *God's* lack in any way. So we wonder, is faith necessary? Or . . . does God act independently of our belief at times?

Here today we could find a myriad of ways that Jesus has healed and answered our prayers—regardless of our faith or lack of it. Our hearts may be hard and callous just about that ONE THING. We don't want to believe that Jesus *can*

*and will* resolve that issue. And regardless of what God's done for us in the past and despite the evidence, we simply *forget* what God has done in our lives and in our hearts and minds. It's like this: God does something—we forget about it—and then we go right back to a heart and mind that's callous and unreceptive about that ONE THING.

A miracle is an extraordinary and welcome event that isn't explainable by natural or scientific laws, and because it's unexplainable, we know its got to be God! Such as, an incurable disease—healed; cancer—gone. Then we have conditions of the heart and mind that remain stubborn and unwilling to be changed by a believer.

Such as, we're finally able to forgive someone because we realize we too are sinners. Or, we see our need for more of God in our lives, we come back to church, and our hearts are changed and become sweeter because God touched them. I can't answer the question of whether faith is *always* needed when God heals, but I do know it's happened both ways to me many times in my life.

God has a divine master plan for your life, your family, and your church. And God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit can't and won't be controlled or manipulated or restrained by any human impulse. God does what God pleases. In Job 42, Job's mind is out of wack. He says to God, "I'm convinced: You can do anything and everything. Nothing and no one can upset *your plans*."

You asked, ‘Who is this muddying the water, ignorantly confusing the issue, *second-guessing my purposes?*’ I admit it. I was the one. I babbled on about things far beyond me, and made small talk about wonders way over my head. You told me, ‘Listen, and let me do the talking. Let me ask the questions. You give the answers.’

We see that we’re like Job at times. We think God to be absent about what we need, we think we know the way and the purposes of God, we forget we’re not God, and after God blesses us, we go right around and forget what God has done for us. We think about that ONE THING, and we think God doesn’t care.

I’m preaching to remind you and me that God’s presence is in your lives and in the life of this church. You think and say, “There’s just no way. I’ve seen it for years. It never changes.” Please, let’s take this moment, close our eyes, and have a moment of silence to repent. Then, let’s confess that God is able to do what He has promised in your life and in your church.

Before you take that moment let me ask you this. Have you ever asked God for something, unselfishly, doubting God’s interest, but then saw God do it? Raise your hand. Have you forgotten that God came through for you? Do you know and remember that God is never late and always on time? And maybe, God is trying to teach you something by waiting to answer.

I'm wondering, what is the quality of your unbelief about this ONE THING? Is it like those at Nazareth who turned against Jesus? Even if you don't think Jesus will answer your need, do you still hope He will? In Nazareth their faith was hostile. What about you? Have you given up about that ONE THING? I don't know your heart, but my suggestion is that we all repent. Turn around, face God, and allow God to do a work of grace in our hearts.

Let's take a moment of silence now.

Please pray with me. God you do whatever you please, in your time and in your way. We petition you with hearts asking for forgiveness. Remove the callousness from our hearts for that ONE THING we won't trust you for and make our hearts soft and tender. We want to trust you, despite what we think we've seen and our indifference to pray about this ONE THING.

God we release this need to you. We let go with soft and tender hearts. We continue to pray believing and expecting to receive from you, because we know, God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all and more than we could ever ask or think. In Christ's name we ask it and thank you in advance. Amen.