



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

“Miracle: Part 3”

Dr. Rice Brooks - December 20, 2015

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- What is one holiday tradition that you cherish?
- What is your favorite part of the holiday season?
- If you were to bless a stranger this week, what would you want to do for them?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online

John 1:1-18 ESV

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

The incarnation of Jesus reveals the great truth that the power behind the creation is not only intelligent, but also personal. The world around us demonstrates an intelligent design, so that belief in God is natural and normal. But this knowledge by itself cannot attain to a personal revelation of God. The incarnation, however, loudly proclaims the truth that the power and intelligence behind the creation is personal and that the Creator seeks relationship with humanity.

That the creator should become a human is astounding. The infinite God became a finite human, yet without ceasing to be infinite as God. The almighty creator became a fragile human, yet without ceasing to be all powerful in his divine nature. The all-knowing, all-wise One became limited in knowledge as a human, yet without ceasing to know all things in his divinity. The author of life who is life itself became mortal and experienced death, yet without ceasing to be the One who sustains all life everywhere.

That God would do this is even more remarkable when we consider how sinful humans are. God is flawless in his holy character and originally created humans in his image. How far we have fallen! When we look to God’s law and to the morality and ethics revealed through the enscripturated prophets, we

begin to realize how sinful we really are. Sin runs deeper than ungodly words and actions. Sin permeates the internal condition of the human soul that then gives rise to sinful words and actions. Scripture, history, and experience all confirm that humans are sinful by nature as well as by choice. This then makes the incarnation even more amazing. Not only did God take on the limitations of human nature, he came and dwelled among sinful humanity; more than that, he came and took the punishment for our sins upon himself. That the flawless, holy, infinite God would do this is awe inspiring.

Jesus said, *“The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here”* (Matthew 12:41-42 ESV).

Jesus is the greatest, most reliable and most authoritative person ever to address the human person and the human condition. To ignore him is to reject divine wisdom and leave us without hope of reconciliation with God in this life or in the next. To embrace him is to embrace God. This involves turning our hearts and our entire lives to God in a commitment to follow Jesus.

If the incarnation can be considered the greatest of all miracles, then the spiritual regeneration of sinful humans is the next greatest miracle. When a person initially whole-heartedly embraces Jesus to follow him as Lord, God is working a miracle in them. This miracle begins with spiritual regeneration, continues throughout life as the person is made more holy, and culminates when the person is conformed to the sinless likeness of Jesus. God is the author, sustainer, and finisher of this miracle.

Since God has done these two amazing miracles (incarnation and spiritual regeneration), it demonstrates that God deeply loves his human creation. Jesus performed many miracles while he was on earth, blessing and helping people and glorifying God. He continues to perform miracles today through his Holy Spirit. In response to Jesus, we too should serve him whole-heartedly and trust him and follow his ways in all things. As we do, we can expect God to also do miracles in our own lives as we call upon him.

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- What’s the greatest miracle you have personally experienced?
- What impact has the “unseen God” had in your life that others can see?
- What kind of miracle do you need from God?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Pray for God to increase your faith so that you would believe not only in his existence, but also in his power and grace to invade your life and the lives of others around you.
- Pray for somebody you know that is struggling to believe in God. Pray that Jesus will become real to them and that they will whole-heartedly follow him in their lives.
- Pray that your life would be a living testimony of God’s existence and his miraculous power and grace.