



Ma Ke Alo o: *Presence*: Miraculture

A Culture of Miracles

When was the last time you experienced a miracle? What, in fact, is a miracle, and why is it important? While there are generally two camps of thought in regards to miracles, that of either miracles continue to happen today because God is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 16:8) or it's something sanctioned for the past through Jesus and the first apostles only, miracles is defined in scripture with the Greek word σημεῖον - which pertains to "signs and wonders" that which a person or a thing is known and distinguished for. Tim Keller writes that miracles

lead not simply to cognitive belief, but to worship, to awe and wonder. Jesus' miracles in particular were never magic tricks, designed only to impress and coerce. . . . Instead, he used miraculous power to heal the sick, feed the hungry, and raise the dead. Why? We modern people think of miracles as the suspension of the natural order, but Jesus meant them to be the restoration of the natural order. (*The Reason for God*, pg 95-96)

So, why are miracles, or signs and wonders that distinguishes God, important?

- Proof that the Kingdom of God is here
- It builds and increases faith
- Highlights God's goodness
- Creates eyes to see God differently
- Sets an environment of risk-taking
- Starts conversations
- Builds humility
- Casts a vision of what the world is supposed to look like

Signs and Wonders create Culture

Since Jesus restores us to a better version of humanity, something closer to the original version of humanity, he doesn't just give us the title of his representatives, he gives us the means to be truly human together for the flourishing of the world around us (authority through the power of HS). It is our duty as image-bearers to restore what God intended from the start – goodness and beauty and creativity and wholeness by correcting the effects of

brokenness, selfishness and separation. If you consider how our restoration is set through the self-giving love of Jesus, then, we are to imitate Him. Our starting point, our created role and relation to God, sets a culture where there is no sickness, no hunger, no brokenness, no death. A culture that is set by miracles, or signs and wonders, that point to the goodness of God, is a means by which renewal and restoration actually happens.

Jesus said, "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12). As D.A. Carson says of this verse, "Greater works ... cannot mean 'more spectacular' or 'more supernatural' works; it is hard to imagine works that are more spectacular or supernatural than the raising of Lazarus from the dead, the multiplication of bread, and the turning of water into wine."¹ So, what does Jesus mean by this? He means exactly that: that He will establish and restore culture, right relationships, heal brokenness through his image-bearers. Through his disciples - through those who imitate Him and walk in the way of self-giving love and authority as truly human ones.

If we as imitators of Jesus don't move in signs and wonders, then our demonstration of the Kingdom of God and the goodness and love of Jesus is only in teaching and good works. And a loving God doesn't just instruct or give out charity – He transforms us and the culture around us for the good and beauty and restoration of everyone and everything.

Miraculture

So, how do we begin to establish a culture like this? Well, instead of asking like beggars or asking for mere selfish gain like we're asking a genie in a bottle, we approach the Father as both heirs and ambassadors. As a child and as a reflection of a good Father. What does this look like practically?

- Testimonies
 - We share stories of signs and wonders, great and small, without withholding
- A "Why not?" Faith
 - We move into places of brokenness, hunger, sickness, and darkness with the expectation that a good Father cares even deeper and longs for restoration in each of these spaces more than we do, so we just go for it!
- Individually and Corporately
 - We pray and ask and ask and pray some more in both our personal and gathered rhythms
- Ephesians 3
 - We approach God in freedom, confidence, and love that surpasses knowledge
 - We have an intimate relationship with God who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us (vs 20)

¹ *The Gospel According to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary, 495)