

201415 messianicmiracles joeamaral 20140803am

Well, good morning. I clean up nice, no? I am capable of dressing up, I just don't like it. It's so great to be with you guys here this Sunday morning.

And I can't believe how many sessions we've had together already. And I hope that you've gotten a good introduction to the ministry over these last few days as we've gotten together and we've been talking about Jesus and his culture and the origin of where he came from. And last night, I really enjoyed kind of that little departure and talking about the story in the stars last night.

Who was here last night? Do you guys enjoy learning about the story in the stars? Yeah? For me, it's one of my favorite things to do because I know it stretches us a little bit, but it shows us a different part and a different side of God. And this morning, what I wanna do is I wanna continue talking about, excuse me, this culture of Jesus that made him who he is. And I'm gonna be talking about what I call the messianic miracles of Jesus.

You know, we as Christians, it's so easy when we talk about Jesus to call him the Messiah because we have 2000 years of history on our side. It's easy for us to look back and say, well, how could they not know he was the Messiah? How did they miss it? Didn't they know that? Well, don't be so judgy, okay? We've had 2000 years. We've had a lot of time to look back and say, yes, he was the Messiah because look at how this was fulfilled in his life.

And look how this happened and how this transpired. But the people who were living at the time, the Jews who were living in Israel especially, they were so hungry for a Messiah, so hungry for a Savior. Like I said, I think a couple of days ago, everybody who thought they were somebody came in to occupy Israel, to kick out the Jews, to take over their land, to make them slaves, to put them in bondage.

And so they were constantly crying out to God saying, Lord, would you please once and for all just send someone to take care of whatever empire or enemy or army is against us, would you just send someone? And they weren't looking for a nice guy. They weren't looking for a man of peace. They weren't looking for somebody to come and say, you know what, be nice to those who are mean to you.

Somebody smacks you on the face, give them the other side. They weren't looking for that. They were looking for a king to come with a sword and a myriad of chariots to utterly destroy whoever came against them.

And so Jesus didn't fit the ideological mindset of the people. Many often wondered when they had the choice between Barabbas and Jesus, why did they let Barabbas go? Because he was an insurrectionist. He was a revolter, at least he tried.

He failed, but at least he tried. And they said, this Jesus, he comes and he tells us just to be nice

to the Romans. And so he didn't fit what they were looking for.

How would people know who the Messiah was? Did he have a business card in his wallet? How are you doing? Jesus, Messiah, nice to see you today. How do they know? Was Jesus the only one who was a contender to be the Messiah? What did you have to do to be the Messiah? What qualifications did you need? Did you have to go to a certain religious institute? Did you have to have a certain family last name, a certain lineage? Did you have to be born in a certain part of the world? What did you need to be the Messiah? And so many came, many claimed either to be the Messiah or declare the Messiah by his followers. And so the people needed to put checks in place.

They needed to put tests in place in order for a person to be considered to be a Messianic candidate. He had to do certain miracles. He had to prove certain things.

And over time, when it came to the days of Jesus, there was a system in place. There was an expectation that when the Messiah would come, he would do these things. But it built up and it got to that point.

Now I want to take a few moments, guys, and just kind of, again, walk us through a little bit of our ministry. How many are here for the first time hearing me this week? Okay, just a few of you. The rest of you are here.

So I won't take a particularly long time. You may or may not know that my wife and I host a TV show here in Canada called First Century Foundations, and you can watch it on Vision TV, on CTS, or the Miracle Channel, or any time on YouTube, okay? It's just one of those shows that you can stream whenever you'd like. And people like to follow the ministry.

I've noticed since being here, the numbers have gone up. Many of you have joined on to our Twitter account, for Facebook, YouTube followers, and Instagram. So you can follow us that way if you just want to kind of stay in touch with what we're doing.

And one thing I'd love to invite you to do, and you might say, Joe, are you crazy inviting us to go to Israel? Yes. I'm inviting you in May to come with me to Israel. Again, where's that couple? Where's Doug and Ruth? You guys stand for a second.

This couple, we met them last year here at the camp, and they came with us to Israel in May, just a few months ago. And how was it? See, he gets that right every time. Rock and roll.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. That's right, it says go with Joe. Go with Joe.

Anyways, no, seriously, guys, it is the trip of a lifetime. I can't sell it enough if that's the right way to talk about it. I can't talk it up enough.

I mean, today we're gonna be reading about the Sea of Galilee. We're gonna be reading about

Jerusalem and Capernaum and Nazareth and Bethlehem and all of these cities. And reading about them is cool, and seeing pictures on Facebook or on Google Images, that's cool.

But I gotta tell you, man, when you stand on the Mount of Olives yourself, and you look around, you say, wow, there's the Eastern Gate. Wow, there's the Garden of Gethsemane. Wow, there's the Upper Room.

Yes, and when you're on a boat, whose parent, whose child is this? You need to take her to Israel. Anyways, there's something about being there, and I'm not gonna focus on all the pictures, but just let you know that we do a lot of fun stuff. And this is one of the highlights for people, is when we get to sail on a boat on the Sea of Galilee, and we sing worship songs, and we take time just to pray.

We pray for people's needs. We just ask people to lead out in prayer. And as you look around, you can still see the mountains of Moab.

You can see Capernaum and Bethsaida. You can see the ancient cities mentioned in the Bible. When Jesus said, the city on a hill cannot be hid, you can see the city on the hill.

And it all just kind of comes into play. And if it's something that you've thought about going, I'd ask you to pray about joining us on a tour. And we get to do a lot of fun and exciting things.

And I didn't really talk much about the material this week, because I don't like to spend a lot of time, because I really would like to put the time into teaching. But I do need to spend a few moments. People have been asking, what's this book about? Or what's this video about? How much does this cost? Let me take just three minutes and let you know what we have back there.

Everything I've been teaching this weekend, except for Story and the Stars, okay? That's gonna be an independent documentary series that we're starting in the next few weeks, which will be ready, God willing, in December, okay? And I said last night, if you wanna help us make this film, there's a little pledge card in the back. You can seek here, and if you wanna give towards that. But everything else that I teach this weekend is in the book, Understanding Jesus.

And a brand new documentary series we just finished here, Understanding Jesus, the video. It's a 60-minute documentary about what life was like at the time of Jesus. So we interview experts who live in Israel, archeologists, and they teach us and they talk to us about what life was like in the time of Jesus.

And it's a window into what a day looked like for him. Why did he talk about shepherding so much? Why did he talk about farming so much? Learning about the culture and how they lived really will give you some insight into why Jesus taught the way he did and why he said the things that he did. And you can see there that the entire package normally is 165, and this week, we're selling everything for 140, which is six DVDs and two books.

And there's even a machine back there that lets you pay with Visa, MasterCard, Interact, Cash,

Check, all that kind of stuff, okay? That's all I wanna say about the products. They're back there. And if anything I've said this weekend kind of interests you and you'd like to learn more, just please pop to the back table and we'll have that there for you.

Now, I have one copy of the book, okay? You, sir, who did the mind-blowing sign. Stand up, there you go. I'd like to give you a free copy of this book.

There you go, hope you enjoy it, okay? We're a small ministry, so I can only give away one free book per service. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

They are at the back table if you would like, okay? But what I wanna do now is I really wanna take some time and kind of build on what we've been talking about. Understanding who Jesus was as a person, understanding his ministry techniques, his style, using that remez, that hinting method, remember? Just to leave somebody a breadcrumb and allow them to make their own discovery as they go on a journey. Now we wanna talk about these messianic miracles, which I talked about at the opening of the service today.

And you're not gonna find these messianic miracles written anywhere. You know, there was no checklist that the rabbis carried around with them saying you have to do A, B, C, and D. There was just an understanding that had been passed down from generation to generation. And what they said was when the Messiah comes, he will be able to do these things.

Nobody else will be able to do them. And the Messiah will not only do one or two or three, but he will do all of these miracles that we expect a Messiah to do. And basically what it was was this.

Anything the rabbis couldn't do themselves, what they weren't able of accomplishing, whatever prayers they couldn't get answered, they said, well, listen, of course we can't do it. Only the Messiah will do it. Yeah, yeah, that's it.

When the Messiah comes, he'll be able to do it. And so this list began to be compiled that it almost seems impossible. How could one person do all of these miracles? Well, do you think there was one man who did all these miracles? Well, there was a man named Yeshua, Jesus of Nazareth.

And I wanna encourage you this morning because all the miracles that he did that were messianic in nature were impossible for men. People felt like there was no answer, that there was no hope to that solution. And then Jesus comes along and he does it.

And he does it again, and he does it again, and he does it again. And I don't know if you've ever wondered why Jesus only did certain miracles and why people reacted to some kind of miracles but not to others. Once I tell you what the messianic miracles are, you're gonna say, you know what? Jesus knew the checklist.

And it's almost like he goes out of his way, says, sorry, I can't heal you. We'll get to you later. I

need to do this messianic miracle because I need to show everybody who I am.

And then sometimes he does a miracle that I think is pretty cool and nobody reacts. Then he does something that I think it's okay and everybody freaks out. And I wondered why are people having this reaction? There's a story of a widow who loses her only son.

Do you remember this story? The village of Nain between the Galilee and Jericho. And the woman is going to bury her son that day. We know that he died that day because in Judaism, you have to be buried before the sun goes down on the day of death.

So this boy had just died and he was her only son. That means that there's now no man in the family. So she's lost all the inheritance that was supposed to come to her.

Because as a woman, she was not allowed to take the inheritance. It would go to a brother or to the nearest family member of her deceased husband. So this woman is having her son carried to be buried.

And Jesus sees the woman and he sees the funeral procession. And what does he do? He has compassion, the Bible says, right? And he goes over and he touches the body and the boy is brought to life. What's the reaction of the crowd? Nothing.

They're like, oh, cool. What if you drove into a standard here or into Collingwood or Wasaga or wherever you live and there was a funeral procession going down the street? And George was there and he says, stop the procession, pull out the casket and open the lid. And he touched the body and that dead person got up.

Would that be cool? I think that'd be like really cool. But the people didn't think it was cool. Oh, that's nice.

Anyways, why didn't they freak out? Why didn't react? A boy was brought back to life. He was dead. They could see it.

They were about to go bury him. We're gonna find out. That was a miracle.

You see, miracles are things that God can do through people if he empowers them. But a messianic miracle is only something that God in the flesh as the Messiah can do. And so we're gonna differentiate between a messianic miracle and just a good old fashioned miracle.

One of the first miracles that the people struggled with and they couldn't get this miracle done in their own strength. And they tried for centuries and then they said, you know what, we can't do it. So obviously this is messianic.

Only the Messiah will do this miracle when he comes, if he comes. And it was casting out a demon from a person that made them mute. We all know what that means, right? Means that they weren't able to speak.

Now, why is that a messianic miracle? I mean, Jesus cast out devils all the time, right? You read it in the gospels. He cast out devils and people say, okay, cool. And they go on about their daily business.

But then he does a miracle about casting out a mute spirit and all of a sudden people's attention is perked. Why? In first century Israel, there was a system in place, okay? There was a way that you would cast out demons from people. Now, one time I brought somebody on the stage as a volunteer and they thought, but I thought they were possessed by a demon and they were offended.

So I'm not gonna call anybody to come up on stage. I'm not gonna look at anybody. If I happen to catch your glance, just because I happen to catch your glance, I don't think you're possessed by a demon.

Don't take anything personal, okay? But let's say there was a person here who had been possessed by a demon. And what they would do is, and we have this, you know, this is, it's recorded in Jewish literature, that as a priest or rabbi, I would speak to the demon in the person. And I would say, what is your name? And then the demon would respond and say, I am this.

And it would give a name. And then you would cast out that demon by its own name. Now you might say, well, that sounds bizarre.

Well, we see Jesus doing this as he goes throughout the region. Remember the man who was possessed? And he says, what is your name? Legion. They replied.

The demon in the man replied, because we are many. And because Jesus began to cast out demons by their own name, look at what people said. Some of them said, by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons.

Although they were looking for somebody to do it, when he did it, they began to cast doubt. Sometimes we pray and we ask God for a miracle. We ask God for an answer.

And we expect it to come in a certain package. It's gotta be a white box. It's gotta have a red ribbon and a blue tie.

And if it comes in any other order, oh, I don't know if this is God, but watch what happens. So I ask the person and I say, what is your name? I talked to the demon, but the demon makes the person mute. They can't speak.

So I ask again, what is your name? And the person can't speak. What would happen to that person who had a mute spirit? According to what I just told you, they were stuck with it for the rest of their lives. Because apparently nobody had enough power to drive out a demon unless they knew its name.

But then Jesus comes along and he hears about a man who had been possessed with a mute spirit. And Jesus speaks to the spirit, doesn't even ask its name. He just says, come out.

And look at what happens here in Matthew 9.33. And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. And the crowd was, finally, they were amazed. He's raising dead kids, nobody's surprised.

And now he casts out a mute spirit and they were amazed. Look at what Matthew records. He says, you know what? It's been a really long time since we've had this happen in Israel.

Isn't that what it says? Oh, it's been years since we've had a mute spirit cast out in these parts. Is that what it says? Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel. Who is this guy? Who is this guy who walks on waters, calms storms, and now even mute spirits obey him? Messianic miracle, number one.

Amen? Some of us have things in our lives and we expect them to go a certain way. And we look to man for solutions and then we get disappointed when man doesn't have the solution. But today, even in this room, even where you're sitting, God can speak into that situation and drive that thing out.

That fear, that concern, that doubt, that worry, whatever it is, I pray that today he will speak into your life. And that thing that man has not been able to drive out will be driven out in Jesus' name. Now, I know I'm a teacher.

I'm not supposed to preach, I'm sorry, but I might preach a little bit this morning, okay? Is that all right? Well, I have the mic, so I'm gonna preach anyways. So that's the first messianic miracle. And the list I give you today is not, what's the word? It's not all-encompassing.

There's more, but these are the ones I wanna focus on here today that I think are gonna be a blessing to you. Another messianic miracle was the healing of a person who was born blind. Not a person who became blind later on in life.

Maybe they got a disease and they lost their eyesight. Maybe they had an injury at work or in a war and they lost their eyesight and they became blind. No, no, that's not what we're talking about.

Because Jesus healed people who are blind and same thing. Oh, cool. And then they went on their way.

But there was something, there was something about a person who was born blind that the Jewish people at the time of Jesus believed. And it doesn't matter what we believe today. He's not living here today physically on earth.

He was living back then. And he was aware of what his own people believed. And he operated in a fashion that will most effectively minister to them.

Do you understand? So knowing the beliefs of the people, even the legends of the people, he operates in a way that's gonna maximize his ministry to them. You see, in Judaism, there's a belief that if there's sin in your life or sin in the life of your parents or grandparents, as punishment, God will make your first child be born blind. Could you imagine living in that time? And you're thrilled.

Hey, God has blessed us with a child. They didn't have ultrasounds, so they couldn't tell if it was a boy or not. But maybe they had a sense, we have a boy.

And then the boy is born and oh no, he's blind. Not only is that terrible in and of itself for the child, but now there's a shame that comes with that because people are gonna think that they were sinning before they were married. Or maybe it wasn't them.

Maybe it was their parents or grandparents. There was some kind of a generational sin. And because of what they did, now they've been cursed by God by having a child that was born blind.

I mean, this happens, guys, in the gospel, John 9, one and two. And as he went along, he saw a man, what? What does it say on the screen? Blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents? That he was born blind.

You see, the disciples and the people were aware of this belief system that if you sinned before marriage, that the price, the consequence was blindness at birth. Now, could you imagine? Imagine Jesus is going through the temple and he's doing miracles, he's healing people. And then it's almost like his ears have little built-in radars.

Okay, blind, blind, sorry, blind, blind, born blind. Blindness, born blind. Hang on a second.

The only way blindness from birth can be removed is if God forgives the sin. If God breaks the sin in the family line, then the curse of blindness will be removed. Who's the only one who can forgive sin? God.

Remember the men who lowered their friend through the roof? And he said, hey, what's easier to say, your sins are forgiven you, or get up and walk? So that you will know the Son of Man can do both, get up and walk. So who could forgive sin except God? Nobody. And so Jesus is going through the temple courts and he hears about a man who was born blind and he goes up to the man and he heals this man, right? And what does Jesus say to him? Don't tell anybody what I've done for you.

What's the first thing the guy does? He runs around, I'm healed, I'm healed, I'm healed. I think Jesus knew that was gonna happen, don't you? That's what we do when God does something good for us, when God does something amazing for us, we wanna tell everybody, I think that's why he does it. But then the Pharisees hear about the man who was born blind and almost within minutes, it seems like vultures, they descend on the scene.

And they wanna know, hey, where's the guy who was born blind, where is he? And you have this idea that the Pharisees are constantly upset with Jesus and they were to a certain point, but at the same time, they were hearing about messianic miracles. They wanted to validate and authenticate. Did he really have a mute spirit? Was this guy really born blind? We need to know.

And so they track the guy down, don't they? And they say, listen, were you born blind? No, I'm actually asking you, he went, no. I'm glad, praise God. He'll put here, were you born blind? And the guy says, yeah.

Are you sure you were born blind? He goes, you know, pretty sure that up until a few seconds ago, I could never see. Yeah, I'm pretty sure I was born blind. Well, who healed you? The guy's like, I don't know.

Listen, don't worry, you're not in trouble. Tell us, who healed you? He said, listen, I'm not trying to be whatever, but I was blind. I couldn't see who it was, you know.

You know, I'm sorry, I'm not trying to be a problem or be arrogant or an idiot here. I just, I could, all I know, I don't care who he is, actually. I don't care who he is.

All I know is this, I was blind, and now I'm not. And that's good enough for me. But it wasn't good enough for the Pharisees or the teachers of the law.

In fact, they send for the guy's parents. Look how hard they're working to authenticate the guy's story, that it wasn't just some blind person who became blind later on in life. They really wanna get to the source.

They wanna make sure, and they even ask his parents, are you sure? Is this your son? Was he born blind? And the answer of the parents is, listen, he's old enough, you ask him. They didn't wanna admit to it, because if they admitted they had a son who was born blind, let you fill in the blanks. They authenticate it, they verify, yes, this man was born blind.

Again, look at what John says. Guys, nobody has ever, not it's been a long time, or it hardly happens anymore. Folks, nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind.

Messianic miracle number two, amen? Are you starting to get the picture that Jesus can do anything? That no matter what man says, that no matter what doctors or banks or therapists or counselors say, no matter what they say, that God can? Do you believe that? Now, this one gets a little tricky, because I'm gonna contradict myself here in a minute. And I have Matthew to thank for that in his gospel. Okay, but let me give you the background.

See, leprosy was seen as an incurable disease. And it was incurable because the belief was this, that if you spoke out against God or his servant in public, God would strike you with leprosy. Again, how could leprosy be removed if it was given by God because of sin or cursing? Who's the only one who could remove leprosy? God.

We see this even way back in the Old Testament in the book of Numbers. Remember when Miriam spoke out against Moses? It says, when the cloud lifted from above the tent, there stood Miriam, leprosy like snow. And Aaron turned toward her and saw that she had leprosy.

So here she is given this leprosy because she had spoken out against Moses, spoken out against God's servant. Now, in Hebrew, the word used there for leprosy is tzarah. You guys wanna try that? Tzarah, that's pretty easy.

And it means to have scales or flakes on your skin. So this kind of leprosy would just cause pieces of your face to fall off, parts of your arm just to fall off. Could you imagine such a thing? And you saw somebody, you're like, ah, you shouldn't have spoken bad against God.

Now, let me, let me confuse you a little more. Let me push you a little more. So tzarah, this disease of flakes or scales forming on the face or body was given when somebody spoke out against God or his chosen servant.

Can you think of anybody in the New Testament who made it his mission to travel around and persecute Christians and talk bad about Jesus? Does that sound like anybody? Aha, and what happened to him when he repented? When God showed up and forgave him, something like scales, tzarah, fell from his eyes. Some of you are smiling, some of you see it. Wow.

So Jesus is doing these messianic miracles. He's casting out mute spirits. He's healing a man who was born blind.

And then he's healing a leper. Let me tell you a little bit more about leprosy. I just want to kind of camp on this one a little bit.

Here are some laws about leprosy. If you had leprosy in those days, you were not allowed to come near a village or a gate. Okay? You could not touch or be touched by anyone.

And in Jewish tradition, no Jewish person had ever been cleansed outside of Miriam. I know you're talking about Naaman. Remember the guy who dipped in the river seven times, but he was a Syrian, he wasn't Jewish.

So in their faith, a Jewish person had never been cleansed from leprosy. And so they're not allowed to come into villages. They're not allowed to be touched by people.

They have to live on the outskirts of town. They could come to the gate, but no further. But usually they have to stand far away from the gate.

And we see this in the story of Luke 17, don't we? Jesus is going into a village and 10 men who had leprosy met him. But where did the men meet him? They stood at a distance, keeping in line with tradition. They stood at a distance and called in a loud voice, Jesus master have pity on us.

And when he saw them, he said, go. You know, people think that, or they forget that he was

Jewish, right? And so they don't think that Jesus abides by the laws of his day. Because lepers can't come into the city.

And these 10 were far away. And they said, master, have mercy on us. What did Jesus say? You know what? Nevermind the law.

Everybody come in for a group hug. Come, come, I'm gonna lay hands on all of you. I'm gonna anoint you with oil.

I'm gonna pray over you and you're gonna be healed. Is that what Jesus does? No, he knows the law of his own people. And from a distance he shouts, go.

And as they went, as they obeyed the word that Jesus gave, they were healed when they went on their journey. So he's casting out mute spirits. He's healing those who are blind from birth.

And now he's even cleansing lepers, all things that only God can do. And he's doing them. And momentum is building.

Remember the crowds were getting bigger and bigger. They're starting to believe maybe this is the one. They didn't care what school he went to.

It didn't matter what his background was. What he was doing was catching the attention of the people. But now I'm gonna show you something that Matthew writes that totally undoes everything I just taught you.

And when I read it, I said, hey, thanks a lot, Matt. Hey God, why did you allow the Holy Spirit to have this written and put in the Bible? It goes against my teaching. That's not cool, man.

I worked really hard to get this messianic miracle stuff together, and now Matthew just ruins it because look at what he says. There was a guy with leprosy who came into a village where Jesus was preaching, and he kneels down in front of Jesus. And he says, Lord, if you're willing, make me clean.

In the previous story, he doesn't call the lepers in. He shouts at them. But in this story, he reaches out his hand and he touches a leper.

Oy vey. And Jesus says, be clean. And immediately, he was cured of his leprosy.

So who's wrong, me or Matthew? Don't answer. Well, the fact is neither one of us is wrong. And let me explain to you why.

You see, the word that we use for leprosy in Greek has many roots, lepai, lepis, lepo. There's all kinds of roots. And whenever we see that root lep, the translators automatically put in the word leprosy.

Now, if you go to Matthew 8 in your Bible, and if you have an NIV or a study Bible of any kind,

go to the bottom of the page. Seriously, somebody right now, go to the bottom of Matthew 8, and tell me what it says there about the word leprosy, if you could. What does it say, George? Not necessarily leprosy, but some kind of a skin disease.

If you had a skin disease, it would make you unclean, but not unapproachable. It would make you unclean. And notice the man's plea.

He says, Lord, if you are willing, can you make me clean? He doesn't say heal me, does he? And after Jesus touches him, he says, I am willing, and immediately he was cured. He said, be clean. So what's the difference in between being healed and being clean? Is there a difference? Well, I would suggest that there is, and I wanna show you what I mean.

There's something called the mikvah cleansing. Have you ever heard of a mikvah before? You don't know it, but you have a mikvah underneath this stage. A mikvah is where we get our baptismal tradition from, where we get our baptismal tank from.

We didn't create it. We're not that smart, okay? We took it from Judaism. We borrowed it, and then we applied the teaching of Jesus about being baptized, but we need to understand where, what the source is, and how we get to this.

So this is called a mikvah, and the mikvah is always carved out of solid stone, something that cannot be penetrated by water to get in, to defile it, for fungus, for mold, to start in it, it has to be completely impenetrable, made of pure stone, and it has to be filled with living water. Do you guys remember we talked about living water a few days ago? Do you remember the sources of living water? Right, rain, springs, and rivers. Basically, water that's not brought by the hands of man.

It has to be brought naturally to the place, and you put something in the way to capture that water. Once you had this living water, you would fill it into this tank, and people would immerse themselves to purify themselves. Now, we have these mikvahs everywhere in Israel.

Everywhere where Jews lived, mikvah was a part of their lives. We have a shower in our home, they had a mikvah. It's something they had to do, because to them, it made them ritually pure.

They couldn't go to the temple without going through the waters of mikvah. Could you imagine if nobody was allowed to come into this tabernacle, unless you took a quick shower at the door? But that's what happened. Now, let me explain why the mikvah is so important.

Three times a year during Passover, Pentecost, and tabernacles, God commanded Jewish men from all over the world to come to Jerusalem. And so three times a year, hundreds of thousands of extra people would come to the city. And they all had to go through the ritual waters of immersion and mikvah before they were allowed to go into the temple.

Now imagine, and I apologize for the graphic description here, but ladies, could you imagine herds of thousands of men traveling through a hot, humid, and sweaty desert without

deodorant, without a woman telling them to use deodorant? No holiday in expresses along the way. These men would travel for weeks at a time. At the very least, they could dip their feet sometimes, but they couldn't wash themselves.

So imagine 5,000 men. Again, I apologize for the visual. Enjoy your lunch after the service.

And these 5,000 men descend on Jerusalem, and they're sweaty, they're stinky, there's dirt in places they didn't know they had. And they finally get to Jerusalem, and one man sees the temple, and he knows, there's mikvah there, filled with cold, clean, fresh, living water. So what does he do? He ditches his friends.

He runs ahead of them as fast as he can. He gets to the mikvah. He starts disrobing as he gets close to it, because he had to go into it completely undressed.

And by the time he gets to the mikvah, he bolts down those stairs. Oh, the water is cold, it's clean, it's refreshing. It's heaven in liquid form.

And you have to completely immerse yourself. So he goes, he goes down, and he's gonna hold his breath as long as he can, enjoy. Oh, that fresh, life-giving, re-energizing water.

Mazel tov. And then he gets up. So you have to come down one side, and it's hard to see here, it's broken, but there used to be a railing in the center.

You can kind of see where it used to be here. Because you would come down one side unclean, you would dip yourself, come out the other side clean. So what if you're coming out clean, and a guy's coming in unclean, and he touches you? Now you're unclean, so you have to go again.

So it'd become a merry-go-round. So they put up the railing to make this distinction. But this sweaty, dirty, filthy man has just got in.

He comes up, ah, clean. And all that stuff that was on him is now floating in this beautiful, clean mikvah. And so the next guy shows up, and he runs, and he goes, whoa, whoa, whoa.

He goes, that's fine. He goes, you know, man, that's fine. Moves it out of the way, dips, comes out.

Same thing falls off his body. The fifth guy goes down. The 50th guy goes down.

The 500th guy goes into the water. Do you want to imagine? Let's just say the water came to a point where its ritual cleanliness became questionable. And so the 501th guy got to the edge.

He went, oh, that's not happening. Rabbi, fix it, right? We always want the pastor to fix it. Fix it, take care of this.

And the rabbi said, what are we going to do? You know how long it took to get enough living water to fill that mikvah? We can't just, you know, pull the drain plug, let it go out, and then fill it

again with all this living water we have around Jerusalem. There was none. So how do you fix the problem? You can't dump it, and now it's unclean.

So the rabbis came up with this really, really great idea to solve the problem. And they had these stone containers carved out and placed beside mikvahs. And during the rainy season, like in Israel, when it rains, it pours, and then there's nothing for nine months.

Not a drop, not a cloud in the sky. It's just this deathly dry heat. But for about two months, two and a half months, there's moments of just downpour.

They would say, Baruch Hashem, thank you, Lord. They would open up the lid, and that container would catch all the rain because rain is living water. And if it was a good year, they'd put a second container, a third container, and the water would just, by tube, spill over from one container to the next.

And now they had enough living water for the year. But still, they couldn't drain the whole tub because there wasn't enough water in one container to fill it again. So I think the Jewish people invented the tap because they couldn't afford to put a whole bucket load.

So they had this little tap-type device that had a little aqueduct, a mini half tube that would come from the container of living water to the top of the water in the mikvah. And when it became scummy and dirty and it became unusable, they would take a skimmer. You know, like those skimmers you use in your aquariums to get the fish? It catches all the little stuff, right? And so they would skim all the stuff.

They would put it off to the side. They would open and close the tap real quick. One drop, two drops maybe, of water would come out from the tank.

And everybody would watch those water drops. It's like a Hollywood scene. Slow-mo, there's momentous music.

And finally, there's one touch. The rabbi would say, I now declare this water to be clean. And the next 500 men would go through.

They would do it all over again. Why am I telling you this? Go back to the man that we read about in Matthew 8. He said, Lord, I'm unclean. I'm impure.

People said, I'm unclean, I'm undesirable. I can't be with people. I can't go to the temple.

I can't go and worship God. I can't do anything. I'm unclean.

But hey, I've heard you traveling these parts. And I heard you tell somebody that you're the living water from heaven. So I'm asking you, if you're willing, please, if you could just take a moment and spare a drop, would you reach out and touch me? Because I know that if you're God's living water, I know that one touch from you and I will be made clean.

And Jesus says, oh, I'm so willing. And the living water from heaven reaches down to this unclean container and he touches him. And one drop of living water, the man is declared to be clean.

Come on, amen? Now I know, and I'm gonna raise my hand for this question. How many people have felt unclean? That's all? Come on. How many people at some point said, God, I feel so unclean.

I feel so unworthy and undeserving of the calling on my life. I feel so unworthy to be used by you. And we beat ourselves up and we let the enemy beat ourselves up.

And we go around moping and saying, oh, if there was only a solution. And we look down at the dirt on our feet. But today what God is saying to you is just reach out to me.

You can never be too impure. You can never be too unclean. You can never be too far gone.

But God says to you, Stanier, this morning, that if you ask me, I will reach down from heaven. And I will give you not just a drop, but I will give you living water that will flow from your innermost being. I will make you clean today.

And those who are feeling dry and thirsty and empty, he says, I'll fill you too. Just reach out to me and I will allow, I will open up the floodgates of heaven and I will pour out such a blessing on you that you won't even be able to contain it. Who would like that blessing? It takes faith on our part to reach out.

Remember the mustard seed? Remember it's not the size, but it's the quality. He's saying, if you will have that mustard seed faith just to reach out and touch me, I will touch you and release cleansing into your life. Come on, amen.

I think we have time to do one more messianic miracle. Then I'm just gonna have just a general prayer over you. I'll ask everybody to stand at the end.

We'll ask Darren and the team when I'm done to come and lead us in a song of thanksgiving, thanking him that he is the Messiah, that he can do what man says is impossible. Now I save this one because to me, it's how God wowed me. And I wanna share it with you, this final messianic miracle.

In Judaism, there's a belief that resurrection is possible within three days, but after three days, resurrection is absolutely impossible because they believe, remember, you don't have to believe this. I don't have to believe this. Jesus didn't have to believe this, but he knew the people did.

So he operated within their belief system. And in Judaism, the belief was that after a person died, the spirit would leave the person. The next morning it would come back.

And if God so willed it, the spirit could reenter the person. Do you understand why nobody was

impressed when he raised up the little boy? He's been dead a day. It's cool, but it's not that cool.

Could you imagine? Could you imagine? Remember Jairus, the religious leader? He and Jesus were walking to his house to pray for the girl who was sick. And they were like a few steps away from the house. And they came out and they say, don't bother the master, I'm sorry.

Your little girl has died. And Jesus goes in and he touches her and raises her to life. Nobody freaks out.

She's not even dead like 30 seconds. Again, it's a miracle, but hey, relax. It's not that big.

And I never understood why it wasn't a big deal because of the belief system. See, he could be raised from the dead within three days, but after three days, now we're talking about a messianic miracle. Because on the morning of the fourth day, the belief was the body began to rot and the face was disfigured.

And when the spirit came and no longer recognized the body and left for all of eternity. So on the fourth day and beyond, resurrection was impossible. Do you have any idea where I'm going with this? Is there a story in the Bible? You know, when you read the story that you know I'm gonna talk about, it's actually a little offensive when you first read it.

Let me tell you why. Because they come to Jesus and they say, hey, your dear friend, Lazarus, yes, he's dying. And Jesus says, I appreciate the update, but I just, I can't go see him yet.

I have stuff that I need to do. Now, I don't know about you. I'm gonna continue to be honest as I have been all weekend with you.

To me, I find that incredibly rude. To tell somebody their best friend is dying, he has hours to live, maybe a day, and you said, well, thank you, but I'm just gonna go over here instead. Am I the only one who thinks that's rude? Inappropriate? Uncaring? And this is Jesus we're talking about.

Why would he do such a thing? I talked about my dad who died of a brain tumor six years ago now, almost. And right before he passed, he was in this coma, and my dad wanted to die at home. He was one of those staunch Portuguese men.

I lived in this house, I built this house, I'm gonna die in this house. And he did, he got what he wanted. And on the Friday, the doctor came to the house, and he'd been in a coma already for a few days, and the doctor said, listen, he's not gonna make it through the weekend.

He's going into organ failure, he's the body's starving, he's make sure that you've called the funeral home, get everything ready. And so, it was very hard news to handle. That was Friday.

On Sunday, I was scheduled to be at the airport in Toronto with 81 people to leave, to go take them on a trip to Israel. Now, could you imagine if I had done what Jesus did? Oh, my dad's dying? Oh, that's fine, just let me know what happens when I'm in Jerusalem. You know what I

did? What any good son would do, what you would do, I canceled.

I had somebody else go meet them at the airport, somebody else take them in Israel. I said, there's no way I'm leaving his side, I wanna be with him. And two days, three days after departure, my dad died and we were right there as he took his last breath.

And I'm so grateful that I was there to witness his graduation from earth into eternity in heaven. But yet Jesus has the same opportunity and he chooses to not be there for his friend. And then his friend dies and they come to him and they say, your friend has died.

And he says, again, thank you very much for the news. He says, I gotta finish up a few things first. You're like, come on, go visit the guy, go see his family, they're mourning, they're in pain, they're suffering.

Do you agree with me? But Jesus waits and he waits and he waits. Let me show you something here. I mean, there's so much, I can't get to all of them.

I do wanna show you a few things here. This is about Jesus waiting and waiting and waiting. And watch, I wanna show you something that happens here.

In John 11, 37, when he finally arrives on the scene, look at what people were saying. And maybe you didn't catch this before, but look at the connection. He says, but some of them said, could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man, which was that messianic miracle he did, could he not have kept this man from dying? They were just starting to believe.

He's casting out mute spirits, he's cleansing lepers, he's healing people who were born blind. Maybe this is the guy. And then he lets his dear friend die.

And all that hype and promotion seems to come to a halt and it all stops. And then Jesus finally shows up. And I'm gonna paraphrase a little bit.

I'm gonna act it out a little bit. It probably didn't happen like this, but I could see Jesus walking in going, I'm sorry, I forget, how many days has he been in the tomb? Four. I'm sorry, how many days was that? Oh, four.

Oh, I should have come yesterday. Sorry, I had that thing, that place with that guy, you know, I just, right? And because he shows up on the fourth day, Jewish people have something called Shiva, where for seven days they sit in the home of the deceased and they visit with family. So they thought, what a nice friend, he's finally coming to sit Shiva with the family.

But he does what nobody thinks anybody would ever do. How dare you do this at the funeral of your friend? He says, how long has he been in that tomb? And they said, master, it's been four days. His body's rotting, there's a smell of decay coming out of the tomb.

He says, remove that stone. And everybody thought, what's he doing? I mean, this is the fourth day. Okay, he's good.

Okay, he's been doing a lot of stuff, but this is like impossible. Who does he think he is? And then Jesus prays and he says, Father, I know that we're good. I know that you hear me when I pray, but so that they would believe, so that they may believe that you have sent me.

I want you to hear me this one more time. And he says to his friend Lazarus, and what was impossible, impossible, happens in front of their eyes. What does that mean for us? Us Western Canadian Christians living in this part of the world? It's this.

I'm gonna close with this. So guys, you can come up and prepare to sing. Now I want us to sing a song of praise to the Lord.

This is what I wanna convey to you, is that you're here in this room or you're hearing my voice, no matter where you're sitting today, you serve what I like to call the fourth day Messiah, the God who can do the impossible. Do you know what a fourth day situation is? It's something that man has says is impossible. Maybe there's one person in this entire camp.

Maybe there's two, maybe there's five. You got some really, really scary news before you came here from your doctor or for a loved one, or maybe there's somebody who's not here because they got some really scary news and the doctor said, I'm sorry, if we had found out sooner, we could have done something, but it's too late. Can I say to you that we still serve that fourth day Messiah that no matter what the doctor says, that when he shows up, anything is possible.

Some of you here have grandkids, kids, siblings, nephews and nieces, cousins, friends that used to serve the Lord, or maybe they never have. And those who have have walked away and they've been gone for a long time. And people have said to you, you know, it's too late.

They're living together or she's pregnant or this happened or he's done this. And people have said to you, maybe if you'd prayed sooner or more for them when they were younger, maybe they would have turned out differently, but it's too late now, you have to give them over. That's a lie.

That's a lie. The same Jesus who showed up in Bethany 2000 years ago, who said, move the stone as the same one who's walking in and out on these roads right now. And he says, it's not too late.

I'm the fourth day Messiah. Do you believe that this morning? I'm gonna ask you guys to stand. I just wanna pray with you and pray for you.

I wanna believe God with you. You know, my hand is raised too. I have a situation that I need God to show up for.

Sometimes, you know, you think that the person up here has it all together. Sometimes the person up here thinks they have it all together. But let me tell you, we're all on the same journey, okay? And I know that I'm going through something, something I need God to do in me and for me.

And I need the fourth day Messiah to show up in my life. I'm not gonna ask you what the situation is. It's not my business, it's not my concern.

But you would say, you know what, Joe, there is, there's something that I just, I need a miracle. I need God to do it. Would anybody here say that they have some kind of a fourth day situation for themselves or somebody they love dearly? So many hands, and that's the unfortunate part of life.

We go through these things. We don't always understand why. But I just wanna tell you guys that we serve the God of the possible.

Father, I thank you that what is impossible with man is so possible with you. You know, if we were just, if the Bible was a history book and it just recorded things that you used to do, that would be really discouraging. If the Bible's pages were filled of the time when you used to do things for your people, that would be really discouraging.

But the Bible is filled with stories of things that you did. And that same book says that you are the same yesterday, today, and forevermore. That means that what you did for your people then, you are willing and able to do for your people now.

And Father, I pray for every person who lifted their hands today, inside or outside this tabernacle. God, you know the fourth day situation that they are in. Maybe it's a physical body issue.

Maybe it's a marriage that seems so far gone and beyond repair. A relationship with a parent, with a spouse, with a friend, with a relative that seems so beyond repair. They've said, oh, it's impossible.

You guys are never gonna talk again. God, would you come into that situation? Lord, we pray for wayward sons and daughters and grandchildren, God. We pray for those who have gone their own way.

We pray that you would use whatever, oh God, to bring them back to yourself. We're calling the prodigals, the sons and the daughters to come home. Not to a father that's judgmental or angry, but to a father who's willing to give up everything just to embrace his son one more time.

So Father, every fourth day situation that's represented in this place, would you just come like you did so long ago? Would you speak to the tombs of our lives and remove that stone because life is about to emerge? And Father, we thank you that you are able to do these things that you ask. And so Father, with faith like a mustard seed, we move this mountain in Jesus' name. And we cling, Lord, to the hem of your garment, Lord, to that tassel of your garment.

And we say, let your healing power flow into the physical situations, the psychological and emotional situations, the relational, the financial situations, every situation with that healing

power, flow now in Jesus' name. Thank you, Lord. If you believe God is able, I want you to say amen.

Amen, amen. I'm gonna ask the team to lead us in a song of worship and praise. You guys have a great afternoon, whatever you decide to do.

And we'll see you again, men, here tomorrow morning. And ladies, have a great time wherever that you guys are going and doing, okay? Have a great day.