

Lecture 11 – Methods for Preaching & Teaching the Miracles

“Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....” Luke 5:23 (NIV)

Key Terms

Test, quest, choice

Objectives

- *To learn the details of the story of the healing of the paralytic
- *To learn the proper methods of interpreting the miracles
- *To learn how to preach miracles Christocentricly

Lead Question

What do you think is the value of Dr. Doriani’s interpretive method for miracles?

Methods for Preaching & Teaching the Miracles

I. Goals for This Session

To gain skill in interpreting miracles by studying a representative miracle

To examine major themes in miracles and their relevance for preaching and teaching

II. The Healing of the Paralytic, Luke 5:17-26

A. Settings

1. Broad context
2. The time and place
3. The audience: List all characters
4. Power was present to heal
 - a. The vocabulary of power with miracles
 - b. Power in Luke: its use and occasions, 4:36, 5:17, 6:19

B. Beginning action

1. A problem and a solution
2. Picture this!

C. Rising tension

1. Jesus’ pronouncement
2. Why are the Pharisees distressed?
3. Jesus reads their minds and replies: “Which is easier to say...?”

D. Jesus heals the paralytic

1. Question: What is moment of greatest tension? Why?
2. The role of dialogue in the drama

E. Following actions and sayings

1. How did the witnesses respond?
2. How should they have responded? (separate crowds from Pharisees)

F. What is the point of this parable? Technique

1. Goal: multiple perspectives through eyes of several characters (cf. magi in Matt. 2)
2. Narrative categories of test, quest and choice
3. For Jesus: a test of His claims
4. For paralytic and friends: a quest for healing despite obstacles
5. For Pharisees: a choice. How shall they respond to the revelation?

III. Methods for Interpreting Miracles

A. Observe the setting

1. List all characters. See story through their eyes.

2. Assume every detail counts.
 - B. Chart the story: Use the whole graph of action or simply list problem and solution
 - C. Identify form of narrative
 1. Report, speech, story or drama
 2. Test, quest or choice:
 - a. Test: Characters are in situations that test their physical, mental, moral or spiritual character.
 - b. Quest: Lead character seeks a goal, despite obstacles.
 - c. Choice: Character must choose between two courses of action.
 - D. Apply story through each major character. Look for:
 1. God or His agent, showing His work of redemption
 2. A believer, showing faithful response or failures common to them
 3. An unbeliever, showing the path of rebellion
 4. Neutral parties, showing the way people put off decision and vacillate
 - E. The goal: a way of reading
- IV. Christ-Centered Preaching and Teaching of Miracles
- A. The miracles are Christocentric. Each miracle presents Christ in several ways.
 1. Jesus is Lord and God. No problem or adversary is beyond His control or power. Miracles constantly compelled witnesses to ponder His identity. See John 6:14, "Surely this is the prophet who is to come into the world." John 7:31, "When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?" Luke 8:26, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water and they obey him!" Matthew 14:33, "Truly you are the Son of God!"
 2. Jesus is the Messiah promised in the OT. See John's question in Luke 7:19ff.
 3. Jesus is compassionate, merciful and loving. Compassion moved Him to heal crowds (Matthew 9:36, 14:14), to feed hungry (15:32), to restore sight (20:34), to raise widow's only son (Luke 7:11-15). Contrast - many miracles in the Old Testament are punitive.
 4. Jesus saves by healing body and spirit.

Many read of Jesus miracles and wonder, "Does God still perform miracles today?" Respond to this question in a winsome and gentle manner, reflecting what you have learned from this lecture and the course up to this point.