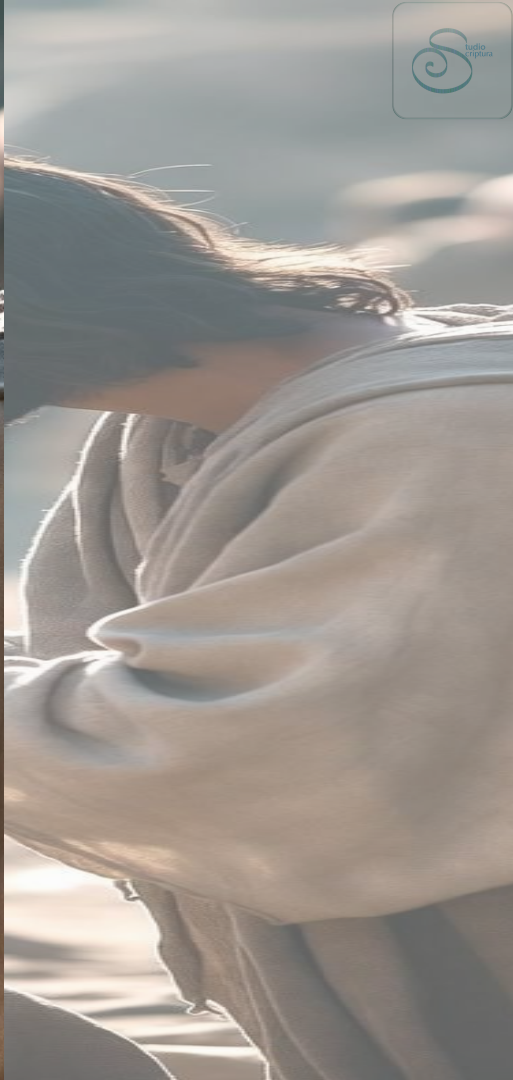




THE LIFE AND TIMES

of

JESUS OF NAZARETH





SIGNS & WONDERS

*Miracles that Mend
Body and Soul*

We begin a new major section in our study of the *Life & Times of Jesus of Nazareth*. We are going to spend several classes considering the signs and wonders of Jesus - miracles that mend body and soul.

Miracles are not a minor theme in the Gospels. They are woven into the public ministry of Jesus. They reveal His person. They confirm His message. They display His compassion. They expose unbelief. They train His disciples. They announce and point forward to the kingdom of God.





The miracles of Jesus are not merely demonstrations of what Jesus can do. They are revelations of who He is. That distinction is crucial. If we only ask, “What can Jesus do for me?” we miss the deeper question the Gospels ask when Jesus performed a miracle:

“Who is this?”

And this same question presses in on us today.

Who is this, who forgives sins? That is the question raised in Mark 2:5–12, when Jesus tells the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you,” and then heals him so that the room may know “that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.”

Who is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?
That question comes from Matthew 8:27, Mark 4:41, and Luke 8:25, when Jesus rebukes the storm and the disciples marvel.

Who is this, who touches the unclean and is not defiled?
We see that in Mark 5:25–34 with the woman who had the flow of blood, and again in Luke 7:14 when Jesus touches the open coffin of the widow’s son.

Who is this, who speaks to the dead and they rise? We see it in Luke 7:14–15 with the widow of Nain’s son, in Mark 5:41–42 with Jairus’ daughter, and supremely in John 11:43–44 with Lazarus.

Who is this, who opens eyes that have never seen? John 9 gives us that account, when the man born blind goes, washes, and comes back seeing.

Who is this, who stands before Lazarus’ tomb and cries, “Lazarus, come forth”? That is John 11:43, and the dead man comes out.





The answer is not vague. This is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. This is Immanuel, God with us. The King whose kingdom has come, *already* - and whose kingdom will still coming, *not yet*! He is Savior whose compassion is not mere sentiment, but mercy flowing from His sovereign authority.

Before we look at the individual miracles, we need a robust foundation. We need to ask what miracles are, why Jesus performed them, what they reveal, how they relate to the kingdom, and how Christians should think about miracles today.

We need a bit of theology.

As we start we need to ask how to avoid two errors. On one side, unbelieving skepticism that reduces miracles to myth or symbol. On the other side, miracle-obsession that chases spectacle and displaces the authority of God's Word and the gospel.

These are not merely academic questions. They matter because real people are suffering, praying for healing, carrying serious diagnoses, living with unanswered prayer, or watching loved ones decline. They matter because desperate people are sometimes exploited by those who promise miracles, while modern skeptics dismiss the miraculous as mere superstition.

All this matters because many sincere Christians are trying to think biblically, faithfully, and wisely about miracles.

We desire to be neither skeptics who explain miracles away nor enthusiasts who chase them as the center of the Christian life.





A miracle, biblically, is a special supernatural act of God



God is always active in His world; every breath we take is upheld by His providence, every recovery through medicine is still a mercy from God. We should never treat God's *ordinary* providence (God working out His sovereign will through natural laws, secondary causes, and the normal course of nature) as though it is somehow less dependent on the Lord. The doctor's skill, the body's healing mechanisms, the medicine's effect, the timing of diagnosis, all of it belongs under God's providential care and love.

And this is also where we need to be careful about wisdom and stewardship. Sometimes Christians pray for healing, and we should. We bring sickness, weakness, diagnosis, and pain before the Lord. But biblical wisdom also teaches us that not every health issue should be met only with prayer for miraculous intervention. Sometimes the Lord calls us to ordinary obedience: better stewardship of the body He has given us. Greater self-control, better rest, wiser eating, more movement, and more disciplined care for the life through which we serve Him and others.

We're not saying every sickness is caused by sin or negligence - that would be simplistic and unbiblical. Jesus Himself corrects that kind of thinking in John 9.

We are speaking of patterns of neglect that can accumulate over time and result in illness - overeating, lack of movement, poor sleep, careless habits such as smoking and drinking, neglect of medical counsel, failure to care for the body as His temple.

These things do not explain every illness, but they do remind us that prayer *and* wisdom belong together. We may ask God for healing while also asking whether obedience requires repentance, discipline, and better stewardship of our bodies.

God often works through ordinary means as well as extraordinary ones.





So, yes, pray for healing. But we also pray and ask whether wisdom directs us toward healthy weight, reasonable exercise, walking, sleep, drinking water, avoiding drunkenness and smoking, eating food that nourishes rather than harms, getting sunlight, receiving medical care early, and staying connected to other Christians for encouragement.

These things do not replace prayer nor God's providential love. But they are often part of His *ordinary providential care* through which God sustains life. We must not turn bodily stewardship into legalism or shame. But we should also be mindful when we ask God to heal in the midst of patterns of neglect that wisdom tells us to change. Praying for loss of weight is different than praying for discipline to lose weight.

A Christian view of healing includes both prayerful dependence and faithful stewardship.

Miracles are extraordinary acts. They are moments where God works above and against ordinary means. Some miracles may involve divine knowledge, such as the miraculous catch of fish, where Jesus knows what the fishermen do not know.

But many miracles clearly go beyond that. Water becomes wine. Blind eyes are opened. A storm is silenced. A man paralyzed rises and walks. Lazarus comes out of the tomb. These are not merely unusual coincidences. These are supernatural acts of God.

So we continue with a bit of our theological pursuit and ask, what are the purposes of miracles in Jesus' ministry?





First, miracles glorify God. Every miracle is first and foremost theocentric, God-centered.

Jesus does not perform signs in order to draw attention to Himself as a mere miracle-worker. He is not building a personality cult. He is not creating spectacle for spectacle's sake. His miracles reveal the glory of God in the person and work of the Son.

When Jesus raises Lazarus, He says to Martha, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" That is a controlling point. Lazarus matters. Relieving his sisters' sorrow matter.

But the miracle is ultimately about the glory of God revealed in Christ.

John's Gospel often uses the word *sign* for a miracle. A sign *points* beyond itself. Think of a road sign. The sign is real, but it is not the destination. It tells you where to go, where to turn, what to look for. Often it even has an arrow on it. If you are driving to a city and see a sign for that city, you do not park your car next to the sign and say, "I have arrived."

You follow the sign to the destination. That is how miracles function. They are real miracles, but they point beyond themselves to Jesus and the glory of God.

Cana (which we are told is the beginning of signs), *points* beyond wine to the abundance and joy of the new covenant. The healing of the blind man *points* beyond eyesight to Christ as the Light of the world. The raising of Lazarus *points* beyond Lazarus to Jesus as the resurrection and the life. These signs are real, but they ultimately point us to Christ, who He is, and to the glory of God.





Second, miracles authenticate the message and the messenger.

Throughout Scripture, miracles often cluster around major moments in redemptive history. Think of Moses before Pharaoh; Elijah and Elisha in a time of covenant crisis; Jesus Himself. Think of the apostles during the foundational era of the Church.

Miracles confirm that God is speaking and acting through His appointed messengers, and therefore their message carries divine authority.

That does not mean every faithful servant of God performs miracles. John the Baptist performed no sign, and yet Jesus said among those born of women none had arisen greater than John.

So we must not flatten the biblical pattern. By *flatten*, I mean we must not treat every era of biblical history as though God worked in exactly the same way, at the same frequency, through the same kinds of signs.

Scripture itself shows periods of miraculous activity at major moments of redemptive history. When God gives signs in those major moments, they authenticate the message and the messenger.

They say, in effect: God is not silent. God is acting. Listen to Him. *Can you hear me now?*





Jesus Himself appeals to this in John 14:11 when He says, “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.”

The works bear witness. They are not the deepest ground of faith, but they are real testimony. The blind see. The lame walk. Demons are cast out. These works confirm that Jesus is not merely offering religious opinion.

He speaks and acts with divine authority.

Third, miracles meet human needs and relieve the misery that sin has brought into the world.

This is very important. Jesus does not treat suffering people as props in a theological demonstration. He sees them as His children. He is moved with compassion. He heals the sick. He feeds the hungry. He restores the outcast and comforts the grieving.





In the first-century Jewish context, suffering and sickness were often connected in people's minds to sin. That assumption did not come out of nowhere. The Old Testament teaches that sin can bring judgment, including bodily affliction.

Deuteronomy lays out covenant blessings and curses. Some Psalms connect sin and bodily weakness. Job's friends assume his suffering must be tied to wrongdoing, even though the book itself corrects that simplistic view.

Over time, especially in religious thinking, the connection between suffering and sin can become rigid. If someone was blind, lame, diseased, or afflicted, people often assumed there must be a particular sin behind it. A sort of karma type of thinking - you get what you deserve.

That helps explain the disciples' question in John 9. They see the man born blind and ask, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" The question is not random. It reflects a common framework. But Jesus rejects the simplistic assumption. He says, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him." Jesus is not saying the man and his parents are sinless. He is saying this blindness is not the direct result of personal sin in the way the disciples assume.

So we should never assume that a person's illness is traceable to a specific sin in that way. That kind of assumption can be deeply harmful. Sickness, death, decay, grief, hunger, and demonic oppression all belong to a fallen world. They are part of the misery that sin has brought into creation. And the miracles of Jesus show Him beginning to undo that misery.

They reveal not only His authority, but His heart. Calvin was right to see Christ's miracles as testimonies of His divine love as much as of His divine power. Jesus' miracles are never cold proofs of who He is. They flow from His compassion.





Fourth, miracles reveal God's *immanence*,

His nearness and active presence in history - and in your life. The God of the Bible is not the god of deism. He does not wind up the universe like a clock and then step away to let it run. He is *transcendent* - He is above His creation but He is also near and stays involved in His creation.

When Jesus performs miracles, heaven breaks through to earth. The kingdom becomes visible. The reign of God is not merely announced with words; it is displayed in deeds. Blind eyes opening, dead bodies rising, demons fleeing, storms quieting. These are not random wonders. They are signs that God is near.

God has visited His people.

Fifth, miracles provide radical and full restoration.

Jesus does not merely patch symptoms. He gives signs of comprehensive healing and renewal. The paralytic is not only healed; his sins are forgiven. The woman with the issue of blood is not only physically restored; she is publicly called “daughter” and sent away in peace. The man born blind receives physical sight, then comes to spiritual sight and worship. Lazarus is raised from the dead, and that resurrection points beyond itself to Christ, who is the resurrection and the life.

Miracles are foretastes. Fanny Crosby wrote, “*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine.*” That is a wonderful word: *foretaste*. A foretaste is not the whole meal. But it is a real taste of what is coming. Miracles are like that. They are previews, samples of the world to come. They do not bring the fullness of the new creation immediately. But they show a glimpse of His coming kingdom.





Sixth, miracles are evangelistic.

They call people to faith in Christ. They are meant to produce more than amazement. Crowds can be amazed and still remain unbelieving. People can love signs and still reject the Savior. In John 6, the crowd wants more bread, but many do not want Christ as the Bread of Life.

That is a warning. A person can be fascinated by the supernatural and still not be converted.

This is where the phrase signs and wonders is important. We see that language often in Acts.

Acts 2:22 says Jesus was “attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs.”

Acts 2:43 says “many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.”

Acts 4:30 speaks of God granting “signs and wonders” through the name of Jesus.

Acts 14:3 says the Lord bore witness to the word of His grace, “granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.”





The phrase matters. *Wonders* arrest attention. They create awe. They make people stop and ask, “What is this?” *Signs* (as previously discussed) direct attention. They point somewhere.

Together, *signs and wonders* are evangelistic. They are not given so people can be entertained by power. They are given so people may recognize the truth of the gospel, the authority of Christ, and the reality of God’s kingdom.

A wonder that never becomes a sign can leave people amazed and unchanged. A true biblical sign directs people to Christ.

So every miracle presses the question: Who is Jesus? Will I believe Him? Will I trust Him? Will I worship Him? Will I come to Him not merely for His benefits, but to be obedient to Him?

Now, all of this leads into a key biblical theme, and our **seventh** point on miracles: the miracles are signs of the arriving kingdom of God.

Jesus says in Matthew 12:28, “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.” In Luke 11:20, He says, “But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.”





That is a major interpretive key. The miracles are not isolated wonders. They are kingdom signs. The reign of God has broken into history because the King has come. Isaiah promised that when God came to save, the eyes of the blind would be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, the lame would leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute would sing. Jesus takes up Isaiah's promises in Luke 4 and says, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Miracles are the kingdom in action. They are signs that the age to come has invaded this present evil age. The kingdom has broken in. The gospel is *already* going to the nations.

But it is *not yet* revealed in its final fullness. Tears remain. Bodies still suffer. Death still enters our homes. The final resurrection has not yet come.

Eighth, miracles remain possible because God is still active in His world.

Similar to our fourth point - we must never adopt functional deism. Many people today are practical deists without using the word or even realizing it. They may say they believe in God, but they live as though He is uninvolved in ordinary life, prayer, history, suffering, providence, or personal need.

That is not biblical Christianity. God is not absent from His world. Malachi 3:6 says, “For I am the LORD, I do not change.”

Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” His power has not diminished. His compassion has not cooled. His arm is not shortened.





Ninth, miracles are not normative in the same way they were during the unique ministry of Christ and the apostolic witness that established the Church.

To say miracles remain possible is not the same thing as saying miracles are the ordinary expectation of every Christian life. Nor does it mean that miracle-workers today possess apostolic authority to validate new doctrine.

So our position is *cautiously if not partially cessationist*. We affirm that God remains free to act miraculously today. He still heals. He still answers prayer. He still acts miraculously.

However, we do not believe the Church today possesses the same accrediting, revelatory miracle-working ministry that belonged to Christ and the apostles during the foundational period of the Church.

The canon is complete. Scripture is sufficient. The gospel does not need a modern miracle-platform to validate it.

Tenth, miracles must never be merchandised.

We must firmly reject attention-seeking, money-driven platforms that exploit suffering people. Some promise healings and imply that if people give enough, believe enough, attend enough they will receive their miracle. When healing does not come, the suffering person is often blamed. Desperate people are manipulated. Money flows upward while the sick remain burdened.

That is not the pattern of Jesus. That is not the pattern of the apostles. The true gospel does not merchandise the power of God. It does not say, “Come to Jesus and you will never suffer.” It says, “Come to Jesus because He is Lord, Savior, Redeemer, and King. Come to Him for forgiveness of sins, eternal life, peace with God, and sustaining grace whether He heals your body now or carries you through suffering until glory.”





Eleventh, miracles should lead us to bold yet, submissive prayer. If God is living, active, and sovereign, then prayer is not a formality. Prayer is the proper response of faith. We bring sickness, weakness, diagnosis, pain, family burdens, impossible situations, before the Lord because He is our Father and He hears.

Sometimes God grants dramatic healing. Other times He grants sustaining grace. Paul prayed three times for his thorn in the flesh to depart, and the Lord answered, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9, NKJV). Timothy had frequent stomach ailments, and Paul gave practical counsel in 1 Timothy 5:23. Trophimus was left sick at Miletus in 2 Timothy 4:20. Even in the apostolic Church, bodily healing was not automatic.

So we pray boldly, but we also trust humbly. Prayer is where miracles and theology becomes personal.

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We start briefly with Cana because Cana is the first sign. We already studied John 2 in an earlier lesson, so we will not redo that entire account. But John himself tells us this was the beginning of signs.

At the wedding in Cana of Galilee, Jesus turned water into wine. Six stone waterpots used for Jewish purification were filled with water, and Jesus transformed that water into wine of extraordinary quality and abundance. John says, “This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.”

That sets a pattern. The miracle is a *sign*, and the sign *points* to Him. It manifests His glory. The disciples *believe*.

The old order of external purification is being surpassed by the joy and abundance of the new covenant. Jesus does not merely patch the old system. He brings new wine. He brings kingdom joy. He brings grace overflowing. And because the first sign happens at a wedding, it quietly points forward to the final wedding supper of the Lamb.





We also learn something from Mary's final recorded words in Scripture: "Whatever He says to you, do it." That is a simple sentence, but it is a wonderful description of discipleship. However much may be said about Mary, her final recorded word in Scripture directs attention away from herself and toward obedience to Christ. Whatever He says, do it.

Now, still in the larger setting of Jesus' Galilean ministry, we move from the more private sign at Cana into more public displays of His authority. The crowds grow. The religious leaders begin to watch more closely. The atmosphere becomes more charged.

The signs are no longer only revealing His glory to disciples; they will begin to press the whole nation with the question: *Who is this?*





Our next account is the healing of the paralytic lowered through the roof, recorded in Matthew 9, Mark 2, and Luke 5.

Jesus is in Capernaum. Mark tells us it was heard that He was “in the house.” Whose house? The text does not say. Some have suggested Peter’s house because Capernaum becomes a kind of ministry base for Jesus, and Peter’s household is prominent there. That may be right, but we should not be dogmatic. What matters is clear: Jesus is teaching in a packed house, the crowd is pressed around the door, and the religious leaders have come as well.

Luke tells us Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting by, having come from every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. That detail matters. This is not just a crowd of curious villagers. The religious authorities are there, watching this young teacher who speaks with authority and acts with unusual boldness. They are observing, weighing, questioning, and testing

The atmosphere is already charged.

Then four men arrive carrying a paralytic on a bed. They cannot get near Jesus because of the crowd. Here is where faith becomes visible. They do not simply say, "Well, we tried." The crowd is too large, the doorway is blocked, the room is inaccessible. They refuse to let the obstacle have the last word. They climb onto the roof.





First-century Galilean homes often had flat roofs made of wooden beams, branches, reeds, packed earth, and clay. They were accessible and sometimes used for daily life. Getting up to the roof and opening part of it would have been disruptive, but not impossible.

Jesus is teaching. The room is full. The Pharisees are listening. Dust begins to fall. Then pieces of the roof. Then daylight. Then a mat being lowered. And on that mat is a man who cannot move for himself.

For friends like this today. Friends who carry you when you cannot carry yourself. Friends who refuse to let the crowd keep you from Jesus. Friends who are willing to be inconvenienced, willing to look a bit foolish, willing to ignore the religious niceties of the moment if that is what it takes to bring someone to Jesus.

Build friendships like that. Be a friend like that. The Church needs roof-tearing friends.

Now notice what Jesus does first. He does not stop the teaching and say, “What in the world do you guys think you are doing? I am dealing with serious theological questions here.” He sees their faith. And then He speaks to the man on the mat.

But notice what He says first to the paralytic. He does not first say, “Rise and walk.” He says, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.”





That would have shocked the room, especially the religious inquisitors. The man came for healing. Jesus speaks forgiveness. Why? Because the deepest need of this man is not standing on his legs. It is his standing before God. Physical healing matters. Jesus is not indifferent to the paralysis. But forgiveness is deeper than mobility. A healed body without forgiven sin is still under judgment. A forgiven sinner, even in a weak body, has eternal life. From the start, we see miracles in context. They point beyond bodily restoration to forgiveness in Christ.

The scribes immediately reason in their hearts, “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” And their theology is correct. Only God can forgive sins. Their problem is not that they believe too much about God. Their problem is that they believe too little about Jesus.

That charge of blasphemy is not a small thing. In their minds, Jesus is stepping into territory that belongs to God alone.

Isaiah 43:25 says, "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake."

Psalms 130:4 says, "But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared."

So if Jesus is merely a man, the scribes are right to be alarmed. But that is the issue. Jesus is not merely a man. He is revealing divine authority.





Jesus perceives their thoughts. That itself reveals divine knowledge. Then He asks, “Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’?” The invisible claim is forgiveness. The visible proof will be healing. So Jesus says, “But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins,” and then He turns to the paralytic, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”

And the man gets up.

Do not let familiarity dull this story. The man who had been carried by friends now carries out the bed on which he had been carried in. The visible healing authenticates the invisible authority. Jesus has authority on earth to forgive sins. He is not merely a healer. He is not merely a prophet. He is the Son of Man with divine authority to forgive.

Luke says the people were filled with fear and said, “We have seen *strange* things today.” That word means extraordinary, remarkable, unexpected. The crowd is not simply entertained. They are unsettled in the presence of divine authority. Something has happened that does not fit ordinary categories. And the crowd glorifies God.



Do not let familiarity dull this story. The man who had been carried by friends now carries out the bed on which he had been carried in. The visible healing authenticates the invisible authority. Jesus has authority on earth to forgive sins. He is not merely a healer. He is not merely a prophet. He is the Son of Man with divine authority to forgive.



"Son of Man" is Jesus' favorite title for Himself, and here it is loaded with meaning.

Luke says the people were filled with fear and said, "We Daniel 7:13–14 says, "One like the Son of Man" came "with the clouds of heaven" to the Ancient of Days, and "to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom... His dominion is an everlasting dominion." So when Jesus says the *Son of Man* has authority on earth to forgive sins, the scribes and Pharisees would not hear a vague phrase. They would hear Daniel 7.

Jesus is identifying Himself with the One who receives universal and everlasting rule from God. Psalm 2 adds the royal background: the Lord's Anointed receives the nations as His inheritance and rules with divine authority. Revelation later shows this same Son of Man imagery in glory, judgment, and kingdom reign.

So this is not merely a human teacher helping a suffering man. Jesus is claiming the authority of the promised heavenly King: authority over sin, judgment, kingdom, and forgiveness.

In Mark's Gospel, this is the first recorded use of "Son of Man" by Jesus, and He uses it at the very moment He claims authority to forgive sins.



Here is the distinctive point. The miracle mends body and soul, but the soul comes first. The healing is wonderful. The forgiveness is greater. Jesus does not ignore the body, but He will not let us reduce salvation to bodily relief. He gives the greater blessing first.

Here is the application. Bring people to Jesus. Be bold enough to push through obstacles. Bring your children, your friends, your neighbors, the spiritually paralyzed, the skeptical, the wounded, and those who cannot seem to get there on their own. Not because you can save them. But because faith is not passive. True love carries the weak, pushes through obstacles, and lowers the mat with a friend before Christ.

And remember their greatest need. We may pray for their cancer, their job, their marriage, their anxiety, their body, and we should.

But their greatest need is forgiveness of sins and peace with God. Jesus knows how to give both. In fact, He does give both.







Now we come to the healing of the centurion's servant, recorded in Matthew 8 and Luke 7.

A centurion was a Roman military officer, a man accustomed to command. The title suggests command over a "century" i.e., 100. Though in practice it seems a centurion commanded roughly eighty to one hundred men (plus support personnel) depending on the period and unit structure.

Either way, this is a man who understands discipline, rank, order, and delegated authority.

In Roman-controlled territories, military presence did not only mean battlefield operations. For ordinary Jewish life under Rome, soldiers and their officers represented daily imperial authority. They helped preserve order, enforce Roman interests, and remind the local population not to step out of line.

So this centurion is not a harmless background figure. He represents the occupying power. He is a man connected to the machinery and enforcing the power of Rome.

And his servant was critically important to him.



In Roman-controlled territories, military presence did not only mean battlefield operations. For ordinary Jewish life under Rome, soldiers and their officers represented daily imperial authority. They helped preserve order, enforce Roman interests, and remind the local population of Rome.

So this centurion is not a harmless background figure. He represents the Roman Empire, the power that connected the Jewish people to the rest of the world.

And his servant is not a simple domestic aide.

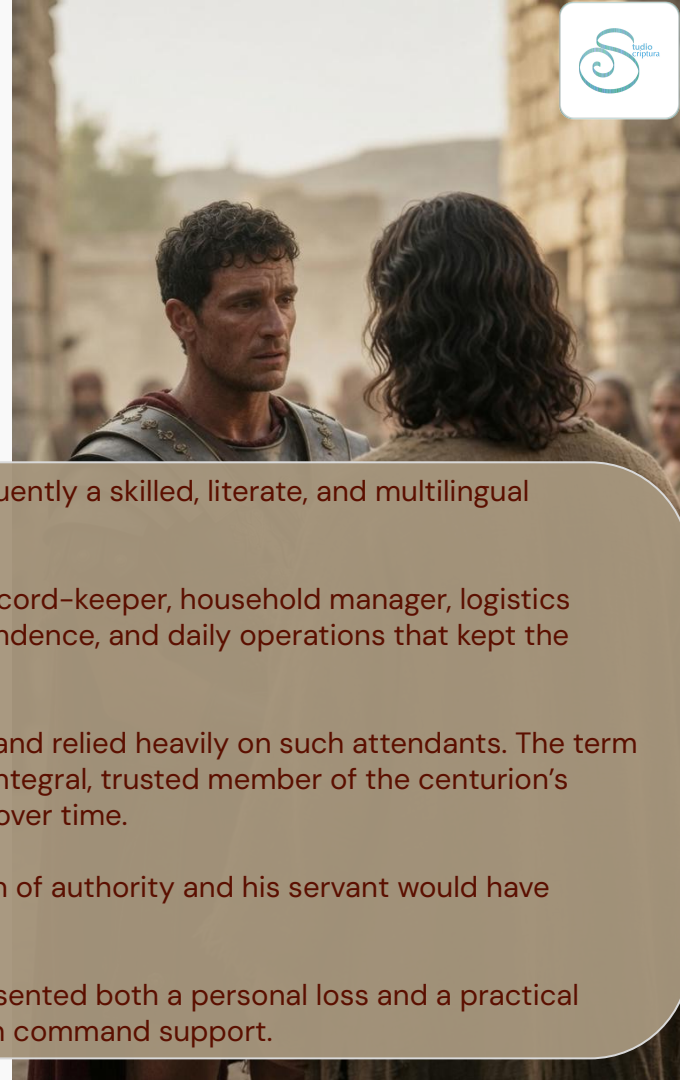
In Roman military households, a centurion's "servant" was frequently a skilled, literate, and multilingual individual who served as a multi-role personal aide.

Far more than a domestic servant, he functioned as trusted record-keeper, household manager, logistics coordinator, and local liaison; handling procurement, correspondence, and daily operations that kept the centurion's command running effectively in a foreign province.

Centurions bore heavy bureaucratic and operational burdens and relied heavily on such attendants. The term "highly valued" signals this was no expendable laborer but an integral, trusted member of the centurion's inner personal staff; someone whose loyalty had been proven over time.

The daily and close one-on-one relationship between this man of authority and his servant would have definitely deepened over the years.

When this valued aide fell gravely ill and neared death, it represented both a personal loss and a practical crisis for a man whose regional authority depended on smooth command support.





In Luke's account, he sends Jewish elders to Jesus, and they plead with Him, saying that the centurion is worthy because he loves our nation and has built a synagogue.

Matthew compresses the account and presents the centurion himself coming to Jesus. There is no contradiction. It was common to speak of a person acting through representatives. Luke gives the fuller sequence; Matthew gives the direct theological point.

This centurion is a Gentile. He is a military man from the occupying Roman power. Yet he is respected by Jewish elders. He has shown kindness to the community. But what is most striking is not his position, his generosity, or even his respectability. It is his faith and meekness when he approaches Jesus.

The elders say, in effect, “He is worthy.” But the centurion says, “I am not worthy.”

That contrast matters. Other people can see his good works, his generosity, his kindness toward the nation, even his role in building a synagogue. But when he sees Jesus, he does not come with entitlement. He does not say, “I deserve this.” He says, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof.”

That is what Jesus called being poor in spirit. It is meekness before the majesty of Jesus. The centurion recognizes that Jesus is holy, authoritative, and unlike any other teacher or healer he has encountered.

So he adds, “But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.”





Notice what he understands. He understands authority. He says, “For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

The centurion knows how authority works. His commands are obeyed because he represents the greater authority of Rome.

And he sees in Jesus an authority far greater than his own - or Rome's. He understands that Jesus does not need to be physically present. He does not need ritual. He does not need theatrics. He does not need to enter the house. He can speak, and reality obeys. This is faith in the authority of Christ's word.

Jesus  *marvels*. That is a remarkable statement. To marvel means to be astonished, to be struck with wonder. We should not imagine this as a cold theological observation.

Those standing nearby must have seen something in Jesus' face, His body language, His pause. Jesus is genuinely struck by the faith of this Gentile centurion.

The use of the word  *marvel* is rare as it describes Jesus. In the Gospels, Jesus marvels at great faith here, and He also marvels at unbelief in Mark 6:6, when His own hometown refuses Him.

What a contrast. He marvels at the faith of a Gentile soldier, and He marvels at the unbelief of those who should have known Him best. That alone is worth letting sink in.





Jesus says, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel.” A Gentile outsider sees what many so-called insiders miss. He does not presume. He does not demand. He does not approach Jesus with entitlement. He trusts the word of Christ: *Only say the word.*

Do not miss the kingdom significance.

Jesus responds - *Many will come from the east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while some of the sons of the kingdom will be cast out.*

That would have landed with real offense to many hearers. It cut directly against ethnic presumption and their religious entitlement. But Jesus says the kingdom will not be limited by ethnicity or covenant privilege.

Gentiles will come in by faith. The chosen, if they reject the King, will be left outside.





This is descriptive of the gospel going to the nations. The promise to Abraham was always larger than one ethnic boundary. Genesis 12:3 says, “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 22:18 says, “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.”

Isaiah 49:6 speaks of the Servant, ultimately fulfilled in Jesus, as “a light to the Gentiles,” that salvation may reach “to the ends of the earth.”

And now, standing before Jesus, is a Roman centurion, a Gentile outsider, already showing the faith by which the nations will enter the kingdom.

He is commended because he trusts the authority of Christ.

And Jesus heals the servant that very hour. Distance is no barrier. The word of Christ is enough.

Psalm 33:9 says, “For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”

Genesis 1 repeatedly says, “God said,” and creation came into being. That is the kind of authority the centurion recognizes in Jesus.

Now apply this today. Christ’s authority is not limited by religious pedigree nor by distance. He can reach the hospital room you cannot enter. He can reach the child you are praying for in another state or country. He can reach the believer under pressure in a hostile nation. He can reach the heart that seems far away.

He speaks, and it is done.





And notice the posture of the one asking. “I am not worthy” is not despair.

It is humility. It is meekness. It is poverty of spirit. “Only speak a word” is confidence in Christ. We come humbly because we know we have no claim on God by merit.

No bargaining. No religious entitlement. Just humility before His holiness, confidence in His word, and recognition of His authority.

That is great faith.



The calming of the storm, recorded in Matthew 8, Mark 4, and Luke 8.

By this point in Jesus' ministry, the demands are already intense. Crowds are pressing. Needs are constant. Teaching, healing, travel, discipleship, and confrontation are all converging.

Earlier that day, Jesus had been teaching by the sea. Mark 4 gives us a long section of parables, including the parable of the sower. So when evening comes and Jesus says, "Let us cross over to the other side," this is not the end of a quiet day. It is the end of a full and demanding day of ministry.





Jesus and His disciples get into a boat to cross to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Mark gives us the detail that Jesus is asleep in the stern on a pillow. The stern is the rear of the boat.

In a first-century fishing boat on Galilee, the stern may have had a small raised area or space where someone could rest. It would not have been luxurious. This was not a yacht. But the detail is important: Jesus is in the back of the boat, asleep, while the storm is breaking around them.

The stern might offer a slight place to recline, but in a boat being beaten by waves, the whole vessel is affected. The point is not that Jesus found a comfortable hiding place. The point is that He is truly human and truly at rest.

Then a great windstorm arises. The Sea of Galilee is known for sudden storms because of its geography. It sits below sea level, surrounded by hills and ravines. Winds can rush down and turn the lake violent quickly.





A first-century fishing boat like the one discovered in the modern era was roughly 30 feet long, large enough for a group but still small enough to feel dangerously exposed when waves were breaking over the sides.

A reasonable estimate is that this was more than choppy water. In a small open fishing boat, even waves of a few feet can be dangerous when driven by wind, darkness, fatigue, and the boat taking on water.

The Gospel writers tell us what matters: the storm was severe enough that experienced fishermen feared they were perishing. This is no small danger.

And Jesus is asleep.

Now notice what they say when they wake Him:  
“Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”

That is a revealing question. They do not merely ask, “Can You help?” They ask, “Do You care?” Fear and lack of faith often do that. It moves quickly from danger to accusation.

It is one thing to say, “Lord, save us.” It is another to say, “Do You even care?” And if we are honest, many believers have prayed some version of that. Lord, do You care that I am sick? Do You care that my child is struggling? Do You care that my finances are under pressure? Do You care that I am in danger?





The storm becomes a test not only of their confidence in His power, but of their trust in His heart. They have seen enough to know that Jesus is able. But in the fear of the moment, they wonder whether He is concerned.

Jesus rises and rebukes the wind. He says to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And there is a great calm.

The storm does not gradually improve. The wind does not slowly soften. The sea obeys. This is the nature of miracles in the Gospels. They happen with immediacy. A word is spoken, and reality changes. Creation hears the voice of its Lord. The One who spoke creation into existence now speaks peace over the chaos.

Then Jesus turns to the disciples: “Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?” Matthew gives the phrase, “O you of little faith.” Luke says, “Where is your faith?”

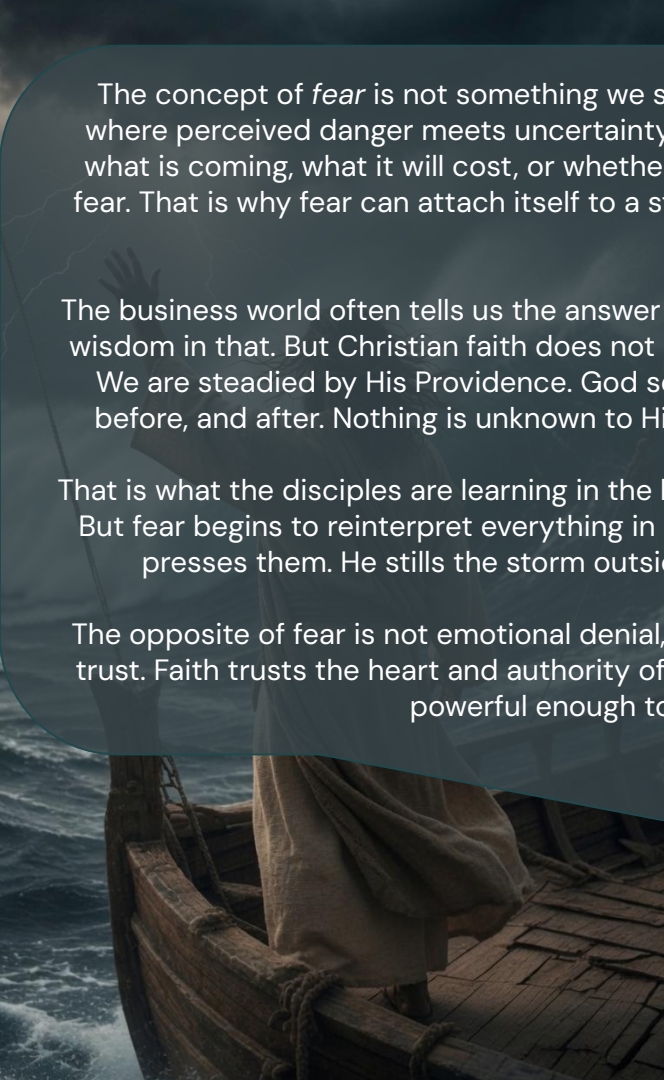
The concept of *fear* is not something we should pass over too quickly. Modern psychology is right to notice that fear often rises where perceived danger meets uncertainty and loss of control. The unknown begins to take power over us. When we do not know what is coming, what it will cost, or whether we can endure it, the human heart often fills the questions and the empty space with fear. That is why fear can attach itself to a storm, a diagnosis, financial pressure, political instability, or a future shaped by forces we cannot control.

The business world often tells us the answer is resilience: adapt, absorb the shock, recover, and keep moving. There is *some* practical wisdom in that. But Christian faith does not rest in human resilience. We are not saved from fear by becoming tougher personalities. We are steadied by His Providence. God sees yesterday clearly. He sees tomorrow clearly. He sees the storm from above, within, before, and after. Nothing is unknown to Him. Nothing surprises Him. Nothing arrives outside His wisdom, power, or Fatherly care.

That is what the disciples are learning in the boat. The storm is real. The danger is real. Jesus does not ask them to pretend otherwise. But fear begins to reinterpret everything in the disciples mind. "The waves are high." It says, "Do You not care?" That is where Jesus presses them. He stills the storm outside, then addresses the storm inside: "Why are you so fearful? Where is your faith?"

The opposite of fear is not emotional denial, resilience, or pretending the storm is small. The biblical answer to fear is rightly located trust. Faith trusts the heart and authority of Christ in the middle of the unknown. The disciples had to learn that Jesus was not only powerful enough to still the sea, but compassionate enough to care for them in it.

Then Jesus turns to the disciples: "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" Matthew gives the phrase, "O you of little faith." Luke says, "Where is your faith?"



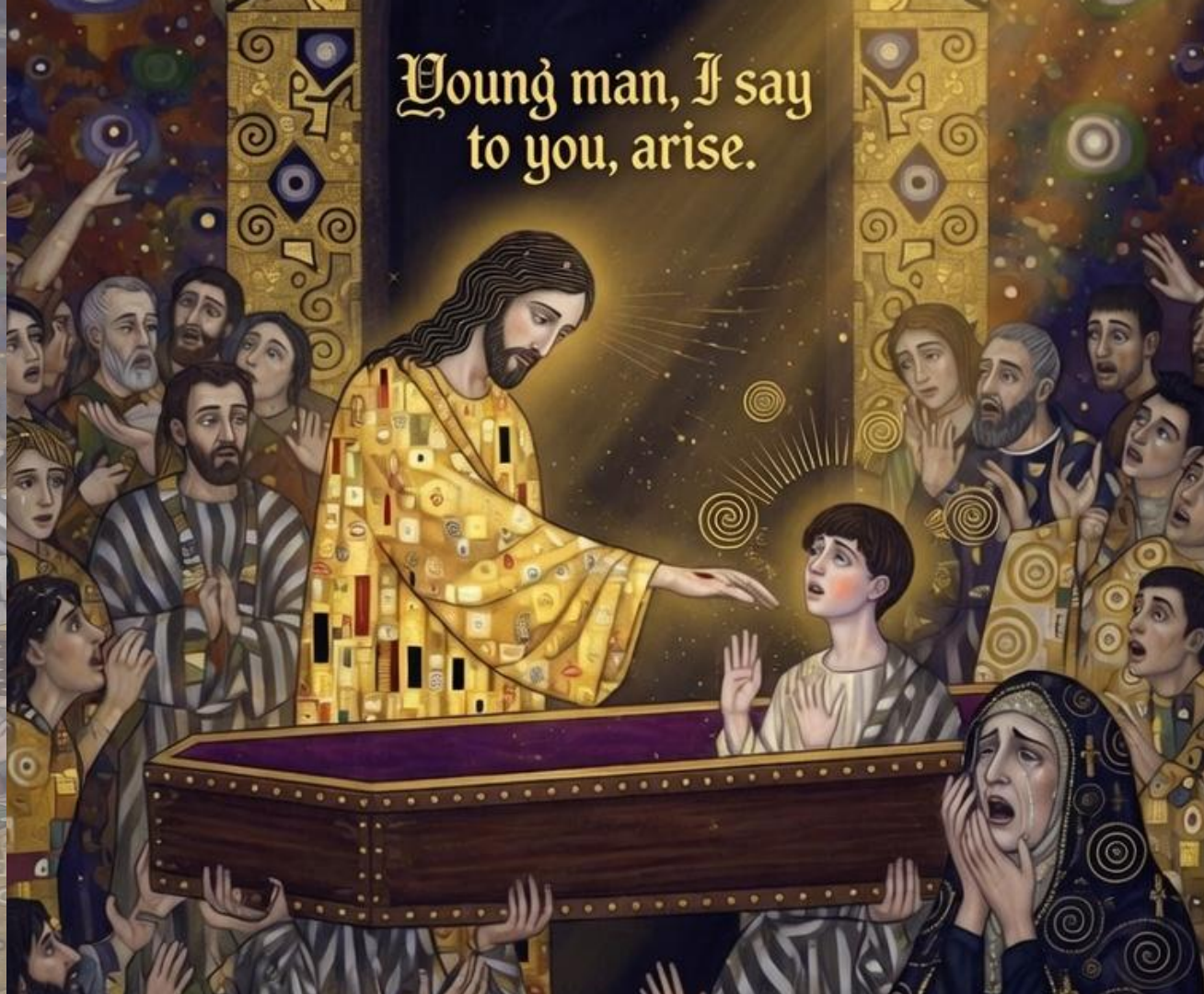
This is on-the-job (or *in-the-boat*) training for the disciples. In fact, many miracles function that way. They reveal Christ, and that revelation calls for response. How will the disciples answer the question others may not even know how to ask: *Who is this Man?*

He is forming them. He is teaching them who He is, not only in sermons, but in storms. The classroom is the boat. The lesson is learned while the waves are coming over the side. That is often how discipleship works. We learn things in the storm that we never learn in calm sailing or on the shore.

The climax is not that the weather improved. The climax is the disciples' question: "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"



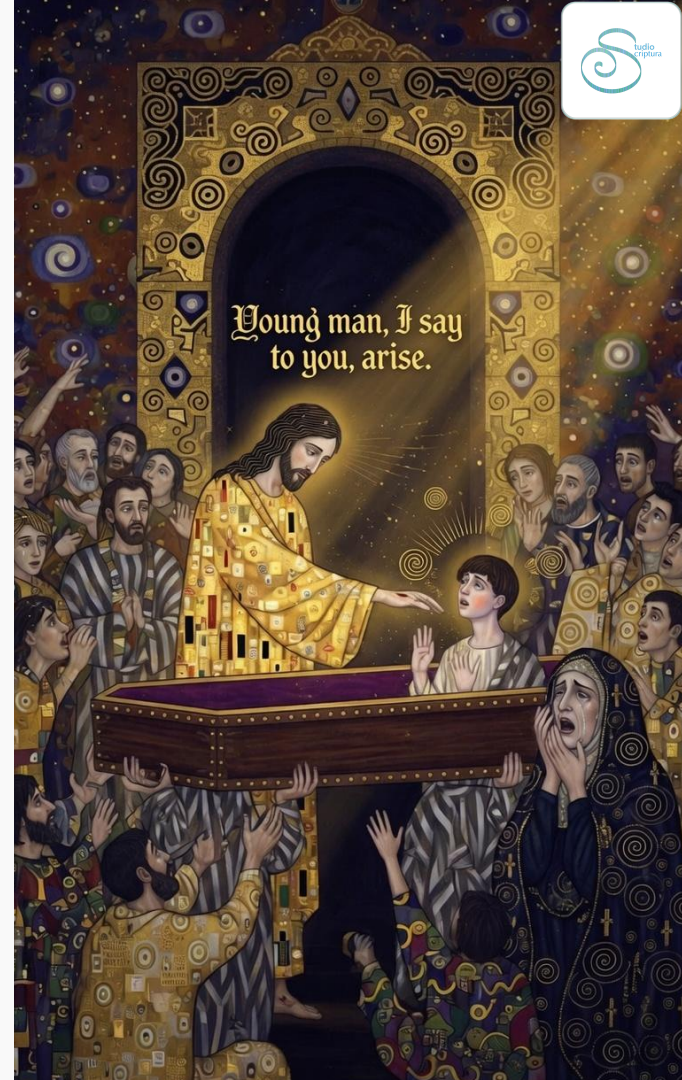
Young man, I say  
to you, arise.

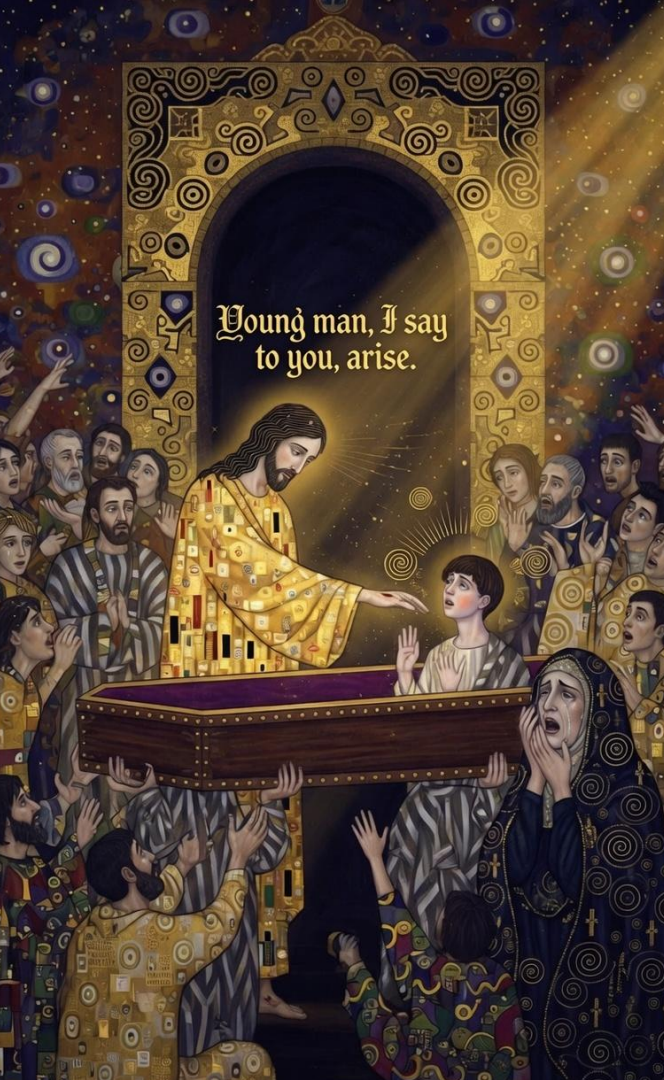


We move to a funeral procession outside a village called Nain.

Luke places this account soon after Jesus' teaching and healing ministry has been widely displayed. In Luke's flow, Jesus has preached, healed, called disciples, cleansed a leper, forgiven and healed the paralytic, taught about the Sabbath, chosen the Twelve, taught the crowds, and healed the centurion's servant.

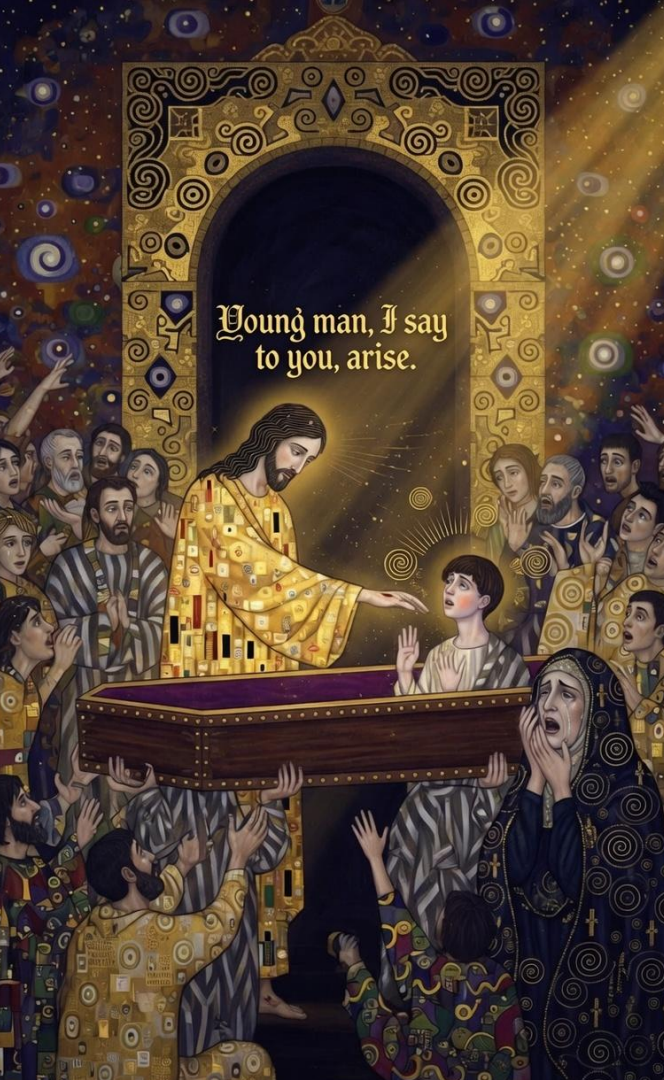
His reputation is spreading. Large crowds are now following Him. And then, just as one crowd follows Jesus toward Nain, another crowd comes out of the town carrying a dead young man.





This is one of the very tender accounts in the Gospels. Luke alone records it. Luke calls it a city, but by modern categories it's more like a village or small town.

Nain was in Lower Galilee, roughly seven miles from Nazareth, depending on the route. That detail matters because it reminds us that Jesus is not moving in a mythic world. He is walking real roads, entering real villages, and meeting real people.



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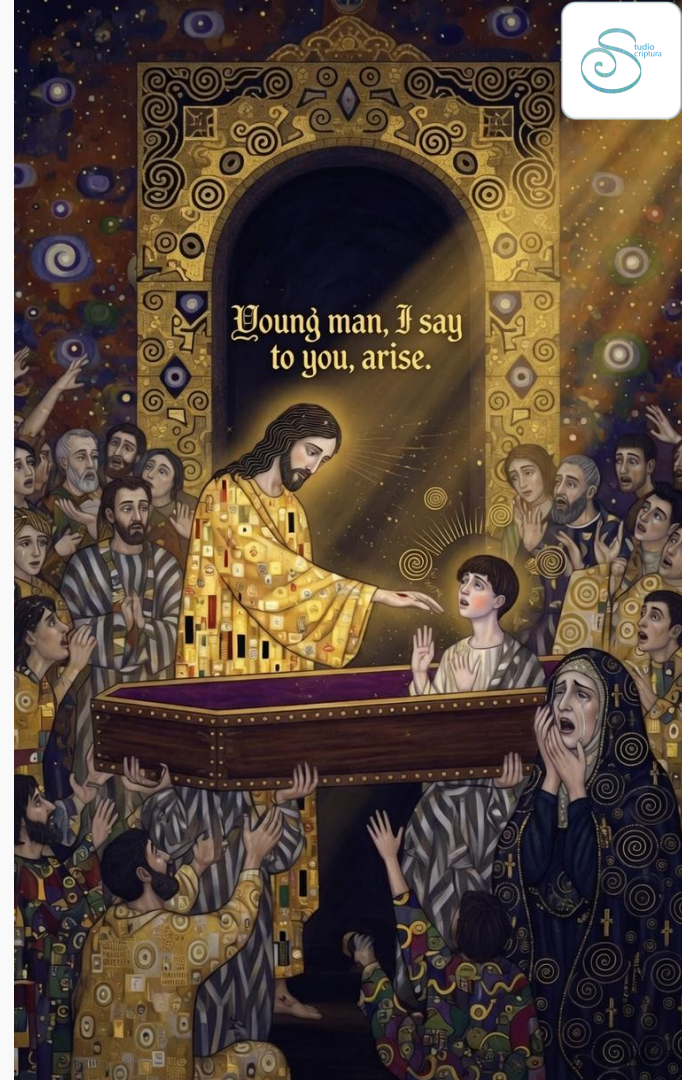
Nain was in Lower Galilee, about seven miles from Nazareth, dependent on the sea for its livelihood. It was a tiny village, a place of no great importance. It was a village, a place of no great importance. It was a village, a place of no great importance.

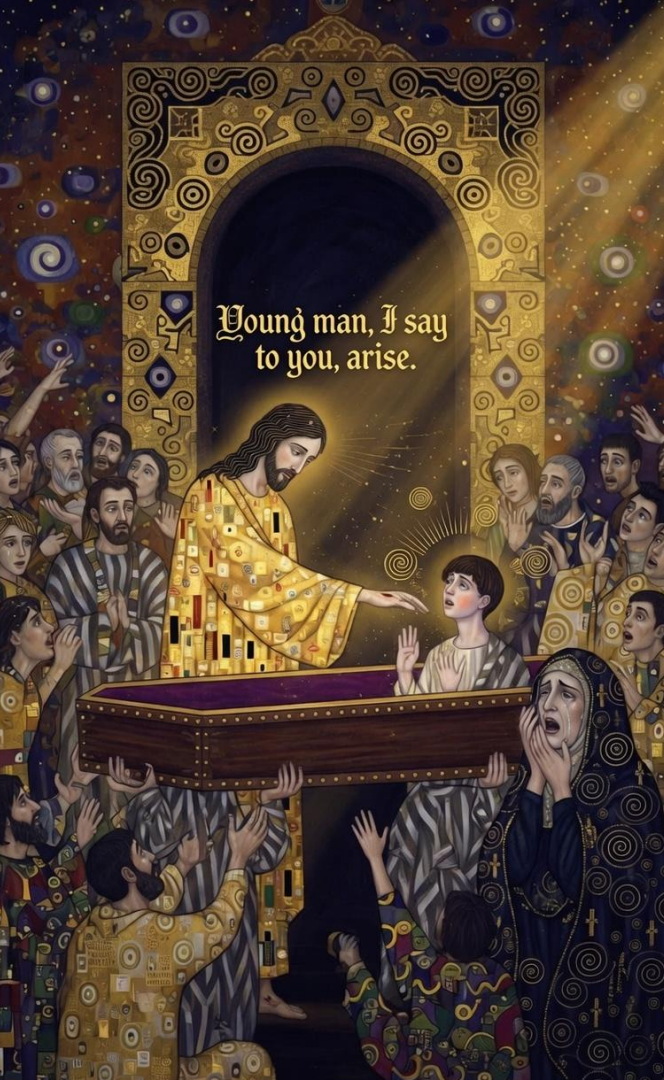
*Nain* is from the Hebrew root meaning "to be pleasant" or "delightful." It spoke of beauty, loveliness, and green pastures. Perched on the northwestern slope of the Hill of Moreh, the town enjoyed sweeping views across the fertile Jezreel Valley toward Carmel and the distant hills; a fitting name for a place of natural charm. Yet into this *pleasant* village Jesus would bring something far greater than scenic loveliness: life itself.

A village gate at that time was not like a modern decorative entrance. It was the place where people passed in and out, where public life gathered, where news moved, where community life became visible. Life and death meet at the gate - the Lord of life and a funeral procession.

As Jesus comes near, a dead man is being carried out. Luke calls him a *young man*. We do not know his exact age. He may have been a teenager or a young adult, probably not yet married, since no wife or children are mentioned.

We do know he is the only son of his mother, and she is a widow.





In that culture, for a widow to lose her only son was not only emotional grief, though it was certainly that, it was also economic and social devastation. Her husband is gone. Now her son is gone. Her earthly support and security is gone. Her hope of grandchildren are wrapped in grief and carried toward burial.

The remainder of her life will now be lived alone.

And Jesus sees her.

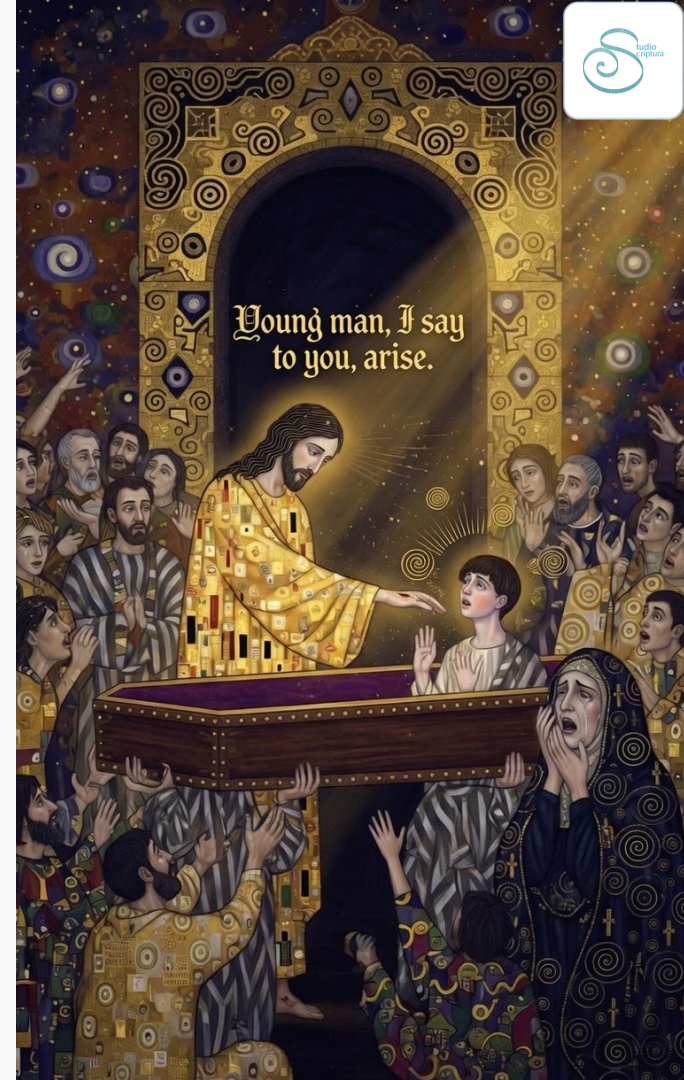
That may be one of the most beautiful details in the passage. "When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her." He sees her. He is not merely aware that a funeral is happening. He sees a mother.

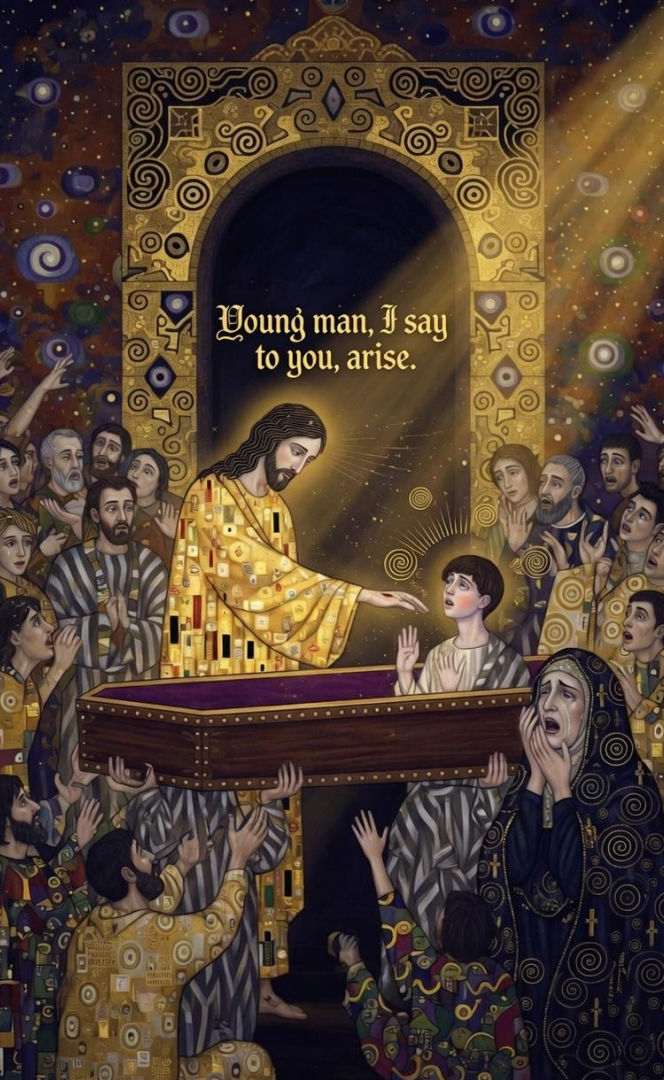
The word for compassion carries the idea of deep inward movement. It is not detached sympathy. It is gut-level. Jesus is moved in His innermost being. Then He says to her, “Do not weep.”

If anyone else said that, it might sound cruel. Imagine walking up to a widow at the funeral of her only son and saying, “Do not cry.” But Jesus is about to remove the cause of her tears.

He comes and touches the coffin. That would have shocked the crowd; contact with death brought ceremonial uncleanness, especially shocking for a respected teacher. But Jesus is not defiled by death - death is about to be reversed by Him.

Then He says, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” And the dead youth sits up and begins to speak. “And He presented him to his mother.”





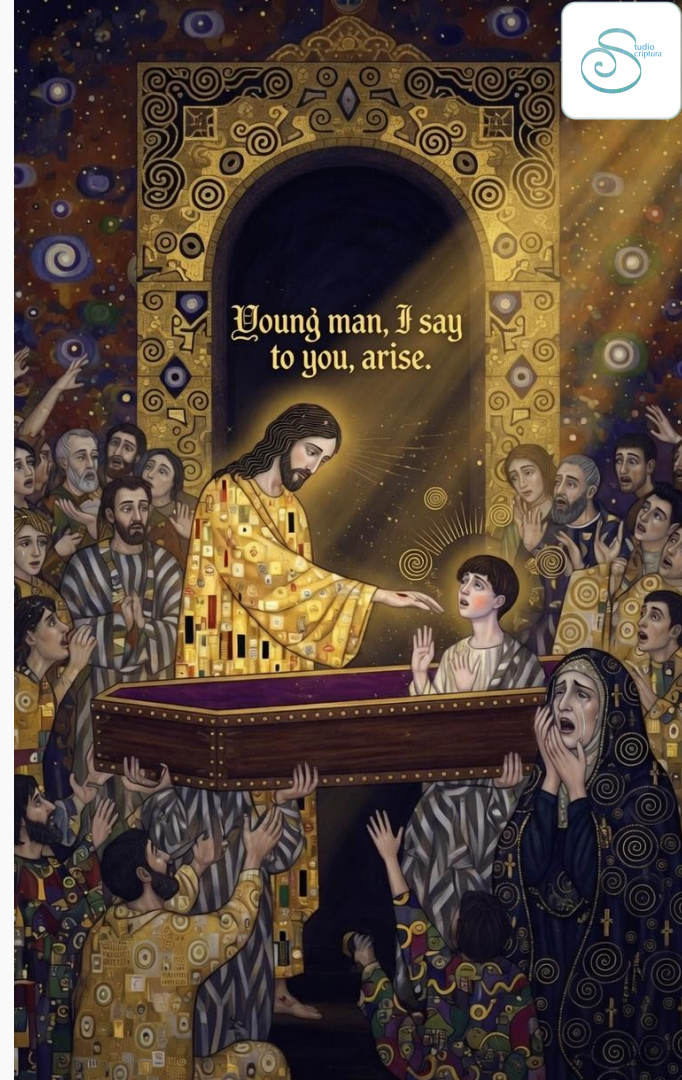
That phrase is tender and theologically rich. It is tender because Jesus restores a son to his grieving mother. It is theologically rich because it shows the nature of the kingdom Jesus brings. He does not raise the young man as a spectacle and then move on. He restores a relationship. He restores a household.

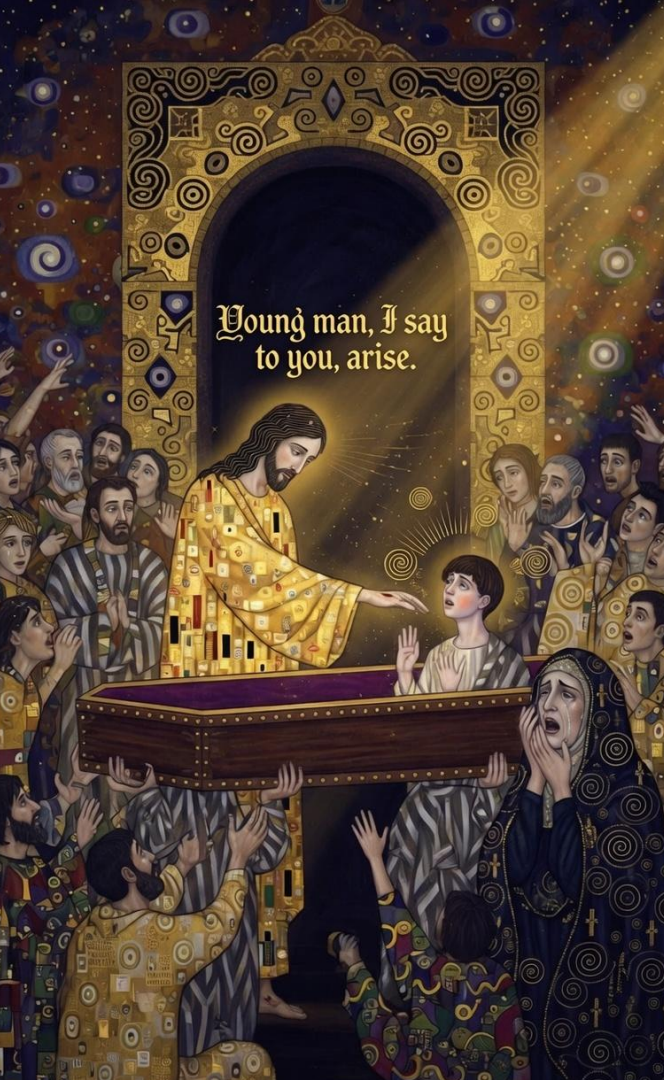
Now there are Old Testament echoes here. The account recalls Elijah and the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17, and Elisha and the Shunammite woman in 2 Kings 4. In both cases, a woman's son dies, and the prophet is involved in the child being restored to life. In the Elijah account, we even find language similar to Luke's: a *son is given back to his mother*.

Geographically, this is also interesting. Shunem, the place associated with Elisha and the Shunammite woman, was very near Nain, just on the other side of the hill in the same general region around the Jezreel Valley.

Zarephath, by contrast, was farther away on the Phoenician coast near Sidon, roughly fifty to seventy miles to the northwest depending on the route.

So Luke's account brings together two kinds of echoes: the nearby regional memory of Elisha and Shunem, and the prophetic memory of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath.





Jesus Himself had recently referred to the widow of Zarephath in Luke 4. He reminded His hearers that there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, yet Elijah was sent to a widow in Zarephath, in the region of Sidon.

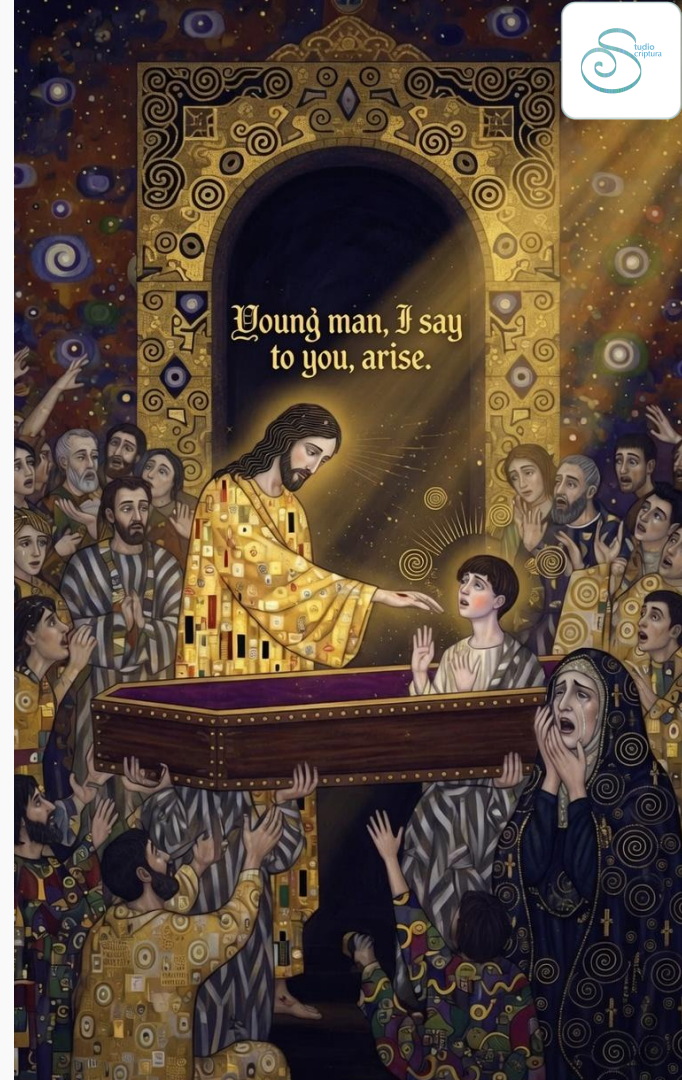
That statement angered His audience in Nazareth because it reminded Israel that God's mercy is not controlled by geography or ethnic pride or religious entitlement.

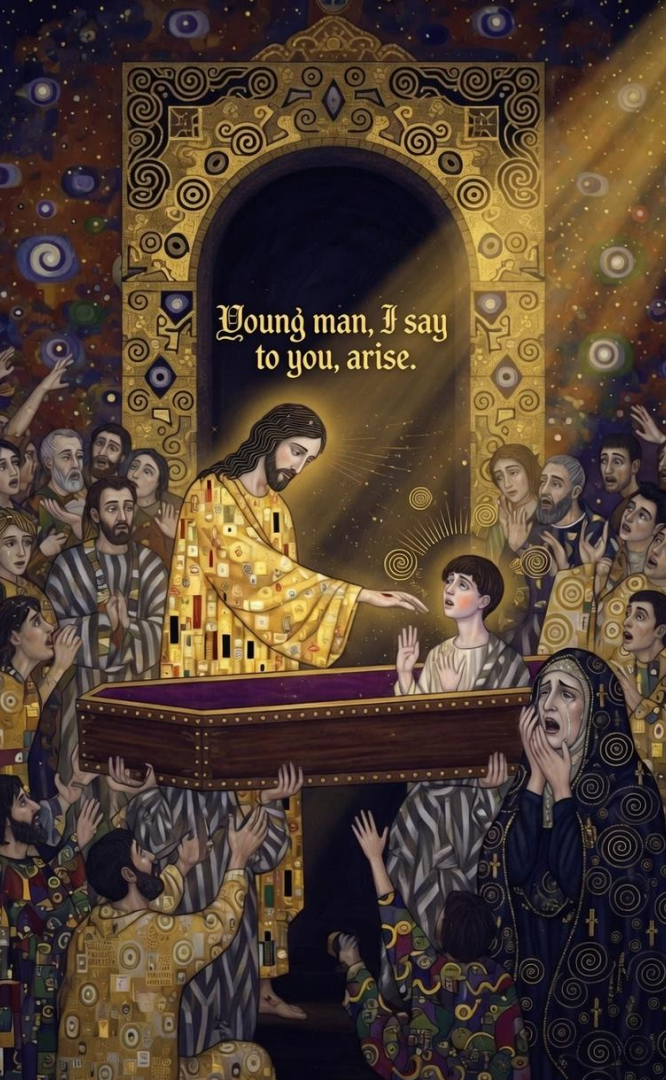
This is a theme throughout Jesus' ministry. Entrance into the kingdom is not based on ethnicity, status, or the mere fact of being among a certain people. It is by grace through faith.

Luke wants us to feel something of that prophetic echo. And the crowd's response confirms that they are thinking in prophetic categories. They say, "A great prophet has risen up among us," and "God has visited His people."

But Jesus is not merely Elijah repeated. He is greater than Elijah. Elijah prayed. Jesus commands. Elijah cried out to God. Jesus says, "Young man, I say to you, arise."

The authority is His own. The prophet points to the God of heaven. Jesus reveals Himself as the Lord of life.



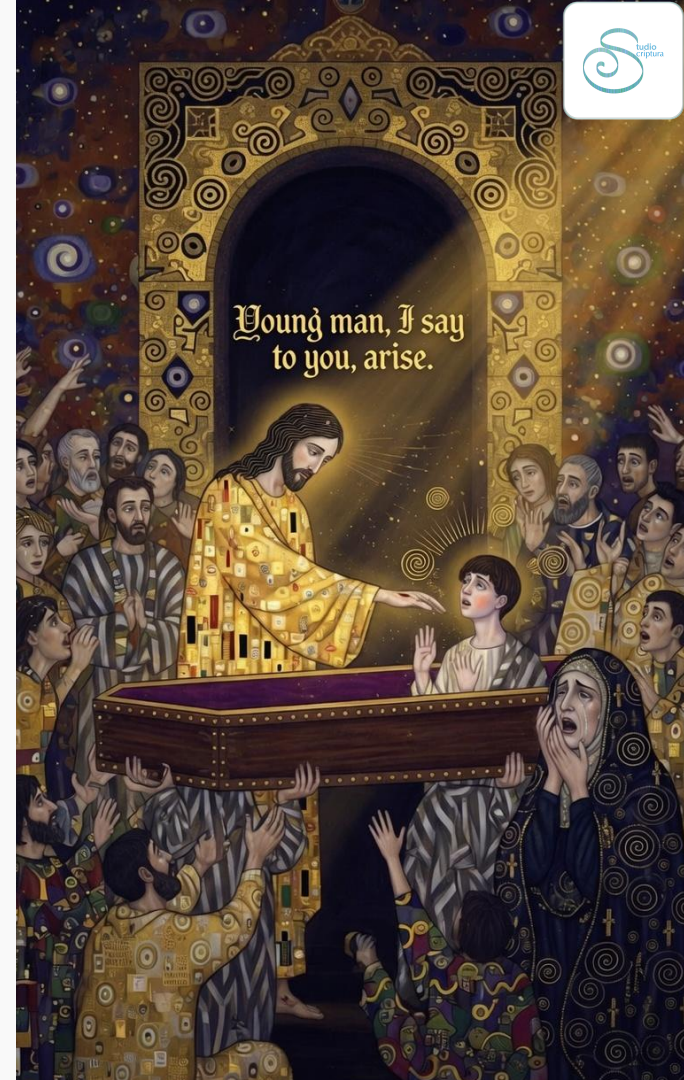


Elijah ministered during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel, a time of deep compromise, when pagan worship was supported by power, and the prophets of the Lord were treated as troublers of Israel. “Troubler” means one who disturbs, stirs up, unsettles the apparent peace. Ahab called Elijah a troulber because Elijah exposed the spiritual corruption and paganism that Ahab wanted normalized.

That dynamic echoes across history. Jesus unsettled the status quo. He disturbed religious arrangements that had become comfortable and corrupt. He threatened the place and influence of leaders who were more concerned with preserving “our place and our nation” than receiving the truth of God.

Whenever the true God is displaced by idols, whenever political or cultural power supports paganism, whenever compromised religion makes peace with the spirit of the age - faithful witnesses are often treated as *troublers* because they say what people do not want to hear.

Not political troublemakers, not unwitting mouthpieces and servants for partisan agendas, but faithful witnesses to God’s righteousness, God’s Word, and God’s authority.





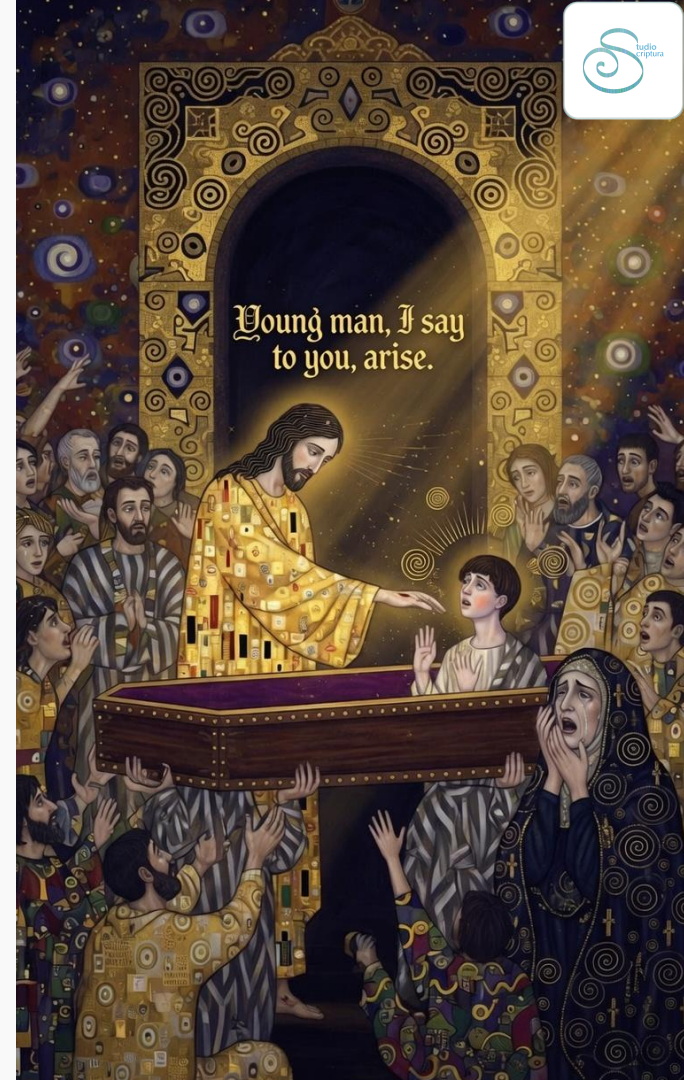
The main point of the Nain account is not a political one. The main point is the compassion and authority of Jesus. But the echo is there.

After centuries of prophetic silence, the people see a dead son raised and say, “A great prophet has risen up among us.” They rightly sense that God is visiting His people again.

Luke says fear came upon them all. Not excitement. Not “That was impressive.” Fear. Awe. Reverent trembling! When you come that close to the miraculous power of God, you do not merely applaud. You are seized with awe and reverence. You realize heaven has touched earth.

And the report about Him goes throughout Judea and the surrounding region. The word gets out. Of course it does. How could it not? A funeral procession left town with a dead young man and returned with an alive son.

Once again, miracle leads to witness. When God reveals Himself, the testimony spreads.







Now we move to Mark 5, where two miracles are woven together: the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, and the raising of Jairus' daughter.

This pairing is deliberate and beautiful. Jairus is a ruler of the synagogue. He is well known and respected. His daughter is twelve years old and dying. He comes openly and falls at Jesus' feet, begging Him earnestly: "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live."

A ruler of the synagogue was not a temple priest. He was a respected lay leader responsible for the order and administration of synagogue life, arranging readings, maintaining the place of worship, overseeing proper proceedings. So Jairus is a man of standing. People know him and respect him. When he moves through the crowd, people notice.

Now his request is public, it draws attention.





Contrast the woman. She is not moving through the crowd as a public figure. She is avoided. Because of her condition, people would not want contact with her. People may walk around her or keep their distance from her.

Jairus can come publicly; she comes secretly. Jairus is associated with order, worship, and status; she is associated with uncleanness, isolation, and shame.

As Jesus goes with Jairus, a great crowd follows. And in that crowd is a woman who has had a flow of blood for *twelve years*. Jairus' daughter has lived *twelve years*. One is the daughter of privilege. The other is an outcast. One has a father who can publicly plead for her. The other needs to come secretly by herself through the crowd.

Miracles are not class-bound. Jesus' compassion is not limited to the respectable. Nor is it limited to the marginalized. He meets the synagogue ruler and the unclean woman. He cares for the daughter in the house and the sufferer in the crowd.

Mark says the woman had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. Now that is painfully modern. Many people know exactly what this feels like. The exhaustion of chronic illness. The appointments. The tests. The specialists. The procedures. The bills that pile up - even with insurance. The treatments that raise hope and then disappoint.

The sense that life keeps getting shorter. She spent all she had, and she was worse.





The likely issue was a chronic gynecological hemorrhage. The ongoing bleeding placed her in a condition of continual ritual uncleanness under Leviticus 15:25 which says, “If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity... all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her customary impurity. She shall be unclean.”

That meant social isolation, religious exclusion, and shame. This was not merely a private medical problem. It affected community, marriage, and identity. She was not only sick. She was avoided in society. The physical trauma was very real; the social isolation was probably unbearable.

She says to herself, "If only I may touch the hem of His garment, I shall be made well." She comes behind Jesus in the crowd and touches His clothes. Immediately the bleeding stops. She knows in her body that she is healed.

Jesus stops. "Who touched My clothes?"





What was the tone of Jesus' voice? The text does not tell us directly, so we should not pretend to know with certainty. But it does not seem to be irritation. Jesus is not annoyed that someone has interrupted His schedule. Nor is He surprised in the sense of being ignorant.

He knows power has gone out from Him. His question is purposeful. It is probably calm, searching, and firm enough to stop the movement of the crowd. Whatever the exact tone, the question certainly gets the disciples' attention. They respond as if the question is strange because the crowd is pressing Him from every side.

But Jesus is drawing her out, not to embarrass her, but to complete the restoration publicly. The disciples are confused. Jesus is not. He knows this touch was different. He looks for her. She comes trembling, falls before Him, and tells Him the whole truth.

Notice the mercy here. Jesus does not expose her to shame. He draws her out for restoration. If she had remained hidden, she might have left healed but still afraid. Jesus publicly confirms her healing and publicly restores her. He calls her “Daughter.”

That word is astonishing. She has been treated as unclean, untouchable, and socially diminished. Jesus addresses her with family language. “Daughter.” He restores not merely her body, but her place. He does not say, “Woman, go.” He says, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.”





She came unclean and isolated; she leaves healed as a daughter. She came trembling and leaves in peace. She came hidden and leaves publicly.

But while Jesus is still speaking, messengers arrive from Jairus' house: "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" Delay. That is the tension.

Have you ever felt that God was delayed in answering your prayer? Jesus stopped for the woman, and now the girl is dead. What must Jairus have felt? Every parent can feel the agony of that moment. If only we had hurried. If only we had not stopped for *that* woman. If only Jesus had come when I first called.

Jesus immediately says, “Do not be afraid; only believe.” He goes to the house. The mourners are already there, weeping and wailing loudly. Jesus says, “Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.” They ridicule Him. He puts them outside, takes Peter, James, John, and the parents, and enters where the child is lying.





Then He takes her by the hand and says, “Talitha, cumi.” That is Aramaic, the everyday language spoken by many Jews in that region including Jesus. Mark preserves the very words, perhaps because they were remembered with tenderness by the eyewitnesses. “Little girl, I say to you, arise.”

Immediately she gets up and walks. And Jesus says to give her something to eat.

That detail is so tender. The Lord who raises the dead also cares that a little girl eats. Divine power does not erase ordinary care. Jesus restores life, and then He attends to hunger.

Here is the distinctive point. Jesus has power over defilement *and* death. The woman's uncleanness does not contaminate Him. His holiness restores her. The child's death does not defeat Him. His voice raises her. He is not stained by impurity and not threatened by death.





And delay is not denial. Jairus had to wait while Jesus restored another. That delay must have felt unbearable. He may have felt, at least for a moment, “I called You first. Why stop for her? My daughter is dying.” But Jesus was not late. He was revealing greater glory.

Some of you are in the delay stage. You prayed. You asked. You expected Jesus would come sooner. You thought the answer would arrive before things got worse. And now you are tempted to think, “Why trouble Him any further? Maybe He is asleep in the boat.” “Maybe He doesn’t care about me.” But Jesus says, “Do not be afraid; only believe.”

That does not mean every earthly story ends the way Jairus’ story did. We know that. But it does mean Christ is never hurried and never powerless. His timing is governed by wisdom and providence we do not fully see.





The Feeding of the Five Thousand is recorded in all four Gospels. It is the only miracle of Jesus' public ministry, apart from the resurrection itself, recorded in all four Gospels.

Jesus has recently heard of the death of John the Baptist. The crowds are pressing so Jesus withdraws to a desolate place, and the crowds come to Him. His reputation has spread as people have heard of His healings. They are spiritually hungry, physically needy, and drawn by the hope that God may be visiting His people.

Jesus is moved with compassion. He heals their sick, teaches them, and the day grows late.





The disciples see a problem: too many people, too little food. Their solution is reasonable: “Send the multitudes away.” Let them go into the villages and buy food. Jesus says, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

Now that is impossible and the disciples know it. They have five loaves and two fish. In John’s account, Andrew says, “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?”

That seems to always be the question: *What are my resources against so great a need?*

Humanly speaking, five loaves and two fish against thousands of hungry people is not a plan; it is a confession of insufficiency.

But in the hands of Jesus, insufficiency is not the end of the story. Scarcity becomes the setting in which His abundance is displayed. The issue is not whether the disciples possess enough. The issue is whether they will bring the little they have to the One whose provision is never small.

Jesus has the people sit down in groups. This is not chaos, it is not spectacle for spectacle's sake. The kingdom's power expresses itself as ordered care for real human need.

Jesus takes the loaves and fish, looks up to heaven, gives thanks, breaks them, and gives them to the disciples. The disciples distribute them to the crowd. Everyone eats. Everyone is filled. And they gather twelve baskets full of leftovers.





Now what do we do with the twelve baskets? That is the question the disciples (and we) were meant to ponder.

The twelve baskets are meant to teach us ... for us to learn a lesson from them.

When one begins with insufficiency but gives it to Jesus, you end with abundance.

This miracle also trains the disciples that they are not the source of the bread; they are stewards of what Jesus supplies. That is ministry: Christ is the source, and His servants receive from Him in order to give to others. Ministers are not magicians. Teachers are not saviors. Pastors are not the bread of life. At one's best, we are all merely distributors of what Christ has provided.

There are Old Testament echoes here as well. The wilderness setting recalls Israel wandering in the wilderness and the manna. God fed Israel through Moses in the wilderness, and now Jesus feeds the multitude in a desolate place.

So when the crowd says, “This is truly *the Prophet* who is to come into the world,” they are thinking of Deuteronomy 18. Moses had said, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear” (Deuteronomy 18:15). And again, the Lord says, “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him” (Deuteronomy 18:18).





Their instincts are not entirely wrong. They see the wilderness, they remember Moses, they think of manna. They recognize that Jesus is no ordinary teacher. But they misunderstand the nature of His mission. Many want bread, but not the Bread of Life. They want His provision, but not necessarily His Person.

And that is still a danger today. People may want what Jesus gives without wanting to live under His authority. The feeding of the five thousand calls us beyond the bread and points us to Christ.

Bring what little you have to Jesus. Your five loaves and two fish may feel laughable. A little time. A little strength. A little money. Limited abilities against such great global need.

But the question is not whether your resources are sufficient. The question is whose hands you have placed them in.







One of the most well-known miracles in the Gospels: Jesus walking on the water is recorded in Matthew 14, Mark 6, and John 6.

This miracle comes just after the feeding of the five thousand and that sequence matters. The crowd has seen the bread. John tells us they wanted to take Jesus by force and make Him king. But they misunderstand the nature of His kingship. They want political deliverance on their terms. Jesus withdraws.

He sends the disciples into the boat and goes up on the mountain by Himself to pray. That is worth noticing. After one of the most public miracles in His ministry, Jesus withdraws to pray. He does not ride the wave of popularity. He does not allow the crowd to define His mission. He remains submitted to the Father.

Meanwhile, the disciples are on the sea, straining at the oars, because the wind is against them. It is the fourth watch of the night, sometime between about 3:00 and 6:00 in the morning. They are tired, battered, and afraid. They have been rowing for hours. The blessing of the previous day has given way to the darkness and exhaustion of the night.





Then Jesus comes to them, walking on the water. They are terrified and think it is a ghost. But immediately He speaks: “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” That phrase “It is I” carries weight. In the broader biblical context, and especially in John’s Gospel, the language resonates with divine self-disclosure. The Lord who treads upon the waves comes near and says, “Do not be afraid.”

Matthew gives us Peter’s response. “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” Jesus says, “Come.” Peter steps out of the boat and walks on the water toward Jesus.

Now we often criticize Peter. But at least he got out of the boat. There is faith there. Imperfect faith, yes. But faith. Peter believes that if Jesus commands him, he can come.

Then Peter sees the wind. That is a striking phrase. He sees the wind, meaning he sees the effects of the wind, the waves, the danger, the instability. And he becomes afraid. Beginning to sink, he cries out, “Lord, save me!”

That is a short prayer, but a good one.

Jesus immediately stretches out His hand and catches him. “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” Then they get into the boat, the wind ceases, and those in the boat worship Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”





Here is the distinctive point: eyes need to be fixed on Jesus. The storm was real. The wind was real. The waves were real. But Peter was sustained as he moved toward Christ. He began to sink when the circumstances became larger in his focus than the Savior. That is not a call to pretend the storm is not there. Biblical faith is not denial. It is not the power of positive thinking. It is Christ-centered trust in the middle of real danger.

And notice this: Jesus catches a sinking disciple. That matters. Peter's faith falters, but Christ's grip does not. "Lord, save me" is enough when it is cried with sincerity - if not desperation to the Lord.

Storms can come even after blessings. The disciples had just seen the feeding of the five thousand. They had carried away the extra baskets. They had witnessed abundance. And now they are straining in the dark.

Yesterday's miracle does not exempt them from tonight's storm. But Jesus is present in both.

Some know that pattern. You have seen God provide, and yet now you are in another storm. You think, "How can I be afraid after all I have seen?" But that is the life of discipleship. We learn. We forget. We see. We pray again. And we grow in faith.







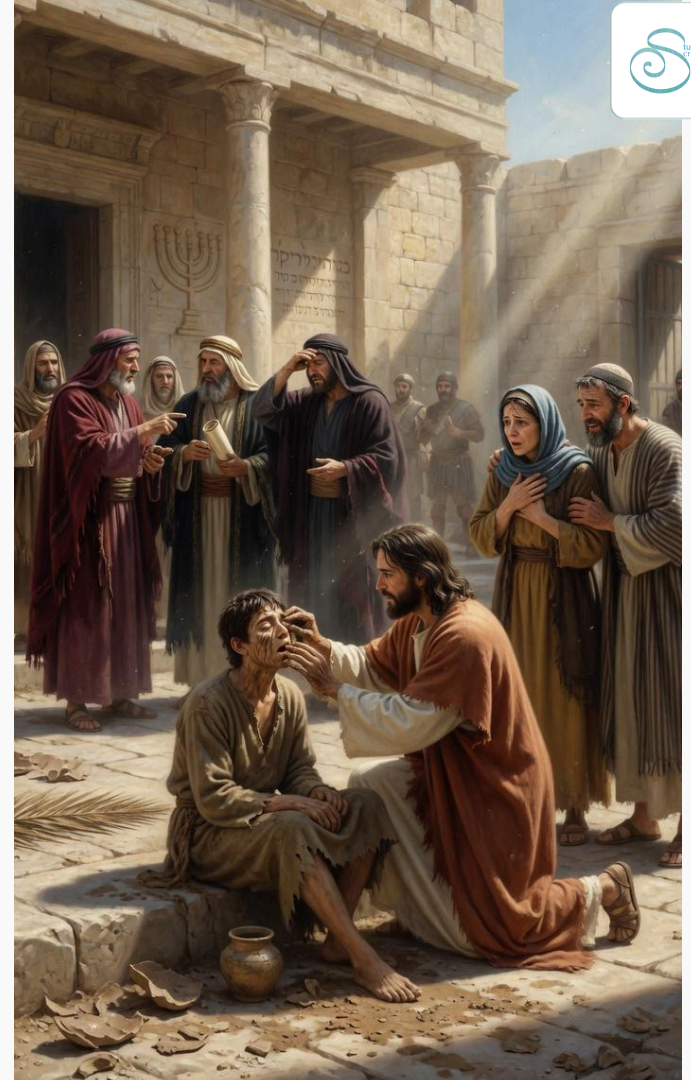
John 9 is one of the richest miracle accounts in the Gospels because the physical miracle becomes a theological courtroom. It also occurs in a larger setting of conflict in Jerusalem, where Jesus has been teaching publicly, making claims about Himself, and provoking increasing opposition from the religious leaders.

So when the healing takes place, it does not happen in a vacuum. It becomes another moment in the escalating conflict over who Jesus is.

Jesus and His disciples see a man blind from birth. The disciples ask, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

That question reflects the assumption (the incorrect assumption) that suffering must be traceable to a specific sin. Jesus rejects that framework. “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.”

Now Jesus is not saying the man and his parents are sinless. He is saying that his blindness is not the direct result of a particular sin in the way the disciples assume. The issue is not blame. The issue is the providence of God.





When suffering comes, people often ask, “Why?” Sometimes Scripture gives us reasons. Often it does not. At the broadest level, all suffering belongs to a fallen world disordered by sin. But that does not mean every affliction can be traced to a particular sin in the sufferer. Jesus redirects the disciples from speculation about blame to anticipation of God’s work.

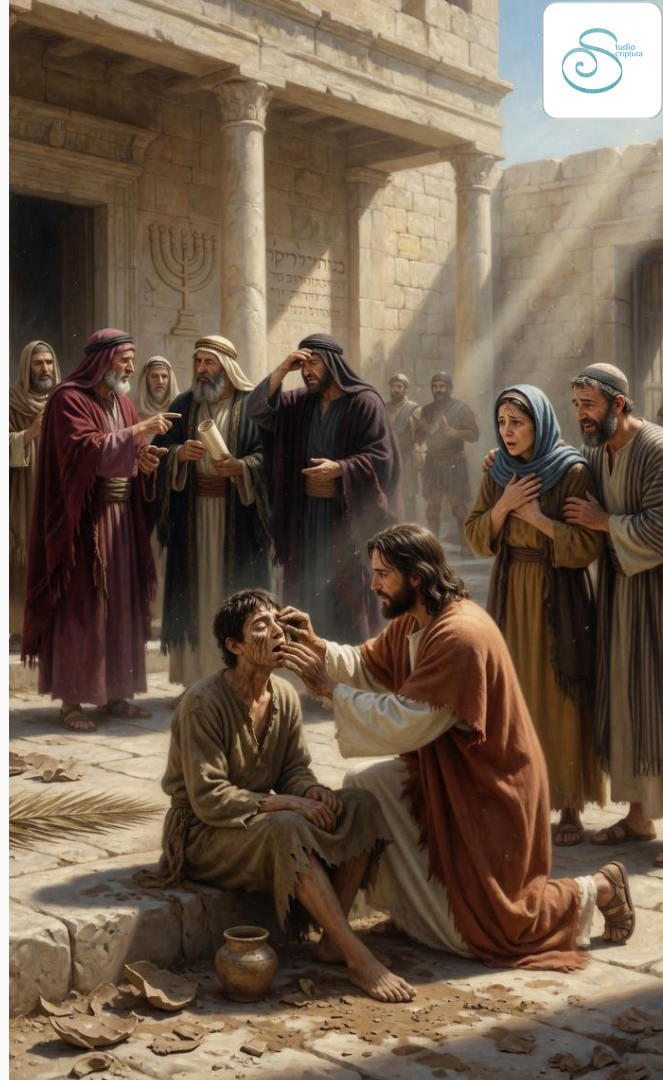
That does not answer every question we might have, but it tells us where to look. Do not fixate on hidden explanations or watch for the works and trust the providence of God.

Jesus then says, “I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

He spits on the ground, makes clay with the saliva, anoints the man's eyes, and tells him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam," which means *Sent*. The man goes, washes, and comes back seeing.

Why the clay? Why Siloam? John does not fully explain why Jesus used clay, and he does not present it as a medical technique. But the clay likely evokes creation imagery. God formed man from the dust of the ground. Here Jesus, the Word through whom all things were made, uses earth and gives sight to a man blind from birth. This is not merely repair. This is new-creation power.

Siloam which means *Sent*. In John's Gospel, Jesus repeatedly presents Himself as the One sent from the Father. The man receives sight as he obeys the word of the Sent One. He moves from darkness to light by responding to Christ's command.





There is also an obedience test here. The man must go and wash. The clay on his eyes does not complete the sign by itself. He must respond to Jesus' word. He must walk blind to the place of washing. Faith is not mere internal agreement. It acts upon the word of Christ.

But the miracle triggers controversy. It was the Sabbath.

That matters enormously. The Sabbath controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees has already been building in the Gospels. The Sabbath was one of the great markers of Jewish covenant identity. God had given the Sabbath. It was holy.

By the time of Jesus, however, many religious leaders had surrounded the Sabbath with detailed traditions and restrictions meant to protect their culture. The problem was not reverence for God's command. The problem was that their system became so rigid that it crowded out God and mercy itself was treated as a violation.

Jesus does not despise the Sabbath. He fulfills its meaning. He shows that the Sabbath is not opposed to restoration, mercy, and life. But the Pharisees often treat His Sabbath healings as threats to their authority.

So when Jesus gives sight to a man born blind on the Sabbath, the leaders are forced to choose. Will they rejoice that God has acted in mercy? Or will they defend their system against the evidence standing in front of them?

The Pharisees interrogate the healed blind man and then his parents. Then they call the man back again. The whole chapter becomes a type of courtroom drama. The miracle is evidence, and everyone must decide what to do with it.

Some of the Pharisees say, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others ask, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" There is division.





The leaders are not primarily interested in rejoicing that a man born blind can now see. They are interested in controlling their theological interpretations. They have a system, and Jesus does not fit it. So instead of allowing the miracle to force them to reconsider Jesus, they try to discredit the evidence, discredit the timing, and finally discredit the man himself.

In short, attack the messenger if you do not like the message. That still happens today. When people do not want the truth, they will often attack the witness rather than deal with the evidence.

The man's testimony grows clearer as opposition intensifies. At first he says, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes." Then he says, "He is a prophet." Then he says, "If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing." Finally Jesus finds him and reveals Himself as the Son of God. The man says, "Lord, I believe!" And he worships Him.

Meanwhile, the religious leaders move in the opposite direction. The blind man sees. The seeing men become blind. They have physical sight but willful spiritual blindness. They claim to see, and therefore their sin remains.

How we need spiritual sight today. We need discernment. Discernment, biblically, is the ability to test, distinguish, and judge rightly according to God's truth. It is not mere suspicion. It is not cynicism. It is not being difficult for its own sake. It is Spirit-formed judgment guided by Scripture, the ability to distinguish truth from error, light from darkness, Christ from counterfeit religion.

We need to see through the fog of culture, false religion, skepticism, and spectacle. We need to see our own sin and the sufficiency of Christ. We need to see the difference between religious control by a hierarchy and true religion, sound doctrine, and worship in spirit and truth.





The parents' fear also deserves notice. They know he is their son. They know he was born blind. But they are *afraid* of being put out of the synagogue. That would have meant shame, exclusion, and possibly economic consequences. So they distance themselves. "He is of age; ask him."

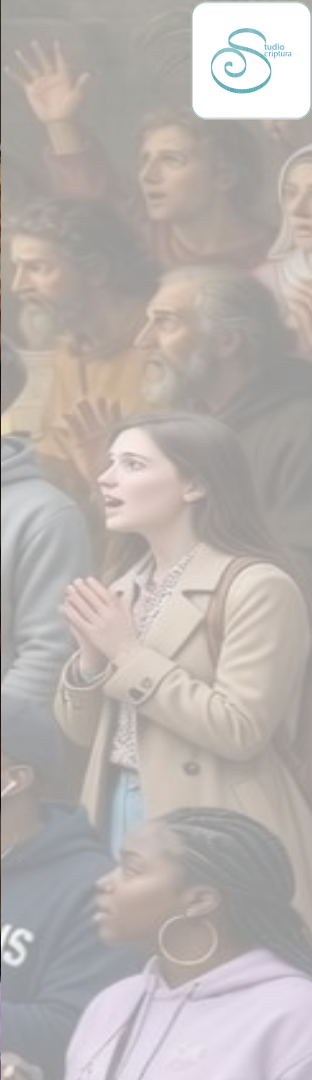
How like us today. Not wanting to be viewed as out of sync with the surrounding religious culture. But here is the news-flash: if you are a faithful Christian, you are out of sync with much of the culture and established religion already. Not because Christians should be rude, strange, or combative.

But because Christ's truth does not bend to the age. Confessing Him has always carried a cost.

Faith can be costly. Confessing Christ may cost social standing. It may cost acceptance. It may cost comfort. John wants us to see that cowardice is a real temptation, even for respectable people. The word cowardice comes through older French and Latin roots associated with fearfulness and lack of heart. That is the issue spiritually: a heart that shrinks back when confession becomes costly.

But Jesus finds the man who was cast out. The synagogue had cast him out. Jesus finds him when religious power rejects him. The man may have lost religious status ... but he gained Christ.







Lazarus in John 11 is the climactic miracle before the Passion. It follows the escalating conflict in John's Gospel, where Jesus' claims about Himself have already brought severe opposition. By the time we reach John 11, the atmosphere is dangerous. Jesus is moving toward the cross, and this final sign will accelerate that movement.

Lazarus of Bethany is sick. Mary and Martha send word to Jesus: "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." That is a beautiful prayer. They do not instruct Him. They do not manipulate Him. They simply bring the need before Him.

Jesus says, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

Then John adds something that seems almost contradictory: “Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.”

Love and delay are not contradictions.

That is hard for us. We often assume love means immediacy. If Jesus loves me, He will come *now*. If Jesus loves me, He will heal *now*. If Jesus loves me, He will resolve this *now*.

But John says Jesus loved them, so He waited. The delay was not indifference. It was God’s providence.





By the time Jesus arrives, Lazarus has been in the tomb four days. That detail matters. John is closing the door on any idea that Lazarus was merely unconscious. He is dead. The Old Testament law does not give a “four-day” rule to explain this. The point is more basic and more powerful: by the fourth day, death is undeniable. Decay has begun. Human hope is gone. Martha herself says, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.”

Martha says, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” There is faith in that statement, but also grief and perhaps confusion. “Lord, You could have prevented this.”

Many believers know that sentiment. Lord, if You had acted sooner. Lord, if You had answered yesterday's prayer. Lord, if .....

Jesus says to Martha, "Your brother will rise again." Martha answers with orthodox Jewish hope: "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Then Jesus gives one of the great "I AM" statements: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"  
John 11:25-26





Jesus does not merely say, “I can raise the dead.” He says, “***I am*** the resurrection and the life.”

Resurrection is not merely a miracle or an event. Resurrection is embodied in Christ Himself. *Life* is not merely something He gives. *Life* is who He is.

Martha confesses, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.” That is one of the great confessions in John’s Gospel. It is in fact the very purpose statement of the Gospel itself.

Then Mary comes. She falls at His feet. She weeps. The mourners weep. Jesus groans in His spirit and is troubled. Then we read, “Jesus wept.”

Jesus knows He is about to raise Lazarus. And still He weeps. His knowledge of the outcome does not make Him emotionally detached. He enters grief. He is truly human. He is the Word made flesh.

But His groaning is more than sadness. He is troubled at death's tyranny, at the ravages of sin, at unbelief, at grief, at the disorder of a fallen world. He stands before the tomb not as a helpless mourner but as the Lord of life confronting the last enemy.





Jesus says, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” Then He prays aloud, not because He lacks power, but because of the people standing by, that they may believe the Father sent Him. Then He cries with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!”

And the dead man comes out. John says Lazarus came out bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jewish burial involved wrapping or binding the body with linen strips or cloths, often with spices. The image is striking. Lazarus does not walk out dressed for ordinary life. He comes out still marked by the tomb, still wrapped like a dead man, still needing to be loosed. Jesus says, “Loose him, and let him go.”

This miracle is not only an act of compassion for Mary and Martha. It is a public sign near Jerusalem. John 11:18 says Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles. That is close enough to walk in perhaps thirty to forty minutes, depending on route and pace. Many witnesses are present. And John tells us that after this, the opposition accelerates.

Some believe. Others report to the Pharisees.

So the chief priests and Pharisees gather a council and say in John 11:47–48, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and *take away both our place and nation.*”





That phrase *our place* is revealing. It likely refers to their temple-centered authority, religious prominence, community standing, and lifestyle. They fear losing their place.

But they do not fear God. So from that day on, they plot to put Him to death.

How often do we fear losing our place? Not necessarily a temple office or national influence, but that small, comfortable slot of life we have designed for ourselves. We will worship God, but only so far. We will follow Christ, but not if He upsets our comfort, our influence, our habits, our little kingdom.

The leaders in John 11 do not begin by saying, “We hate God.” They begin by saying, “We must protect our place.” A heart determined to protect its place from Christ can become capable of terrible things.

So Lazarus is not merely the miracle before the Passion. It actually helps trigger the final escalation toward the Passion. Jesus’ hour has now come. The sign that reveals Jesus as the resurrection and the life becomes one of the reasons His enemies seek His death.





This is essential. Jesus' miracles do not climax in the miracles themselves. They climax in the crucified and risen Christ. If we stop at miracles, we have stopped too soon. The deepest human problem is not hunger, blindness, paralysis, storms, social shame, or even physical death. The deepest problem is sin and separation from God.

That is why Jesus went to the cross.

That is why Jesus says in John 11:25:

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?

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The Theology of Miracles

1. Glorify God by revealing the Father through the person and work of the Son.
2. Authenticate Jesus' message and divine authority, especially His authority to forgive sins.
3. Meet real human need and show the compassion of Christ toward sufferers, sinners, outcasts, and the grieving.
4. Reveal God's nearness. The God of Scripture is not distant, detached, or merely observing history from afar.
5. Preview the restoration of all things in the Kingdom: sight for the blind, cleansing for the unclean, food for the hungry, peace for the fearful, and life for the dead.

6. They call people to faith. The goal is not amazement alone, but worship, obedience, and witness.
7. They announce the arriving Kingdom. The King has come, and His reign breaks into a fallen world.
8. They remain possible because God is still active in His world. We must not fall into functional deism.
9. God often works through ordinary means, but He remains free to work above and against ordinary means.





10. Today we want neither unbelieving skepticism nor miracle-obsession. We want biblical faith.
11. Miracles are not normative today in the same way they were during the unique ministry of Christ and the apostolic witness that established the Church. Scripture is complete and sufficient. The gospel does not need a modern miracle-platform to validate it.
12. Miracles must never be merchandised. We reject prosperity-gospel manipulation and the exploitation of suffering people. Miracle theology should lead us to bold, yet submissive prayer: we boldly ask God to act, while humbly adding, "Your will be done."

This class was prepared through personal study of Scripture and careful engagement with trusted scholarship on the Gospel of John. Generative AI tools were used to assist with research, organization, and the drafting of phrasing. All final interpretations, judgments, and content reflect the author's convictions.