

Pastor Marv Reads Ivan Burgener

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Preacher: Ivan Burgener

[0 : 0 0] Well, I've got a treat for you this morning, and it is a treat indeed. And before we go there, I want to read a passage of Scripture and ask you to turn in your Bibles, please, to Luke's Gospel.

Luke's Gospel, Chapter 9. And while you are doing that, I want to explain the essence of our session this morning.

Because it comes from the mind and the pen of Ivan Bergner. Ivan Bergner is a grace believer. He came into the truths that we hold dear many, many years ago.

And by occupation profession, Ivan was a chemical engineer and worked for large companies.

But he was also a pastor and enjoyed the teaching of the Word of God. And in all the years that I've been a believer, I don't know that I have met anybody who had such a profound grasp of the Scriptures and the way he would ferret things out was just truly remarkable.

[1 : 2 2] And a couple of years ago, he was at Grace. And he came in, he just dropped in unexpectedly as a visitor. And I prevailed upon him to take the services that morning.

And he did. And of course, it was typical vintage Ivan Bergner. It was great stuff. I'd never heard him when it wasn't. And what I want to share with you this morning is his doing.

And it is in connection with a passage of Scripture that I remember reading as a new believer in Christ many, many years ago. And it was one of those things that led me scratching my head.

And I thought, what's that all about? And how, what, what's going on here? And I would turn to commentaries. And I've got, I've got a huge list of friends.

Almost all of them are already gone on. But I call them my friends and they line my shelves. And they are, they are my library. And I don't know how many volumes I have considered over the years looking for some really definitive answers on this particular issue.

[2 : 3 1] Never could find anybody. And it's an amazing thing. Some of the best recognized commentaries, when they came to this passage, they almost treated it like, well, that's no problem at all.

And they didn't even deal with it. It's frustrating. But Ivan dealt with it. And it's quite remarkable what he came up with. And it's been a real blessing to me. And I wanted to share it with you.

So, if you will look at chapter 9 of Luke's Gospel. And I'm going to share with you from the paper that he provided. Beginning with verse 37.

Luke 9 and verse 37. Here's what we read. And it came about on the next day that when they had come down from the mountain, a great multitude met him.

And behold, a man from the multitude shouted out, saying, Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only boy. And behold, a spirit seizes him.

[3 : 33] And he suddenly screams. And it throws him into a convulsion with foaming at the mouth. And as it mauls him, it scarcely leaves him.

And I beg your disciples to cast it out. And they could not. And Jesus answered and said, Oh, unbelieving and perverted generation.

How long shall I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here. And while he was still approaching, the demon dashed him to the ground, threw him into a violent convulsion.

But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy and gave him back to his father. And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

But while everyone was marveling at all that he was doing, he said to his disciples, Let these words sink into your ears, for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.

[4 : 46] But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this statement.

And Ivan has labeled the topic of his session, the demon who wouldn't and the disciples who couldn't.

That's a pretty apt description of what's taking place here. Now, before we get into this, I want to give you a little background. And that means we need to go back to chapter 9 of Luke, just back a page.

And beginning with the very verse first, we find, And he called the twelve together. Now, this is early on in his ministry. He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases.

And he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing. And he gave them instructions. And we read in the chapter following about the five thousand being fed.

[6 : 02] And then I want you to note also the transfiguration that follows also in Luke 9. So, keeping all of these things in mind, I'm just going to go through this and see if I can talk you through this and read what Ivan has shared.

And it is, I think it's remarkable stuff. How different, he says, how different from the scene atop the Mount of Transfiguration from whence they had come.

Now, that took place right before this. You see, Jesus called the twelve. And then of the twelve, he took just three to witness what was going to take place on the Mount of Transfiguration.

And he had already given the twelve the authority to perform miracles, cast out demons, and so on. And we may assume that they were busily engaged in that as the nine, while the three went with Jesus into the mountain of transfiguration.

Where we read there, The fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, or Elijah, who appeared in glory.

[7 : 26] Now, these men have been both dead for a long time. But here they are on the Mount of Transfiguration. And this is really important, because the text goes on to say that Moses and Elijah appeared in glory and spoke of his decease.

Moses and Elijah, obviously, were aware of what Jesus was going to do by way of his death.

And they are talking to Jesus about that. Following a scene of such glory, it must have been a huge letdown to be so greeted by the demon who wouldn't.

Not long before this, the Lord had sent out his twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all devils. We looked at that.

And to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God and heal the sick. We saw that in Luke 9, 1 and 2. They had participated in a ministry of miracles such as the world had never seen.

[8 : 50] But now, it was not going very well at all. They had met their match. Even more than their match.

Since Peter, James, and John were with the Lord on the Transfiguration Mount, this was the problem experienced by the nine apostles left behind. They had not been idle, but attended diligently to their miracle ministry.

However, they now had a problem of major proportions. Something was missing, and they had no clue. According to the lad's father, these disciples, the nine, had tried earnestly to dispel the demon, vexing his son, but to no avail.

Surely they had tried more than once. Surely several, if not all the time, had tried his hand. Their failure was complete. Try as they will, this demon would not budge.

How they must have waited anxiously for the Lord's return from the mount. They must have thought, we have done this before with great success.

[10 : 17] What is different now? And why won't this demon budge? You can see the perplexity in their hearts, can't you? What's going on here? Everything else has responded to our power and authority that Christ gave us.

But we come to this one obstacle, and this demon is actually exercising control over us, and is uncooperative, and won't come out. Helpless disciples and a grieving father greeted the returning Lord and explained the desperate situation and their fruitless attempts.

It was then the Lord answering said, Oh, faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and suffer you?

Bring your son hither. And as he was yet coming, the devil threw him down. And by the way, this keeps translating. This is King James that he's using here as his text.

And it keeps using the word devil, but in the Greek it's the word for demons, really. It isn't. There's one. There's only one devil. That's the adversary. Satan.

[11 : 33] He is the devil. But there are multiple demons, and demons are not the devil. So keep that distinction in mind if you would.

So the demons threw him down and tear him, and Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the child and delivered him again to his father.

Now, these nine disciples have to be standing there scratching their heads and saying, Why didn't that work for us? He gave us the authority to do that, and we've been doing that with other situations, but we couldn't get it done here.

And Jesus, of course, did. So that's the thing. They were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered, everyone, at all things which Jesus did and said to his disciples, he said, Let these sayings sink down into your ears.

In other words, guys, I want you to really get this. Listen carefully. For the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

[12 : 55] But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them that they perceived it not. And they feared to ask him of that saying.

Now, I'm just going to inject here a Wiseman opinion. And it could be right and it could be wrong. But my thinking is, when Jesus told them, The Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men, their thought was, Well, we heard what he said, But that can't be what he meant.

That's not possible. Couldn't be that. But they apparently didn't want to show their ignorance, so they're not asking for more information. And the text says, They perceived it not.

They feared to ask him of that saying. And it says, It was hid from them. What was it that hid it from them? I really don't believe that it was some supernatural thing that was blinding their minds and eyes to it, because he'd already told them, Get this.

Listen carefully. I want you to get this. But they didn't. And my suggestion is, when it says it was hidden from them, it doesn't mean that God mysteriously kept them from understanding it, but I think it simply means that they heard what Jesus said, but they were forced to dismiss it, that he actually meant what it said, because that couldn't be.

[14 : 34] That's not true. And Peter, well, let's go on here. Matthew's record sheds the light we seek.

So we'll have to go to Matthew chapter 17. While you're turning there, let me read what Ivan's got to say. Matthew's record sheds the light we seek. When they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son.

He is a lunatic and sore vexed. Oftentimes he falls into the fire, off into the water. I brought him to thy disciples. You see, this is just Matthew's version of what Luke has already said.

Same instance. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you?

How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me. Jesus rebuked the devil. He departed out of them. The child was cured from that very hour. And then came the disciples to Jesus apart.

[15 : 37] Now that simply means that they came to Jesus privately. Not in the presence of the crowds. But they got Jesus alone.

And they're questioning him. And they're asking him, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief.

For verily I say unto you, If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence the yonder place, and it shall remove. Nothing shall be impossible to you.

How be it, This kind, or this instance, or this demon, goes not out, but by prayer, and fasting.

Hmm. Matthew 17, 14 through 21. The Lord's answer was still perplexing. What did he mean by this kind?

[16 : 41] Was this a demon of a special kind? A demon with too much resistance for the power granted thus far to the disciples?

And what is the significance of prayer and fasting? What did that have to do with it? What did prayer and fasting have to do with this situation? And what was it they did not believe that seemed to be a problem?

What was it the disciples did not believe? Various aspects of a very difficult situation. Now here, by the way, is an excellent example of what I've tried to communicate in times past that no mere human has the ability to truly interpret the scriptures.

The only real, reliable interpreter of the scriptures is the scriptures. The principle is the Bible is its own best interpreter.

Scripture interprets scripture. That's why the basic principle of scripture and the study thereof is a comparing and the analysis of this passage with this passage because this passage leaves something out that this passage puts in and you've got to put the whole thing together in order to get a picture.

[18 : 11] This is what this is what Bible study is. This is not Bible reading. All too many people satisfy themselves with just Bible reading.

Well, I've done my duty for the day. I read a chapter today. And that's good. I don't want to take anything away from it. It's better than not getting into the book at all. But that's not Bible study.

That's just a little devotional reading where you're just trying to fortify yourself and get a little information for the day. But Bible study always requires the diligent comparison of scripture with scripture.

And sometimes many times you'll find going from the Old Testament to the New or the New back to the Old that things may be very far apart that you're seeking information for. So, Ivan continues in his article, Such perplexities about this whole thing, what did prayer and fasting have to do with it and all the rest, had bothered me for more years than I wish to admit.

I'd say amen to that brother. I'd say amen to that brother. Me too. Furthermore, I could get no help from anyone I ask. Commentaries I consulted seemed to overlook the issues and shed little light.

[19 : 26] So, I laid the problem aside but could not forget it. There's got to be an answer to that. One day, while reading through my Bible, I came upon the passage in Matthew 9, verses 14 and 15.

I'm going to turn to that if you don't have it already. Matthew 9, 14 and 15. Then came to him the disciples of John.

Now, this John is not John who wrote the Gospel of John. This John is John the Baptist. And by the way, I think by the time this question comes up, John the Baptist has already been executed by Herod.

and John had acquired a number of disciples before Jesus ever came on the scene because John was preaching his message that absolutely electrified the Jews.

And John's message was, repent! The kingdom of heaven is at hand. And what that means and what that meant to every Jew is that God is about to do his thing.

[20 : 41] the Messiah is about to arrive and when he does he will be bringing the kingdom of heaven with him.

And the people of Israel had lived for that for centuries for the Messiah. And now John the Baptist is announcing and you remember John is the second cousin of Jesus.

John is announcing what is about to take place and then when Jesus arrives on the scene he introduces him as, behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

And this message, all huge numbers of people came out and were baptized of John. So those who really logged on to John's message became John's disciples.

That means the word disciple simply means a learner, a follower. And they were enamored with John's message and they began following him, teaching, listening to his teaching and taking in everything that he had to say.

[21 : 45] So they became disciples of John and then when Jesus came on the scene and was introduced as the Lamb of God, a number of the Jews left John and his leadership and began following Jesus.

They just kind of changed leaders. And someone came to John one time and said, does it just bother you? I mean, these disciples that were yours, they're leaving you and they're going to follow Jesus.

And Jesus said, John the Baptist said, he must increase. I must decrease. And this is the one of whom John said, I baptize you with water, water, but he who comes after me, which would have meant Jesus, will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

And John says, and by the way, this fellow is one whose shoes I am not even worthy to unloose. John recognized that this Messiah was in a completely different category from himself.

And he was delighted that people were following him and wasn't at all put out that they were leaving him. So, we read in Matthew 9, 14 and 15, then came to him the disciples of John saying, why do we, that means themselves, the disciples, why do we and the Pharisees fast often?

[23 : 26] But your disciples fast not. This fasting, of course, was a voluntary depriving oneself of food. Now, actually, the real main reason that fasting ever came in and the basic purpose behind it is not what a lot of people think it is.

Actually, it doesn't mean that you are just depriving yourself of food for some religious purpose.

Real fasting, real biblical fasting, always involved an attitude of deep, deep concern, anguish, care, worry, whatever.

Let me put it this way. Real fasting meant that you were so overwrought with what was happening or what could be happening or what was taking place that you had no interest in food at all.

You just had no interest in food at all. You were preoccupied with something that was on your heart and mind so that food had no appeal to you.

[24 : 47] and it usually occurred in connection with some great sorrow about something. Those of you who have lost someone of significance, maybe a mate, one of the first things you notice is that you don't have the interest in eating that you once did.

Sure, you still have to eat, you have to keep up nourishment and your body strength and everything, but food, along with a whole lot of other things, mysteriously loses its appeal.

And it takes a while to get over it before things return to what we would call normal. So, in answer to what Jesus said, why do we, or what the question was asked of Jesus, why do we and the Pharisees, fast often?

In other words, they did this almost as a ritual, as a routine thing. But your disciples fast not. And Jesus said to them, can the children of the bride chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?

Now, the children of the bride chamber are those who are closely associated with the groom who is to be married, or the ladies with the bride who is to be married.

[26 : 18] It's a time of great excitement, great enjoyment, great rejoicing, and very often great food goes with it.

Everybody's eating and celebrating, and it's a wonderful time. But he says, as long as the bridegroom is with them, present.

But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

Why? Because their rejoicing has turned into sorrow. The bridegroom is gone, or the bridegroom has met some devastating end.

Here, here we notice the Lord defending his disciples for not fasting, when at that time the disciples of John and the Pharisees were fasting.

[27 : 27] Since fasting expresses sorrow, the Lord explained his disciples could not be expected to fast while in his presence.

What's Jesus saying here cryptically? He's saying, I'm the bridegroom. That's what he's saying. He's putting himself in the position of being the bridegroom. In his illustration, the Lord pictured himself as the bridegroom, and he added that the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

And I suspect that that began in connection with the day that our Lord was crucified. He was arrested, and they held the trials, put him on the cross.

I can't imagine any of the disciples, and by the way, we don't know which of the disciples were there. The only one that we know for sure that was there was John, and that was not John the Baptist.

That was the John that wrote the Gospel of John, and we don't know if he was the only one who even witnessed the crucifixion, because remember the night that our Lord was arrested, when Peter sliced off the ear of Malchus, the servant, and they saw that Jesus was not going to put up a fight, and even ordered Peter to put away his sword, the disciples didn't know what to do.

[29 : 01] They were scared, and they panicked, and they fled every which direction, took off in the dead of night there, and they ran in all kinds of directions, and we know that Peter finally regained his senses, and he came, and he saw where they were taking Jesus.

You remember Peter there, and the cock crowing, and all of that. But at the crucifixion itself, the only disciple that we know for sure was there, and maybe others were too, but the only one that's mentioned is John, and it was John to whom Jesus turned when he was on the cross, and he said to John, behold your mother, and he meant, Jesus meant his own mother, and then he turned to Mary, who was watching her son, agonizing there on that cross, Jesus turned to Mary and said, and woman, behold your son, and what Jesus was doing was releasing the care and protection of his mother to John, the apostle, and he was assigning John to be the caretaker of his mother, and tradition tells us, and I think it's probably pretty accurate, that eventually

John ended up on the Isle of Patmos, and Jesus' mother, Mary, with him, and there is a place there in Ephesus, where John was considered to have been the bishop of Ephesus, and tourists can still see the place where it is reported that John and Mary made their home, there on, in Ephesus, as she was living out the rest of her years, and John, we know, died on Patmos at an old age.

So, keeping on with this now, let's go to the text when he says, the time is coming when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

Ivan says, that's it. here is the clue we missed. Before the Mount of Transfiguration, and yet immediately after the Lord had given Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, we read, from that time forth, this is right there in Matthew 16, from that time forth, Jesus began to show his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, suffer many things of the elders, the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

[31 : 49] The bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, would be taken from them. But did they believe it? No. No.

How did Peter take it? How did Peter take it when Jesus said that? He was outraged, and he rebuked the Lord. Peter took Jesus and began to rebuke him saying, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee.

Peter wanted no part with that message. He denied that that was ever going to happen. Impossible. Stop talking like that. But Jesus turned and said to Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan.

Thou art an offense unto me. In other words, you are a stumbling block, a stone of stumbling to me. You would deter me.

You would prevent me from this. If you had your way, this would not happen. And Peter's thinking, Yeah, right! It wouldn't happen.

[32 : 55] It wouldn't happen. And then Jesus calls him Satan. Now, this does not mean, this does not mean that Peter had somehow mysteriously become Satan.

but what he did mean, what Jesus did mean, is that Peter has placed himself in the position and in the attitude that Satan would have regarding this whole affair.

Because Satan's way is man's way. This is not going to happen to you. We are going to prevent this. This is not going to happen. So, he is saying, your attitude reflects that of the adversary himself.

This is the way he thinks and this is what he would want. And you're falling into that. And he addresses him as Satan. How did the other disciples feel? Surely, they felt exactly like Peter.

Had they believed their Lord would soon be taken from them by crucifixion, they would have been praying and fasting. Get it?

[34 : 08] But did they believe that? No. Were they sorrowful over that? No. No. They were going to Jerusalem and when they got there, Jesus was going to kick out the Romans and set up his kingdom.

Is that something to fast about and be sad? No. They were joyous. And when they went into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, remember the crowds? How people lined away?

How they threw the palm branches in the way? Some threw their garments down. They were screaming, Hosannas, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And they were having a great old time. And there was no thought that that was going to turn into crucifixion.

This is not a time for fasting and prayer. This is a time for jubilation. crucifixion. So had the other disciples believed their Lord soon would be taken from them by crucifixion, they would have been praying and fasting and having great success dispelling demons of every kind.

Instead, they were engrossed with gaining positions of prominence in his coming kingdom. Remember that? But they're talking about the kingdom and Jesus going to Jerusalem.

[35 : 25] And James and John sidled up to Jesus and they said, hey, how about when you come into your kingdom, I get to sit on your right hand and my brotherhood gets to sit on your left hand.

And in one of the other gospel accounts, it was the mother of James and John came to Jesus with the same petition. And what are they thinking about? They're thinking about padding their future.

They're thinking about getting their digs in for when this kingdom is set up. They'll have choice positions of authority and honor. And that, again, is the way humans think.

They're just looking ahead a little bit. They're trying to feather their cap before the time comes. They were engrossed with gaining positions of prominence in his coming kingdom.

How sad indeed. And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again, and they were exceeding sorry.

[36 : 32] Here, they seem to be catching on. This is Matthew 17, 22, and 23. They seem to be catching on, but yet they are not taking his message seriously.

They are sorrowful, but have not yet embraced the Lord's words. This explains the Lord's words.

Because of your unbelief. Unbelief about what? Unbelief about the end that awaited him.

Unbelief about the cross and the crucifixion. They had not bought into it. Because of your unbelief, verily I say unto you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, remove hence the under place it shall remove.

Nothing shall be impossible to you. Would you say, Ivan continues, would you say that faith smaller than a grain of mustard seed is mighty small faith?

[37 : 37] While refusing to believe the Lord's announcement of his being taken away from them by way of the cross, they were not at all in harmony with this apparent change of program, and were therefore rendered helpless to continue their ministry of miracles, signs, and wonders.

Luke's record made clear to us what was still hidden to them, and they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered, everyone at all things which Jesus did, he said to his disciples, let these sayings sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

What they had learned from the Mount of, what had they learned from the Mount of Transfiguration? Did they not hear Moses and Elijah talking about the Lord's death which he would accomplish at Jerusalem?

them? There's no reason to believe that they weren't in on that conversation, that they didn't hear it. After all, that's why Jesus took them up there to witness what was going to happen.

And they saw Moses and Elijah, and they were fully aware of that, and they were talking about Jesus' decease. So whatever they learned there, their lips were sealed, for as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them saying, tell the vision, that is what you saw there in the Mount of Transfiguration, tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man be risen from the dead.

[39 : 24] Matthew 17 9. And the text says, but they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, they perceived it not, and they feared to ask him of that saying.

And then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. And that's when Jesus corrected them by saying, he who would be greatest among you, let him be servant of all.

Well, that's not the answer they were looking for. They wanted to know, how do you get to the top of the stack? And Jesus was saying, if you want to really be great, learn to be a servant.

And that was the key there. So, in just a moment I'll take your question. While jockeying for positions of greater honor, they seemed clueless and have no idea about what the Lord had been trying to teach them.

And he said, O ye of little faith, O faithless and perverse generation. Matthew 17 17. So, the real problem was not the demon who wouldn't.

[40 : 35] It was the apostles in unbelief who couldn't. And most sorrowful of all, they did not know why. Are not our thoughts recalled to poor dear Samson who was shorn of the hair of his strength who did not know that the Lord was departed from him?

So, okay, comment or question, Roger? Yeah, in Luke 9, after they talked of him, two men, and they were Moses and Elias who appeared in glory and spoke of his decease which he should accomplish in Jerusalem.

But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep, so maybe they didn't get in on that part of him. Could that be it? I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I didn't get that.

Where are you now? Luke 9, 32. Okay. And it says they were asleep and when they went they saw their glory and the two men stood with them.

So it sounds like they might have missed out on that. Does that make sense? Yes, it does. Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep.

[41 : 57] They had the same problem the night that Jesus was betrayed the night in Gethsemane. I appreciate you mentioning it because I did not recall that. It would appear that they did not get in on that.

Yes, you're right. Good observation. I appreciate that. That would account for their ignorance. They just weren't in all. We don't know what the time frame was here as to what time of day it was and when they went into the mount.

And you got to remember that the night that Jesus was betrayed it was a long, long day because as is usually the case these people generally arose at sunrise and they generally sacked in pretty early.

once it got dark. Of course they had their lamps and everything too. But they were more early to bed, early to rise people, especially in an agrarian society. And the night that Jesus was betrayed, he had a real problem keeping them awake.

And the reason he did wasn't because they were disloyal or disinterested, but it had been a long, long day. I mean, and when you're up 18, 20, 24 hours without sleep, it doesn't take anything for you to doze off or to nod off.

[43 : 17] Yeah? Verse 33 kind of emphasizes that Peter wasn't really thinking too good when he said, let's build a tabernacle. Yeah. And he just belied up, you know.

Yeah. Well, what they're actually suggesting is we want to stay here. We want to stay here longer. Maybe they had come to that conclusion after they had dozed off and had a cat nap and got some sleep.

But you're right that they were not in on, apparently, they were not in on the conversation about his decease. So that adds to the mix as well. Any other thoughts or comments? By the way, I have a copy of this article for all of you.

You can take it and look at it at your own leisure. While we're doing this, though, I want you to turn to, while we're here in Luke, come back to one book earlier, back to Mark.

Mark chapter four. And we've got another incident that's certainly not as involved, but it talks about the same principle.

[44 : 19] And it's in Mark chapter four and verse 35. And what we're talking about, guys, and the point of this whole thing is, nothing has changed today in the dispensation of the grace of God from the standpoint of believing the Lord, because you've heard me say this many times, what God wants from us today more than anything is to believe Him.

And I'm thinking primarily of what He has recorded in His Word. He calls on us to believe Him. He is trustworthy. You can believe Him.

He wants to be believed. The opposite of that, of course, is unbelief. And that's something that the disciples were coping with or didn't cope with very well, the unbelief thing. And here's another slight example of it in verse 35 of Mark chapter four.

And we read, and on that day, that is after speaking all of these parables that went before, on that day, when evening had come, Jesus said to them, let us go over to the other side.

Now, they're talking about crossing the Sea of Galilee from one side to the other. And whatever reason He wanted to go over there is revealed later on, but it was on the other side of the lake.

[45 : 42] So He says, let's get in the boat and go to the other side. And after leaving the multitude, they took Him along with them. just as He was in the boat and other boats with Him.

And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up.

And He Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they awoke Him and said to Him, Teacher, do you not care that we're perishing?

And being aroused, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Hush, be still. And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.

And I'll bet you it was an eerie calm. Whoa, what is it? Where did the wind go? Where did the waves go? It became calm. And He said to them, why are you so timid?

[46 : 52] How is it that you have no faith? Why is He charging them with having no faith? Because He told them earlier, get into the boat, we're going to the other side.

He didn't say, get in the boat, we're going out into the lake and drown because of this big storm. And yet that's what they thought they were going to do.

And they had no idea that this one who had performed the miracles that he had was also capable of stilling the storm. And it led them to the question, who really is this?

And what they didn't understand, God was in the boat. God incarnate was in the boat. And they are scared witless.

And they said, what kind of a man is this anyway? Well, he was the God man, the theanthropic man.

[47 : 57] He was the word encased in human flesh. And he chided them for not believing him. Actually, he had already given them good reason to believe him completely.

but they still flagged in their faith, just as we do from time to time in refusing to believe. And here is another instance where it was a faith issue.

And all faith means is belief, trust, commitment, reliance, dependence. That's what the word faith means. And sometimes it's used as a verb, sometimes it's used as a noun.

But it's a fabulous word. Any other thoughts or comments? Anybody? Yeah, right? When you think about everything those disciples saw, miracles, just this thing here, you would think at least one of them would be with them.

Imagine this is. I think they were so all that they said, well, he can do anything, we don't have to worry now. Whatever, let's enjoy it.

[49 : 06] Well, from time to time they demonstrated their lapse of faith. Once it was the feeding of the 4,000, the feeding of the 5,000, and they came to Jesus and they said, you know, it's really getting kind of late in the day.

We probably ought to break up this crowd and let the people go so they can go into the villages nearby and get something to eat. And Jesus said, you give them something to eat. And they said, well, we don't have anything but a few loaves and fish is all we've got.

And here once again, and you know, he had already fed a group before, and they had the miraculous multiplication to distribute, and they had baskets left over, for crying out loud.

and the thing about miracles that makes a miracle truly a miracle is that it completely defies the laws of physics and everything else.

A genuine miracle isn't just an oddity. A genuine miracle is something that is totally contrary to the laws of nature. nature. That's what makes a miracle a miracle.

[50 : 23] And there are a lot of things that people try to pass off as miracles, including the miracle mets in the 1960s, whatever. But a genuine miracle is when the one who is in charge of creating the laws that determine gravity and everything else, chooses to exercise his authority over those things he's already established and make exceptions.

And that's what a miracle is. And there isn't anything that would get people's attention like that. And that's going to come into play when we get into the subject of the miracles. I think you'll find it quite fascinating and very enlightening.

Yes, Don? Thinking like they do back then, they were all disciples, all of them were raised to think that Messiah was coming and going to do this thing.

What would make them change their mind even though what Jesus was saying so forth, it was still in their mind that this was going to happen, you know? And Messiah was going to take care of Israel.

Yeah. I mean, no matter what he said, it was still in their minds. Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely. Like being brain washed all the way up through your mouth. Well, it's a perfect example of how our mindset works.

[51 : 45] people can have a fixation on a particular concept or idea and boy, I'm telling you, it takes the power and the grace of God to knock that out of them.

And there probably isn't a greater example of that than Saul of Tarsus. If there was anybody who was absolutely, totally convinced that he was doing the right thing by rounding up these fellow Jews, whom he thought had been deceived and deluded into believing that Jesus was the Messiah, most ridiculous thing anybody could ever imagine, and he was doing God a favor by rounding up these people because they were the cancer that was growing on Judaism, and it was Saul of Tarsus' responsibility to stamp these people out.

And he was going to be God's poster boy for the righteousness of Israel, and he could not possibly have been more wrong, but he had imbued and embedded in his mind and in his psyche that Jesus was not the Messiah.

And it took that revelation on the road to Damascus, and remember, remember the three days and three nights he spent in Damascus, and what was he doing?

Remember, he was neither eating, he was upset, he was traumatized, he was just beside himself, and he replayed and relived that incident on the Damascus road time and time again, and how many times do you think he must have asked himself, was that real, or was I dreaming, or was I imagining, and he replayed and replayed, and every time it came out the same way, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

[53 : 36] Wow. And you talk about a major catharsis, I don't know if anybody's ever had one equal to it, of Saul of Tarsus. So now, he preaches the faith that he once sought to destroy.

And this Jesus, and Stephen, his follower, how he cheered on the Sanhedrin as they stoned Stephen to death. He's got to relive all of that, rethink that.

Can you imagine what is happening internally in that man? And can you not also see what it was that gave him the drive that he had, and the conviction that he had, the dedication that he had, and willing to spend and be spent for the cause of this one whom he earlier hated, tried to destroy.

Amazing. So, you know, it's conversion. The songwriter says, it took a miracle, hang the stars in space, took a miracle, but when he saved my soul, cleansed and made me whole, it took a miracle of love and grace.

And every time, every time a human being comes to faith in Jesus Christ, receives him as his Savior, and is born again, it's just as much a miracle as it was when he came forth from his mother's womb.

[55 : 04] And I tell you, the physical birth of a human being, although we have recorded it billions of times, billions of times over the years, it's still a miracle.

Every time it happens when a baby is born, new life comes into the world. And it's a miracle when someone comes to spiritual life as well. Any other thoughts? Anybody? Yeah, Rod?

That type of blindness that Paul had before his conversion, isn't that the same as the people today who deny God?

Oh, sure. Supposedly, old us. Sure, sure. And want nothing to do with God. Yeah. And can do everything. Yeah, well, you know, human beings, in a sense, are born with two strikes against them, spiritually.

First of all, you're born with an Adamic nature. You're born in a state of fallenness. And this means, not only is your body fallen, that will allow you to experience physical death, but your thinking process, your mind, your intellect, is fallen also.

[56 : 18] That's part of that fallenness. And this is how people can get into such absurd things like idolatry, worshiping an idol. This is how, this is how a reasonably intelligent human being can cut down a tree and cut up the wood and carve part of it into an idol and an image and stand it up and the rest of the wood he puts in the fire and warms himself and cooks his food and then he turns to the image that he constructed from that, bows down and worships it.

Is that crazy or what? That's flawed human thinking. We think and we reason with a fallen intellect, with a skewed logic.

And this is how people come to some of the bizarre conclusions that they do. This is the basis for Islam. This is the basis for Buddhism. This is the basis for all of the false religions.

And when I say we've got two strikes against us, one is your thinking apparatus is skewed that keeps you from thinking correctly. And the other is the God of this age has blinded the minds of those that believe not so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, which is the image of God, does not shine unto them.

So you've got satanic blindness added to human blindness and it takes something as great as the word of God and the grace of God to break through that and bring out spiritual life on the other side.

[57 : 51] So every time someone comes to faith in Christ, it's a new kind of miracle. It's a beautiful thing. Other thoughts, anybody? I don't know if I'm late or if they're early or what?

They're late. They're late. Okay. I want to pass these out. So you'll have a copy. And again, our thanks to Ivan Bergner for having put together this.

Frankly, it's kind of a theological masterpiece and I really appreciate it.