

## The Meaning in the Miracles

For the Third Sundays in Autumn we are going to be reflecting on three of the miracles that Jesus performed as they are recorded in the gospels. Two the healing of people, one looking at 'Two Sea Miracles', the final service showing us of something of Jesus' power of creation, his work as the cosmic Christ and Lord.

Sunday 16 September      The Healing of the Paralysed Man  
*Trinity 16*                      (Mark 2.1-12)

Sunday 21 October        The Healing of the Centurion's Servant  
*Trinity 21*                      (Matthew 8.5-13)

Sunday 18 November      Two Sea Miracles:  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Before Advent*        Jesus calms the storm  
    (Mark 4.35-41)  
    Jesus Walks on Water  
    (Mark 6.47-52)

The earthly ministry of Jesus was made up of teaching and healing. He met others at their point of need and cured them, restoring them to health. Not only were they cured and made physically well, but, by this very transformation in their lives they were restored to a place in the community. Until then their sickness or impairment had left them marginalised or excluded from the community.

Jesus' ministry of healing was an essential part of his mission. It could be costly for him physically (cf Luke 6.19), and, furthermore, he put himself at risk in healing women and foreigners (cf Mark 7.26). The miracles were not an end in themselves. They had deeper meanings, most especially to usher in the Kingdom of God. Jesus commissioned the apostles to do the same: we see this over and over again in the Book of Acts, beginning with Peter and John healing 'a man lame from birth' (Acts 3.1-10).

It's easy for us to get weighed down by the supernatural nature of miracles in the scriptures. How can we therefore see them for ourselves? How can we engage in them in such a way that they have meaning for us today?

The gospel writers are wanting to do far more than leave us in open-mouthed amazement. For example, they are wanting us to ask 'What sort of changes does Jesus bring into the world and to our experience of it?'

There are serious and legitimate questions we may want to probe, even if the answers are difficult to find, if at all:

Why do we find a conflation between sin and 'sickness'?

What does it mean to have enough faith, and are those who are not healed in some way deficient of the right amount of faith?

What about those Jesus didn't heal?

Is healing confined to physical or mental illness and simply about a 'cure'?

How do we need and want to be healed?

and perhaps many more.....

Let us pray that through the study of these miracles the Spirit will enlighten us with grace and insight to discover more, to be unafraid to ask questions, and leave with only 'half-answers', or none at all. We may have to accept that we have to go on living with the questions as we persevere as faithful disciples who are called by named and loved beyond our imagining.

*Fr Paul*