

If Sodom Had Miracles

by Carter Conlon

This sermon delves into the powerful message from Matthew 11:23, exploring the potential impact of miracles in Sodom and the transformative power of God's presence. It emphasizes the need for believers to step out in faith, engage with their communities, and bring hope and healing through the demonstration of God's miraculous power. The sermon challenges listeners to move beyond complacency, embrace their spiritual authority, and actively participate in God's redemptive work in their cities.

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Scripture: Matthew 11:23, Genesis 18:23, Mark 16:15, Luke 4:18, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Acts 1:8, James 5:14, Romans 8:37

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Description

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Transcript

I want to talk to you today from this verse of Scripture, Matthew chapter 11 verse 23, in a message entitled, If Sodom Had Miracles. If Sodom Had Miracles. Verse 23, Jesus Christ said, And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades.

For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. I want you to think about this for a moment. This is Jesus Christ speaking.

It is the same Jesus Christ that conferred with Abraham outside of Sodom. I'll show you that in a moment in the Scriptures. It is the pre-incarnate appearance of Christ when Sodom was about to be destroyed.

So it's the same Jesus that was standing with Abraham on the outskirts of Sodom, now in Capernaum, speaking to this particular town, saying these words, If the miracles done in you had been in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. The gospel, if it had been preached with power and supernatural signs following, if it had been in Sodom, Sodom would have been spared and would still have been standing 2,000 years later. There was 2,000 and I think 11 years or so between Abraham and Jesus.

Sodom would still have been standing. With all of its depravity, when we think of Sodom, we wonder if any society could be more wicked than Sodom was. They were sexually confused, degraded, and depraved.

When we think of Sodom, we just see a whole city full of sexually given to perversion people, not knowing what they were, having abandoned their God-given roles and being given in to the lust of the flesh. And when we think of Sodom, we wonder if any society could become more wicked than Sodom. Yet it still appears that they could have been reached, they could have repented, and they could have been changed if miracles had been in Sodom.

Isn't that amazing? Think about that just for a moment. When we think of Sodom, we think of a society that was unreachable. It's so depraved that they were trying to rape angels.

I mean, this is where they had gotten to. Roving gangs of men and boys looking to haul two angels out of Lot's house and literally rape them. But they could have been reached.

Jesus said if the mighty works done in Capernaum had been done in Sodom, they would still be standing 2,000 years later. You know, I've been reading the Bible for years and never seen that. It just hit me one day like a ton of bricks.

You are the Christ who was there, and you're making a statement that almost beggars description. Capernaum was the home base of Jesus for about 20 months. It is a city where ordinary men were called and promised a new future.

Peter was called there, James was called there, and so was Matthew called there. It was a place where that's one of the miracles, I guess I could say, that happened in Capernaum is that ordinary people were told that you're going to have an extraordinary life. The place you've been walking in is not the place you're going to walk in the future.

God is going to transform you. And as with Peter, for example, you're going to become another person than the person you are. That's the first miracle in a sense, going out in the name of God into this particular society and saying you can have a new life.

It was in Capernaum that the centurion's servant was healed. The word of God was so powerfully spoken there that they didn't even have to be in the same room with a sick person. Jesus just simply spoke the word, and the centurion's servant was healed.

It was in Capernaum that Peter's mother-in-law was healed. Family healing happened in Capernaum. It was in Capernaum that some people let down a man who was paralyzed through the roof where Jesus was.

It was a place where you could bring your friends, no matter their condition, into the presence of God, believing and expecting that God was going to heal them. In Capernaum, a man with an unclean spirit was healed and set free and delivered by the power of God. It was in Capernaum that a woman who had been sick with an issue in her body for 12 years pressed through the crowd and just touched the hem of his garment and was healed of her sickness.

It was in Capernaum that Jesus raised a 12-year-old girl from the dead. And how many teenagers need to be raised from a place of spiritual death in our generation? He spoke to her and just said, little girl, arise. It was in Capernaum that Jesus Christ paid his and Peter's taxes.

There's your first opportunity to do a miracle in New York City. You could start by paying your taxes as Jesus did. He sent Peter out to catch a fish, and remember there was a coin in the fish's mouth.

That would be a good sermon title, Pastor Tim. Jesus paid his taxes. He did.

For some people that would be a miracle, and when your friends found out, Jesus made tables. He didn't get paid underneath them. He made them.

Amen. A rather weak golf clap when I talk about paying taxes. Now, Sodom had a potential testimony in it, because there was a man who was related to Abraham, who was the father of faith, and he was in that particular city.

He and his wife and two daughters, we know at least, and he had some extended family there. But he was a weak man, and his testimony was compromised. He had no real spiritual authority.

He couldn't speak to the people because he was too intermixed in the society that he was in. You know, the Bible says that he was vexed at the conversation of the wicked, but not vexed enough to separate himself from it and become a testimony of the reality and the goodness of God. But there was another man on the outskirts of the city, and in my opinion, this man had the opportunity to make the 2,000-year difference, just like you and I do today.

I think in New York City and whatever city you're listening from today, we are of this generation that we have an opportunity now to make an incredible difference for the future. People don't have to perish because we are here. Listen to what the promise was in Abraham's life, and he is considered, as the Apostle Paul said, the father of faith in this and other generations.

Genesis 12, verse 1 says, The Lord said to Abram, Get out of your country and from your family and from your father's house to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you. Is this not the promise of God when we came to Christ? I know the promise that was given to my heart is that if any man is in Christ, any person is in Christ, they become a new creation.

The old things in our lives pass away, and behold, all things become new. I'll bless you, he said to Abraham, and I'll make you a great nation. I'll make your name great, and you shall be a blessing.

I'll bless those who bless you, and I'll curse him who curses you, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. And so this is, in a sense, our calling as the Church of Jesus Christ, to allow the Holy Spirit now, with the Word of God, to change us from what we used to be into what God says we now are. As we behold him, the Scripture says, as we behold Christ, as we behold his victory, as we behold his promises that became a reality to each one of us when he died on the cross and was raised by the power of God from the dead.

As we behold him, the Bible says we are changed into the same image, from glory, image to image, and glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of God. We become different people than the people we used to be. Instead of our downward trajectory before we came to Christ, we now have an upward trajectory to becoming the people that God always desired we should be, and when we come to Christ now intends that we will be.

So we're moving from what we used to be into what we're going to be. That's the first miracle. That's the miracle of the testimony.

If Sodom had had miracles in it, it would have been spared. Too long, I think, as the Church of Jesus Christ, too many of God's people have looked too much like the world around them. It's time to make the break.

A lot couldn't do it, but it's time now to make the break. It's time to walk away from all the things that so beset us and captivate us and cause our conversation not to be filled with the wonderment of God. Abraham had a mission.

He had a promise, as we have a promise, that God said, through you all the people of the world are going to be blessed. Now that's your promise. He is the father of faith.

Ultimately, the promise that was given to him is being fulfilled through the Church of Jesus Christ in this generation. We are the fulfillment of the promise that God made to Abraham after the cross, of course, and after Christ's victory. We now become that testimony on a much bigger scale than just Abraham was as a one man.

But here's this man with a mission, this man with a promise, and he's outside of this city that's about to be destroyed, just as you and I are. We're more or less treading the outskirts of a city that God only knows. We don't know how long New York has, folks.

If you knew that it only had six months to go or a year to go or two years to go, we've got a lunatic with his finger on nuclear weapons over in Russia. You don't know how long we've got here or the people have. Now we're secure as believers in Christ.

To be absent from this body, we're going to be present with the Lord. Thank God for that. Thank God.

But there are probably somewhere in the vicinity of eight million people in the greater New York area that don't have that assurance. To be absent from the body, they're going to be absent from the Lord, absent from the presence of God for all of eternity in a place that is so mind-bendingly painful and dark that we can't even comprehend it. And we are the people that God has planted here in this season to make a difference in their lives.

If Sodom had had miracles in it, it would have been spared even to this day. We don't know. Sometimes even the future of a city or the longevity of a city is directly tied to the people of God that are in it.

On the outskirts of the city, the Lord with two angels came to Abraham's tent, made him another personal promise that he was going to have a son, which was great. And then the Lord said, Am I going to hide from Abraham that which I'm about to do? Because he's going to become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. Shall I hide this from him? For I know him.

He will command his children and his household after him and they'll keep the way of the Lord to do righteousness and justice that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has spoken to him. And in verse 20 of Genesis 18, it says, The Lord said, Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is very grave, I will go down now and see whether they've done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to me. And if not, I will know.

Then they turned from there, the two angels, and went towards Sodom. But Abraham, verse 22, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. So it identifies the third person of this trio that visited him as the Lord Jesus Christ, the pre-incarnate Christ, may I put it that way, an appearance of the Son of God before the

physical birth of the man Jesus.

And verse 23 says, Abraham came near and said, Would you also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there were 50 righteous in the city. Would you also destroy the place and not spare it for the 50 righteous? Far be it from you to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked. Far be it from you.

Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Now this is a type of intercession. Now Abraham is the man through whom the world is supposed to be blessed and will be blessed. He has this incredible promise.

He doesn't fully understand the depth of the promise that's been given to him at this point. But he has access to God. He's actually speaking to God.

And God has granted him access just as he's granted us access to come to his throne to find grace to help in our time of need. He's given us power and intercession, power and prayer. And here's Abraham as a, I put it as a type of the praying church, and he's starting to now in a sense intercede for Sodom with Almighty God himself.

And the Lord said in verse 26, if I find in Sodom 50 righteous in the city that I will spare their place for their sakes. Then Abraham answered and said, well who am I but dust and ashes and have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose there were five less than 50 righteous.

Would you destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, I will, if I find 45, I will not destroy it. He spoke to him yet again and said, suppose there should be 40 found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the sake of 40.

Then he said, let not the Lord be angry and I'll speak. Suppose 30 be found there. So he said, I will not do it if I find 30 there.

And he said, indeed now I've taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose 20 should be found there. So he said, I will not destroy it for the sake of 20.

Then he said, let not the Lord be angry and I'll speak. But once more, suppose 10 should be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the sake of 10.

So the Lord went his way as soon as he'd finished speaking with Abraham and Abraham returned to his place. I've always been incredibly perplexed by this particular scenario right here. Why did Abraham stop at 10? He was six people short of a victory for a city.

We know there were four righteous in it. The Bible tells us that in the New Testament, Lot, Lot's wife and his two daughters. Now their righteousness was exceedingly iffy, but nevertheless the Lord declares them to be righteous.

If I were Abraham, I don't know, don't you think you would go back and he had at least 400 trained servants in his house. Remember they had gone and fought against these foreign kings so that Lot could be returned to Sodom. Don't you think he would have gone to his house and said, hey, I need six volunteers.

The Lord said if 10 righteous people are in the city, he's going to spare it. But he stopped. He stopped at 10 and he just went home.

And it's the type of the praying church that gets so close to the victory and just quits at the finish line. It's the type of the children of Israel coming to the borders of promise. And for whatever reason they don't go in and choose to die in the wilderness.

They were so close. Wouldn't it be tragic for you and I to get to the throne of God one day and just suddenly realize we were so close to a spiritual awakening in New York City. We were so close to the victory.

We went to prayer meetings and when we got it down to what we thought was a reasonable response, then we just went home. Amazing when you look at it. But I think, I don't think the Lord was playing with Abraham because the Lord knew.

He foreknew. He is omniscient, which means he knows everything. God knew there were only four righteous in the city.

God knew it. And so he allows Abraham to go to 50 to 45 to 30 to 20 to 10. What was he doing? Why didn't he just tell Abraham straight out, Abraham there aren't even 10 righteous in the city.

Why did he, why did he allow this seeming game to be played? I believe in my heart, this is my interpretation, but I believe in my heart God was waiting for something. For one thing, I think he was waiting for Abraham to say, will you spare the city if I will go into it? I will go. I will go into Sodom and from one end to the other.

I will talk about the miraculous promises of God. I will believe for families to be healed. I will call ordinary men and women out of their ordinariness and tell them they can have an extraordinary life in God.

I will be vulnerable. I will let people touch me. I will believe for the healing of God to flow through my life.

I will stand against powers of darkness. I will believe for miracles in the city. I believe in my heart that if Abraham had gone, the city would have been spared.

And Jesus said if miracles had been in the city, it would still be standing 2,000 years later. And so the question in my heart is, what will happen to New York City if we decide to go in? If we decide not to live on the outskirts anymore? If we decide not to live compromised lifestyles? If we decide to say, God, I'm going to do this your way. I'm going to let your mission become my mission.

I'm going to let your passion be the passion of my heart. I'm going to take a chance and lay hands on the sick and believe they're going to recover. I'm going to stand against powers of darkness.

I'm going to speak truth. I'm going to call men and women out of darkness and into the life and light of Jesus Christ. I'm going to bring people to the house of God.

I don't care if I have to let them down from the roof in a bed. I'm going to bring them and believe that God is going to touch them. I don't think the lame man had a lot of say in the matter.

I think the four friends said, we're bringing you to God's house whether you like it or not, you are coming. And we're going to let you down through the roof. And we're going to believe that God's going to touch your life and God is going to heal you.

Luke chapter 4 in verse 18, Jesus said, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he's anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the recovery of sight to the blind, and to set free all who are oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. And remember elsewhere in scripture he said to his disciples, as the Father sent me, now I'm sending you.

So the mission of my life is to tell people who are poor that there is an incredible treasure of God available to them for newness of life, newness of heart, a new song, new vision, a new future, new direction. Why would I hold my peace when I know these things? Why would I not speak? What is it that would keep me quiet when I know, oh God, thank you that in 1978 you found somebody to come to my house. Oh Jesus, I thank you from the depths of my heart.

Oh God, you found a man who wouldn't give up on me, who knocked on my door every Wednesday night and even when I was rude he still loved me and still kept speaking about the kingdom of God, newness of life, a hope and a future. I'm sent to the brokenhearted, the people who don't see a way forward, they've been so wounded by life's bitter disappointments and addictions and betrayals and abuses that they don't know how they're ever going to live or have a future. I'm sent to those that are captive to see them set free by the power of God, to those who can't see a way forward to tell them there is a way, there is a future, there is a hope for you, there is life for you.

I'm sent to those who are oppressed and confused and they don't know if they're up or down, a male or female, they don't even know what they are. I'm sent to them to tell them you were created in the image of God and for the purposes of God and for the glory of God and there is a divine purpose and plan for your life and I'm sent to tell everyone that this is, this is the moment of your freedom. Not ten years from now, not ten days from now, but right now you can be free, right now you can be the person that God has destined you to be and has desired you to be.

Jesus himself said these things to his disciples in Mark chapter 16 beginning at verse 15. He said, go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved but he who does not believe will be condemned and these signs will follow those who believe.

In my name they will cast out demons. In other words, in the name of Christ they will have a power over the powers of darkness. They will be able to break the chains that bind people to darkness and to the things of this life and the things of this world.

They will speak with new tongues. In other words, they will be given abilities that they don't naturally possess to speak things they can't naturally speak in any amount of human reasoning and strength. They will be given the power to agree with God and to speak mysteries in such a way that people's hearts will be turned and strangely warm towards the things of God.

They will take up serpents and if they drink any deadly thing it will by no means hurt them. In other words, everything that comes your way of darkness to bite you and to infuse poison into you, you'll have the power to take it up. Behold I give you power over scorpions and serpents and nothing will by any means hurt you.

If any deadly thing is spoken to you, any voice that is raised against you and even if it finds a lodging place in your mind for a season, it will not take you down because God says I will sustain you. I will keep you in the midst of this fight. And lastly, they will lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.

In other words, you've got to be where the sick are. You can't lay hands on them from 15 feet away. You can't have a pole with a glove on it going God bless you brother, God bless you my sister.

You have to get in close and proximity and believe that God will heal them. Believe that God will set their minds free. Believe that the purposes of God will be revealed to their lives.

This is the moment for the Church of Jesus Christ to rise up again. This is the moment for the people of God. No more living on the edge of society.

No more being intermixed and having no testimony. This is the moment to be separated to the things of God. This is the time of a great awakening in our generation and it's time for you and I. It's time for us to go in.

It's time for us to rise up. We are the Church of the Living God. We are God's plan for redemption on the earth.

We are the ambassadors of the cross of Jesus Christ. We bear in these earthen vessels the spirit of the Living God. Hallelujah, hallelujah.

Glory, glory, glory. Glory to the name of Jesus. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Glory to God. Glory, glory. I am done with a tepid testimony of Christ.

I'm done with the mixture in my heart and I'm done with it in yours. We are going into the city and we are going to make a difference. We're going to bring our friends to the house of God.

We're going to tell men and women you can have a new life. We're going to speak. We're going to open our mouths and we're not going to be silent anymore.

Praise be to God. We live on the side of truth, the side of victory, the side of eternity with God. We have no reason to be quiet.

We have no reason to be ashamed. We have no reason to be compromised by the grace of Almighty God. I know I speak for Pastor Tim.

We want to see stretchers come in this place, wheelchairs. We want to see the addicted and the afflicted brought to the house of God. We want to see them set free by the power of God, not just in church but by the Spirit of God operating through your life, your life.

Yes, you. You are God's plan A for this generation. You're not plan Z, you're plan A. There is no plan B. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. So the question is, do we just go home or do we go in? You see, today you're going to do one or the other. You're going to leave the service, you're going to walk back to your apartment, you're going to go get your car, you're going to do Abraham's thing and just get it down to ten and go home.

Six short of a victory. Six short. He was so close.

If miracles had been in Sodom, it would still remain to this day. 2,000 years later, Sodom would still have been there. Think that through for a moment.

I don't know what the future of New York is going to be. I know that the trajectory is dark. But look who's here.

Look what we've got in this house. There's only 120 in the upper room in Rome, Benedictine eventually. Look what we've got here.

What's the 1,600 people just in this sanctuary alone, let alone those that are online? The potential here is astronomical. If we will go, if we'll go, these signs will follow. So I'm going to give an altar call today and it's going to be really simple.

I'm in. I'll go. I'm not going to just pray and go home.

I'm going to go in. So I'll start to speak right where I am, my neighborhood, my community, my home, my family. If I've lost spiritual authority, I'll ask God to give it back.

Lot had lost all his spiritual authority, but he could have asked for it back and God would have given it to him. I'm going to start speaking about the wonderful things of your kingdom in my workplace. They can't cancel God, so then nobody's going to cancel me.

What in the world are we backing away from? Somebody told me, well, you've been flagged on Facebook. Who cares? I don't care if I'm flagged on Facebook. What does that matter? Is Facebook in charge of getting the gospel out to the world? Amazing.

Amazing. The enemies of God are not going to cancel me, nor you. I want to challenge you.

Go in. Go in now. There's people crying all over this city for hope.

They might be parading in the streets trying to get their abnormality to be considered normal, but they hate themselves. Every last one of them hates themselves. They're looking for somebody, somewhere that has an answer.

Somebody that can say, I want to tell you, you can have a new life. You can be free. You can be another person than the person you are.

You can find God's purpose for your life. Taste it and see for yourself. That's what I always tell people.

You don't have to believe me. Taste it yourself. Ask God.

Go to God and say, if what this guy's saying is true, show me. He'll show you. I have enough confidence in him to know that.

He'll show you. That was my prayer. 1978, I just, on the way to work, I said, God, if this is true, what this man's telling me, I open my heart to you and invite you in to be my Lord and my Savior.

What a journey this has been. What a journey this has been. So Father, I do pray, God, for your people.

It's a choice for all of us, just as salvation was a choice. It's a choice to get up and go into this sin-sick city and believing that the miracle of your presence in my life and the miracle of your power flowing through my life can make a difference. But God, I choose to believe.

I don't want to just go home and sit in my tent and just watch the television and wonder what's going to happen. I want to go into the city. I don't want to go home when I'm so close to the victory.

Somebody, somebody is going to find eternity in heaven because I go back into the city, because I tell them there is a way to victory. No matter how obstinate they look or how dark they seem to have gotten, if miracles had been in Sodom, it would have been spared. It means they could have been reached.

God Almighty, God Almighty, give us the eyes of faith to see this. Give us the hearts to believe it. Give us the courage to go in.

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