

# The Ugly Side of A Miracle

by Carter Conlon

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*This sermon emphasizes the transformative power of God's miracles in our lives, highlighting the challenges and opposition we may face on the journey to receiving and living out these miracles. It encourages a deep, personal surrender to God, acknowledging the potential costs and opposition that may arise, but ultimately focusing on the life-changing impact of experiencing God's love and mercy.*

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 5:17, Luke 17:12, John 9:20, John 5:8, Isaiah 33:22

**Topics:** "Transformative Power of Miracles", "Surrendering to God's Will"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Remember, April the 19th, we're going to be at Yale University. That's going to be the worldwide fair meeting, and we're not going to be live there because we don't have the equipment to broadcast it appropriately live, and it would be too expensive to bring it in an outdoor setting. So we're going to pre-record it, and we'll show it to those online on the 26th of April.

So if you'd like to attend it as well, go to our website at [summitpa.org](http://summitpa.org), and scroll down to the bottom of our website, our Bible school website, [summitpa.org](http://summitpa.org), and you'll see the Yale University fair meeting, and then you'll click on a registration button, and it will take you to their website, and the opportunity to register. It's a gated, closed community at Yale, so you have to be registered to get in if anybody wants to attend that event. And you'll get the details of the time and the place and all that on the website.

Make sure you're registered, because if you're not registered, you'll arrive, but you won't be allowed in. So just make sure you go on that website and fill that out, and we look forward to seeing a lot of people there. And remember, we're not there to create a spectacle, we're there to worship God, to truly, truly lift our voices, our hands, and our hearts, and worship the Lord Jesus Christ.

A lot of the young people there have never seen genuine worship in their lifetime. Some have, some haven't. But what a wonderful thing to see five, six, 700 people out in this, the quad, as they call it, and lifting our hearts and lifting our hands to God.

And be in prayer. For those that will be sharing different prayer points and those that will be speaking, be in prayer, please. And if you're not able to visit in person, just remember us on April 19th and pray for us, because it is the first of probably a few, if not several Ivy League schools at this prayer meeting will be attending in the future.

Now, after service this evening, we're gonna be celebrating communion. If you have any bread or juice at home, crackers or anything, just we're gonna celebrate the death of Christ on the cross where he paid the price for the wrong things that you and I have done that the Bible calls sin. And because of that, we know that we can be forgiven when we turn our hearts to him.

And because of Christ, we can have eternal life and forgiveness for our sin. Tonight, I wanna talk to somebody who's going to receive a miracle. You're going to have a miracle tonight.

Your life is going to be transformed. You're going to hear the words that will be spoken to your heart. You're going to believe it in your heart.

And as difficult as it may be for you to understand it, you're going to turn to God and your life is going to be transformed. Now, before that happens, I want to speak to you about the ugly side of your miracle. It seems like an odd title, but I would be remiss if I didn't explain that there will be somewhat of a cost to letting God transform your life.

And let's go to 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17. That's where I'd like to begin tonight. And so Father, as we do that, as we turn in our Bibles to your word, God almighty, we are living in a perilous time now.

Lord, and it is time for you to work for men and women have made void your law. It's time for you to take your right hand of a power out from your bosom, Lord, and stretch your hand out one more time and offer mercy to anyone and everyone who's crying out for an alternate life, for a new life, for hope for the future, for a redemption they need and don't know they can have freely through you. Father, thank you, Lord, for the prayer that was prayed tonight, that we will live to see a generation of youth turn to you and bring the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit to this generation one more time.

I do pray for the anointing of the Holy Spirit to be upon this pulpit tonight and my life. And Lord God, that you would grant to me the ability to speak simply and clearly to everyone who's listening. And God almighty, go beyond that, go beyond my words.

I ask tonight, Lord, that you would visit the inner prisons in people's minds, in their hearts, in their lives, that you would break shackles and chains, that you would deliver the oppressed, that you would give clear thinking to those that are confused, that you would set up a clear pathway of life before those who don't feel they have a reason to live. We ask you tonight to just be God, do the work that only you can do. Lord, we know your heart, it sent you to a cross, and so it's not even debatable.

You have a passion and a love for this world that is deeper than anything that we can muster in our own spirit, anything that we can conjure up in our own strength. Your love is deeper than anything that we have. And so, Lord, tonight, God, I ask you, please, in Jesus' name, Father, and for the sake of Christ, set people free.

God, set them free, and let them not be disappointed when they get to the other side of their miracle. Let not the ugliness that sometimes greets us there turn anyone back from serving you, living for you, and worshipping you. And we thank you for it in Jesus' name.

Amen and amen. One of, if not my favorite verse in the whole Bible, 2 Corinthians chapter five and verse 17, the verse that won me to Christ. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

Old things have passed away, and behold, all things have become new. I've probably talked about this hundreds of times from pulpits in this one and other pulpits that I've been behind, and I don't think I'll ever get tired of speaking this verse, because at one point in my life, it was a dream. At one point in my life, it was something that was so far out of reach that it would have to be a miracle that would accomplish this.

I tried so hard to change the things that were part of my character in becoming an ever-deepening part of my character. Every person who's not living for Christ is on a downward spiral. We try as hard as we can to change, but we can't change in our own strength.

And suddenly, somebody talks to us about a miracle, and that's what this one particular man did to me. Talk to me about a miracle that I could have in my life, that I could be a new creation. The old things in my life that had footholds in me that seemed to be gaining strength every day would be passed away, and behold, all things would become new.

And I remember the day I just pulled over on the side of the road, and I prayed this prayer. It was a simple prayer, but it was a true one. I said, God, if what this man is saying is true, I open my heart to you, and I invite you into my life to be my Lord and my Savior.

And that's all I prayed, and it was an if prayer. I didn't even have a wagon load of faith, just an if, but it was a very sincere if, and God took my if and turned it into a miracle. If it's true, I didn't feel anything.

I went to work, I worked my regular shift. I was a police officer, I worked my regular eight-hour shift and did what I had to do, and I went home. I didn't feel a thing.

A lot of people talk about how they feel and maybe look at feelings as being a part of the transformation of your life. Well, I didn't feel anything, nothing. I didn't feel different.

Went home, went to bed, didn't really think much about the prayer that I had just prayed, but as God lives, when my eyes opened in the morning and my feet touched the floor, I knew I was a different man. And don't ask me how I knew, I just knew. Something had changed inside.

It's like a light was on that had never been on before. A source of life had come that had never been there. There's suddenly this illumination in my heart.

There's this hope for the future. Now, a lot of the old things were trying to hang on, but they had died now according to the word of God and they had passed away. They lost their life source.

They couldn't govern my life anymore. And how amazing it was as day after day began to unfold and the transformation that began that day with that sincere if began to grow day by day by day. And it was exciting to me.

I wanted to sing. I used to sing that song. It's one of the first hymns I ever learned.

I didn't know theology and most of the theology I got in the first two years in church, I didn't understand the pastor. I'm sure he must have been brilliant, but I didn't understand a word he said. He was talking about righteousness.

I didn't know what the word meant. He talked about being under the law as if it was a bad thing. And I was a cop and I was thinking, what's his problem with being under the law? But never, he never explained anything.

He never made it simple. And he's using righteousness. The only thing I ever knew was a singing group called the Righteous Brothers.

You're probably too, Mark knows that and Joanne know that, but the rest of you are probably too young to remember them. And that's the only time I'd ever heard the word. So I didn't know what that even meant.

He never explained it meant you could be clean in the sight of a holy God. He just continued to use these words. So I didn't understand them.

And so a lot of the theology came from the hymns. And I used to love to sing these songs and I couldn't wait to worship God. I loved to sing.

I loved to worship him. There was a news, you know, the Bible talks about David. The psalmist said he lifted me out of a horrible place where I was sinking and he set my feet on a rock and he put a new song in my heart.

And it's not just a song that people hear, David says, and many will see it and fear and turn to God. It's not just words. It's the whole song that comes from your being.

It's the entirety in the sense of your, this renewed born again being beginning to worship God. And you would think that everybody would be excited about this as I was, only to find out there is an ugly side on the other side of your miracle. And the ugly side is that not everybody is excited about your conversion as you are.

Then you get to the other side and it's funny. You know, when I was a drunk, when I was angry, when I would fight at the drop of a hat, when I would lie, when I would do all this stuff, nobody had a problem with me. Everybody thought I was just a great guy.

When I got saved and when I started telling the truth and I didn't drink anymore and I was loyal and I was a good employee, then suddenly people have a problem with me as if I have a problem or something is wrong with me. I had other police officers that wouldn't work with me even. They wouldn't work, they wouldn't ride in the same car because they, I don't know why, just because I wouldn't do the things I used to do.

And suddenly I'm, and they're afraid of it. And you think that, and that's kind of the ugly side, may I call it, that's one of the ugly sides of the miracle you have in your life is that not everybody's going to appreciate your miracle. You'd like them to, and you'd say, well, but they look at you as if you now have a problem which you didn't have before.

You know, in the gospel of Luke chapter 17 and beginning at verse 12, the scripture says Jesus entered a certain village and there met him 10 men who were lepers who stood afar off. And when they lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, master, have mercy on us. And so when he saw them, he said to them, go show yourselves to the priests.

And so it was, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned and with a loud voice glorified God and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks, and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answered and said, we're not 10 cleansed, but where are the nine? You know, sometimes you have this miracle in your life and you're in church and you just look around and say, has God never touched these other people? What's wrong with them? Why don't they want to sing? Why don't they want to go to prayer? Why don't they want to be involved in the work of God in his kingdom? Like, it's a strange thing.

For 10 who were cleansed, only one comes back and falls at the feet of Jesus and just worships him unreservedly. I don't know where the other nine went. It's kind of the ugly side of a miracle, isn't it? Like a lot of people get healed and they say, thanks, I really appreciate the healing, and then take off and just do their own thing.

They don't come back to worship. They don't come back to serve. They don't come back to be yielded to the purposes of God.

They have no conscience whatsoever about taking up their cross and following Christ. It's all about just me, my miracle. Thank you very much, I'm gone.

And you can't even get them to come to church because they got their miracle. They're no longer oppressed. They're no longer crying out on the side of the road.

Jesus met them. He touched them. And sometimes it seems like, am I the only one that God's ever touched? But to thank God that this man came back.

That's the beautiful side of a miracle. There was one who came back. So we don't know anything about the other nine other than they've been a bad testimony for 2,000 years.

But we do know that the guy who came back and worshiped God has been encouraging people for 2,000 years. He had no idea that his little worship service is gonna be recorded in the word of God. It's gonna be spoken about.

And Grantville didn't even exist back then. There was probably bush and beavers here. That's all that was around this place.

And now here we have a Bible school. We got people from all over the world that didn't exist back then. And here we are talking about the one leper that came back and said, thank you, Jesus.

Thank you for hearing my voice. Thank you for hearing my cry. Thank you for touching my life.

Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. And so sometimes you just have to go all alone. Sometimes the people that God touches are not gonna go with you.

And you can get discouraged when you say, what's wrong with the rest of the people? I say we all be like this one leper. And so what? If they decide to do their thing, let them do it. I'm going back to the feet of Jesus and I'm going to worship him and I'm gonna thank him and I'm gonna praise him and I'm gonna give him glory because if it wasn't for him, I would be unclean.

I would be untouchable. I would be in hell for the rest of my life. Thank you, Lord, for what you have done for me.

Thank you for the mercy that you brought into my heart. I remember one time Pastor Teresa and I were visiting a church somewhere and I was sitting there, I'm a brand new Christian and I could hardly wait for the people to leave so I could worship God. It's true.

I could hardly wait for the service to be over and when everybody left and Pastor Teresa was there, she can tell you the story. I walked up and down the aisles of the church when everybody was gone singing, he lives, he lives, Christ Jesus lives today. He walks with me, talks with me along life's narrow way.

He lives, he lives, salvation to impart. You ask me how I know he lives. He lives within my heart.

In John chapter nine, in verses 20 to 22, talks about a man who was born blind and he too cried out to Jesus and Jesus healed him. He told him to go to the pool, which is called Siloam and wash and he went and washed and he received his sight. Now, there was a dispute among the religious of the day as to whether or not this was a bonafide genuine miracle that had happened to his life and so they called in his parents.

In verse 20, it says his parents answered and said, we know this is our son and that he was born blind and by what means he now sees we do not know or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age, ask him, he will speak for himself. His parents said these things because they feared the Jews for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

The other ugly side of your miracle is when those who know your history won't vouch for you because they're afraid of being canceled. That's what happened. You might be listening online tonight and maybe you're gender confused and God's gonna touch your life and set your thinking straight.

Maybe you're in some kind of a prison, some kind of a place where you need to get out and God's gonna do a miracle and you go to those you love, you go to those who have known you most, if not all of your life and when they're asked about you, they will not vouch for the miracle that God has done in your life just because they fear being canceled. That's exactly what happened. How discouraging it could have been for this man that his mother and father won't stand for him.

His mother and father won't vouch for the miracle that's been done in his life just because they are afraid of being canceled by the religious order of that particular day. And so if God's gonna do a miracle in your life, number one, not everybody's gonna celebrate your transformation. Not everybody's gonna worship God with you and on the other side of your miracle, those that knew you and those that you loved and those that should be there and willing to vouch for you are going to draw back because they're afraid of the criticism or the circumstances or the consequences that are being imposed by their present day society.

And in John chapter five, let me finish with the story of, in John chapter five and beginning in verse eight of John chapter five, there goes my water, but that's all right. Jesus said to this man who had been 38 years waiting for a healing, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well. He took up his bed and walked and the day was the Sabbath.

And the Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath. "It's not lawful for you to carry your bed." Can you just imagine being in that man's place? He spent 38 years waiting for a healing, 38 years of rampant hopelessness, 38 years where everybody has given up on him. As a matter of fact, by the time Jesus comes, he says, I have nobody to help me get into the water.

Everybody has given up on this man and on his situation. Jesus just simply speaks to him and tells him to take up his bed and walk. And this is an amazing miracle.

And you would think the religious leaders of the day would be able to rejoice with him. But all they're concerned about is the fact that he's carrying his bed, his mat. He rolled it up, it's probably under his arm.

He's walking for the first time in 38 years. And they're all in a knot because he's carrying his bed, which they considered work on the Sabbath day. And the ugly side of your miracle is when the religious order of the day won't celebrate your miracle because it didn't happen their way or through them.

You can be sure if it had been one of the Pharisees that had spoken to him to get up and walk, they wouldn't be concerned about the mat. But it didn't happen through their religious system and it didn't happen their way. And religion has an ugly side to it.

When it's bereft of the mercy of God, it's bereft of the touch of God, the power of God, the compassion of God, religion can become a very ugly thing. And it can actually be used to condemn people that God has given a miracle and brought into a place of healing. And just, I was thinking, I know a young lady, I personally know a young lady who was attending a church in a wheelchair.

She was crippled, she was in a wheelchair. And in another place, another environment, another time, God gave her a miracle and raised her out of the wheelchair. She went back to visit her home church and walked in, walked in, she'd always rolled in.

And that's the person they knew. She walked into the church, but because the miracle didn't happen there and it didn't happen their way and it didn't happen under their leadership, they would not even acknowledge that she had been healed. Amazing what religion can do.

And to me, that's the ugly side of religion. When religion becomes proud and arrogant and has to be done through us or it can't possibly be God if it didn't happen through us. Because God obviously knows we're the vessel that he's using in this generation.

All the stench and the arrogance of religious pride that can't rejoice in somebody's miracle because it happened somewhere else. It happened through somebody else's voice, somebody else's ministry, or in some other way and in some other place. Perhaps they, I don't know the whole history, maybe they had anointed this young lady with oil or had prayed and she hadn't been raised at that time.

Because it happened at a later date and in another place, they couldn't celebrate it. And that's the ugly side of a miracle. And don't be disappointed if you get a miracle and you go into a church and you get a ho-hum and a yawn or people are not even interested in what happened to you because it didn't happen through them and through their ministry.

And so, if you're going to be touched of God tonight, if you're gonna have the miracle that God wants to give you, just be aware that not everybody else will be happy about your transformation. Not everybody else will join you in praising God for the things that he's done in your life or maybe in their lives. Some people that you trusted will draw back from you because they're afraid that if they share your testimony publicly, they too will be canceled.

Others, religious people will deny your miracle or deny it even happened or pretend it didn't happen because it didn't happen through them, it didn't happen through their lives. But no matter what awaits you

on the other side of your miracle, the miracle is still yours just for the asking. I've gone through everything I've talked to you about tonight, I've gone through it.

I don't wanna tell you all the circumstances but I know what it's like to have people not celebrate your transformation. I know what it's like to be in places where others were touched but they, for whatever reason, choose not to serve God or to praise him. I know what it's like when those you love and you trusted and who knew you before you came to Christ draw back and will not testify to the miracle that's happened in your life.

I know what it's like when religious people will draw you out or put you out of their presence because what God's doing in your life didn't come through their religion. I know all of it and I've experienced everything I've explained to you and shared with you tonight. But I also know this, no matter what happens on the other side of your miracle, the leopard didn't care, I don't care either.

No matter, let the doubters, let the cowards, let the religious bigots, let them do what they wanna do. But the miracle is still there and all you have to do is ask for it. Let me just read to you now from Isaiah 33, this is where I'm gonna close, beginning at verse 22.

For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us. Verse 23 says, your tackle is loosed. They could not strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail.

In other words, you have given up on your own journey. You have no more plans to get through the future. You don't have sufficient strength to go forward and you don't have a sail, I use the imagery of a sail.

You don't have any wind behind you, you have no reason, you have no impetus to go forward. You feel like a hopeless case, you feel like there's nothing left for you to do but cry out at the side of the road or in your case, the side of your bed, the side of your couch, the seat of your car, the park bench you're sitting on right now. There's nothing left for you to do but cry out to God.

And then he says, this is incredible. Then the prey of a great plunder is divided. In other words, what was won for you through the sacrifice of God's son on Calvary is now divided among those who are nobody, nothing, they have no strength, they have no power, they got no future in themselves.

There's nothing they can do but cry out to God. There's nothing you can do tonight but maybe pray my prayer and say, God, if what this man is saying is true, then I open my heart to you and I invite you to come into my life and be my Lord and Savior as well. And it finishes with this incredible statement.

The prey of a great plunder is divided. It's divided at the point where we have no strategy to go forward and the lame take the prey. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God.

It's the person who can't walk further, the person who doesn't know how to get out of their situation. They don't have a plan for the future. The song within them has died.

They hate what they have become. They don't see any way forward. They see no future.

But then they cry out to God and the miracle of life comes in to their physical being and they become a new creation in Christ Jesus. The old things pass away. The gates of the prison fall off their hinges.

The old bungee cords holding them to pass are caught by the blood of Jesus Christ. The old habits break. The old ways of thinking are gone.

And you walked out of that desert. You walked out of that place of impotence and powerlessness into this amazing new life that is given you in Christ Jesus, born again by the Spirit of God, given a reason to live, given a hope for the present, given freedom from the past, given a promise of eternal life in heaven through the Son of God, Jesus Christ. And we don't take this spoil and this victory because we're strong.

We take it because we can't walk. That's the people who get the victory. And on the other side of your miracle, you might not find a lot of friends, but you will find Jesus on the other side of your miracle.

You will find eternal life. You will find a reason to live. You will find a mansion in heaven with your name on the front door.

Hallelujah to the Lamb of God. Glory to the name of Jesus. So let the scorners scorn.

Let the mockers mock. Let the laughers laugh. Let the ignorers ignore us.

But praise be to God. We have a song within these earthen vessels that is eternal. It will never pass away.

We have a lamp that can't be extinguished, a source of life that can't go out, living water that flows from our inward parts, giving life to everything and everyone around us. Praise be to God. This world may not be willing to acknowledge it.

Our friends may turn away from us. Others may not join us in worship. But thanks be to God that I have one leper in the Bible that came back and shouted, Jesus, thank you for what you've done to my life.

Thank you for touching me. Thank you. You know, I can imagine how nice it would have been if there would have been 10.

What a worship service that would have been. But thank God there was still one. There was still one who would not be silent.

There was still one who came back and the Lord said, I'm gonna write this guy's story down in the words of eternal life that will never pass away. A million years from now, we'll still be hearing the story of this one man who made the choice to come back and worship God. The miracle is yours if you want it.

And it's not you that has to do the miracle. It's God that does the miracle for you. Praise be to God.

Oh, thank you. Praise God, thank you. It's God who does the miracle.

All you have to do is open your heart. Listen, listen, listen to me. I just said if.

That's 40 something years ago now. I just said if. If it's true.

So can you at least bring yourself to pray that tonight? If it's true, God. I open my heart. I invite you into my life to be my Lord and to be my Savior.

You can't save yourself. That's why God sent his son to a cross to die in your place and pay the price that needed to be paid for the wrong that you had done, the wrong that separated you from God and the wrong separated you from the life that God wanted to give you. So in order for God to give you that life, somebody had to pay the price for what you had done.

You had offended the Holy God. The way you lived, the way you thought, the way you spoke, the things you did. But God satisfied his desire for a price to be paid by putting the price on his own son.

And then gave you the promise that if you would believe that he died in your place and you would confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord, you would be saved. Saved from an eternity without God in a place where God is not. Saved from a life that is listless and hopeless and captivated and ever destined to go downward and brought into this incredible power of a new life in Jesus Christ.

All you have to do is just pray. Let me lead you in a prayer. There's nothing mystical about what I'm about to say.

I'm just helping you to pray. If you've never prayed before, you can just repeat the words after me, but I do ask that you make it your own prayer. Just make it personal as you say it.

Because God wants to give you a miracle tonight. God himself is tired of you being beaten up and wandering every hillside looking for a reason to live. He's tired of it and he wants to give you life.

I've come to give you life and that you may have it more abundantly. Those are the words that Jesus spoke over you. So pray this prayer with me.

Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for loving me. It's more than I deserve. But in any case, you do love me.

You love me enough to die for me. I want to live for you. I do.

You'll have to be my strength because I can't do this by myself. But I open my heart to you and I invite you to come into my life and be my Lord, my God, and my Savior. I will tell others about you.

I will speak your name. And I will be that person who comes back to worship you. No matter what anybody else does, my life and my song, Jesus will be for you.

I love you, Jesus. And I thank you for loving me. From this day forward, I will follow you in Jesus' name.

Now, if you prayed that and you meant that, as much of it as you could understand, just text the word decided on your phone to 51000. Decided to 51000. And let somebody from Times Square Church just get in touch with you via video.

Nobody's gonna bother you. Just to let you know what do I do now and how do I grow in an understanding of what I've done tonight. Let us help you with that.

And we're gonna return in just a moment and we're gonna have communion, which is a celebration of what Jesus did so you can have the eternal life and a meaningful life while you live on this earth.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/PQ11T4KOFNM.mp4>  
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