

Jesus: The Marriage of Word and Power

Jesus left his hometown, Nazareth, following their rejection of Him. He couldn't do mighty works there except for the few who believed.

So, the Lord turned His attention next to an itinerant ministry from village to village—focusing on teaching rather than miracles. It's easy to skip over this small reference in Mark, but it should grab our attention.

There was another occasion in Jesus' ministry when He also turned from the ministry of healing and miracles to teaching. Remember the Sermon on the Mount (recorded in Matthew 5 to 7)? Immediately preceding that sermon is the most extensive summary description of Jesus' power. Crowds came to Him from all over the region and far away and brought with them those with various diseases, severe pain, paralysis, seizures, and demonic possession and He healed them (Matthew 4:24–25).

But, Jesus abruptly broke away from doing miracles, went up on a mountainside, called His disciples to Him, and taught them. Why? Why would He break away from doing something with such evident visible results? Even today, crowds will come out for healing services but will stay away if only teaching is on the agenda.

Too often we seek for the Lord to do something for us rather than in us. We pray more for a change in our external circumstances than for transformation of our internal attitudes. But Jesus is more concerned with the kind of person we are on the inside than how things are going on the outside. He is far more interested in our bodies being His temple in which He dwells than what kind of house our bodies live in.

It is always tempting to think that a ministry of miracles is

superior to a ministry of teaching—but Jesus did both. The early church did as well—for the story of those first believers is that Jesus continued both to do and to teach through them (Acts 1:1).

The ministry of the gospel is most potent when the Word and power work together.

I compare some works of God to a microwave, where the result is rather instant, and others to an oven, where the process takes time. The microwave represents healing, deliverance, and miracles, while the oven represents wholeness, discipleship, and maturity. Our microwave view of prayer says to the Lord, “I want it now.” The oven may answer, “It takes time.”

The microwave involves the gift of faith, and the oven births perseverance. Both the microwave and the oven are integral parts of Jesus’ ministry, as they must also be today in the lives of His people. Our task is not to set one against the other.

In the villages of Galilee, Jesus focused on teaching. He knew that the miracles He did for individuals would benefit them during their own lifetimes, but His teaching would last for untold centuries. Today, we know by name only a handful of the people He healed, but we know the words He spoke.

The miracles of Jesus arose out of His compassion for human need and served to authenticate His identity as the Son of God. Knowing who He is, then, provides the greatest credence possible for what He taught. Thus, when Mark ended His gospel He noted that the preaching of the disciples—like the ministry of Jesus—was confirmed by the signs that accompanied it (Mark 16:20).

A Prayer: Lord Jesus, may I hunger as much for You to work in me as I do for You to work for me. Let me not minimize Your power to change my circumstances nor underrate the importance of the words You speak.

Excerpted from Dr. Wood's book, Fearless: How Jesus Changes Everything, available from Vital Resources.

George O. Wood *is the general superintendent of the Assemblies of God. For the original article, visit .*