Bold: Unleash Your Faith – Part 2

# Experiencing God’s Power

# (Matthew 9:29)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. We are continuing our series called “Bold: Unleash Your Faith.” Now, we started last week talking about a God who does miracles, a God who is our deliverer, and we looked at God's power over the forces of darkness. A power that he’s given to us who believe. He’s given us his authority, and so we can be bold, we can unleash our faith in Jesus name.

Today, I want to talk to you about tapping into the full potential of faith so that you would experience God’s power to do great things. Now, of course, if we experienced miracles every day, we might be tempted to call them Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday. You know, it’s just another day, and we take so much for granted; but the Bible does encourage us to live a life of faith, relying upon the supernatural power of God, so that we would experience God in a way that’s beyond human explanation. And so, I’m believing that today’s message not only has the potential, but the anointing of the Holy Spirit to build your faith beyond what you may have previously experienced.

As I introduce the topic, talking about our God who heals, I’ve got to boast in the Lord for a minute because this is something that he did in me. You see, Jesus revealed his miraculous healing power to me within a week of being filled with the Holy Spirit. One morning as I was in prayer, he told me he was going to heal me of my lactose intolerance; and that very week I didn’t need any more Lactaid milk, no more medication, because I was completely healed. And so, I absolutely 100% believe that God cares, that he talks to us, and that he performs miracles of healing today.

As a matter of fact, while I’m boasting about Jesus, it was just over a year later, after walking with God for just over a year that I was completely healed of a hyperthyroid condition that I’d been medicated for over 15 years. And even today, the doctor is still checking my thyroid levels, expecting it to reoccur, because he’s never seen a thyroid correct itself. And some of you, if you were with us last week, you remember how Karolyn testified to her heart condition correcting itself, that she no longer needs a pacemaker, and so I just want to encourage you to unleash your faith.

Today, we can still experience the miraculous power of God to heal, because he’s the same yesterday and today and forever. And so, miracles of healing are gifts according to the supernatural power of God; it’s his work, it’s his glory, and yet I don’t want to imply in any way that a life of faith is easy. You see, when you choose to unleash your faith, you’re literally removing the neutral option from your life. It’s like, you’re the vehicle and God is the fuel that keeps you going. And so, as long as you remain full of him, you’re empowered, because you’re the vehicle, but it’s your shifter, your gear selector, your steering column, and there’s no coasting in a life of faith. As a matter of fact, there’s not even a park or reverse position, because a life of faith is always full speed ahead. And so, as we talk about unleashing our faith it’s not a lifestyle for the faint of heart. In fact, sometimes when you’re walking in faith you won’t even feel full of faith, you may even feel a little anxiety, because walking in faith is a choice and not a feeling. Walking in faith requires taking a risk, it requires trusting God, because you never know exactly how everything’s going to work out. And so, we don’t want to rely upon our feelings, but we want to rely upon the goodness and the promises of God; because faith is a verb, it’s active, it’s a choice you make, it’s something you determine to do. And so, you boldly choose to unleash your faith, to have an attitude of expectancy, and you take steps that are consistent with what you’re believing God to do.

Jesus said it this way in Matthew chapter 9, he said, “According to your faith will it be done to you" (Matthew 9:29). And so, Jesus challenges us to go beyond the mundane, day in and day out routine of daily life, unleashing our faith, and striving to achieve a level of greatness that God had planned for those who follow him. In fact, that’s exactly what Jesus said in John's gospel, in chapter 14 he said,

“Anyone who has faith in me will do what I’ve been doing. He will do even greater things than these…” (John 14:12).

And so, what were those things that Jesus had been doing? Well, he healed the sick, he opened blind eyes, he healed deaf ears, he made the lame to walk, he raised the dead, and it’s that same power that’s available to us today. Jesus said, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you”. It’s his “incomparably great power for us who believe” because the Bible tells us “all things are possible with God” and so we know we serve a God, Ephesians chapter 3 says,

“Who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us” (Ephesians 3:20).

And that’s why we’re here today, that’s why we’re praying together, that’s why we’re worshiping together in God’s presence, because we serve a God whose power is at work within us. And so, when Jesus was talking about greater things, he wasn’t talking about fame or the magnitude, but he was talking about the quantity, he was talking about living a life that will have impact on generations to come. You know, just think about the man who led Billy Graham to Christ; it was the obedience of that one man to share the gospel that changed the course of history for thousands upon thousands of families. And so, for us to make a difference in the lives of others, we need to unleash our faith, opening ourselves to the potential of those greater things, where we would experience the power of God and let him make a difference through us.

Today I want to share with you three things, three keys to challenge you to unleash your faith so that you would experience God’s healing power in your life. And the first thing we’ve got to understand is that Jesus never performed a miracle that interfered with God’s plan. He knew better than to haphazardly alter the course of history and therefore he refused to prove himself and to perform tricks like a magician, but only did those miracles that would accomplish God’s will. In the same way, number one, we always want to pray according to God’s will.

## 1. Praying According to God’s Will

This is so important for us to understand when it comes to experiencing God’s power in our lives. In fact, the Bible records an occasion where Jesus chose to do a miracle, but then a second later he refused to perform a miracle even though it was within his power to do so. It’s the account of Jesus’ arrest at the Mount of Olives, a private garden where Jesus would often go to pray and find solitude. It’s a powerful illustration recorded in all four Gospels; Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell us that Jesus went deep into the garden with Peter, James, and John to pray. Mark tells us that he said to his disciples,

"The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!" Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. The men seized Jesus and arrested him” (Mark 14:41-46).

John gives us a little more detail, telling us that Peter with his usual boldness, mistakenly attempts to prove his devotion to Christ by engaging in a sword fight. John chapter 18, verse 10 tells us,

“Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" (John 18:10-11).

And so, Peter had the best of intentions, but really bad aim. You know, you can just imagine the chaos now as blood is spurting out of this guy’s head. I mean most of you guys know what it’s like to cut yourself shaving, and so you can just imagine how much of a mess there would be if you cut off your ear. Well, Jesus taking control of the situation, reprimands Peter, and says, "Hey, where’s the ear"? You know, “Who’s got the ear?”

Now, some of you, may have lost your glasses in a crowd, or maybe it was in a fight before you got saved or in the dark? And so, you can picture this, you’re on your hands and knees, you’re groping around, hoping that somebody doesn’t step on your glasses, right? And so, Peter cuts off the ear, it flies off somewhere, and Malchus is bleeding, he’s looking for his ear, he’s hoping that nobody steps on his ear. And anyway, the Bible tells us they found the ear, we don’t know where it was, but somebody gave Jesus the ear and Luke tells us,

“He touched the man's ear and healed him” (Luke 22:51).

And so, Jesus performs this amazing miracle, reattaching the ear, and bringing peace to a chaotic situation, before turning back to Peter and reprimanding him in Matthew chapter 26, verse 53 saying,

“Don’t you realize that I can call on my Father and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53).

And so, Jesus does this great miracle for Malchus, but then he doesn’t do a miracle for himself even though he could’ve. He says, “I could’ve instantly had at my disposal not just one legion, not just 6000 soldiers” but he says, “Peter, I could’ve had 72,000 angels, any of which would’ve done a much better job of defending me than you did with your ear cutting skills.” You see, here’s the thing, Jesus knew the Scriptures had to be fulfilled and that it wasn’t God’s will for him to be rescued. And so, Malchus experienced God’s power because it didn’t interfere with God’s plan and Jesus didn’t because it did!

Number one, we want to pray according to God’s will, and then the second key to opening the door to experiencing God’s healing power is that you’re earnestly seeking him...

## 2. Earnestly Seeking Him

You see, God doesn’t do miracles where there is no faith. In fact, the Bible records in Matthew’s gospel, chapter 13, where Jesus came to his hometown, verse 54 says,

“Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor." And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith” (Matthew 13:53-58).

So, we need to understand that it’s our faith that moves the heart of God. It’s our faith that matters, because our relationship with him begins with faith, it’s sustained by faith, and it’s our faith that keeps us connected to him. And so, God’s looking for faith, this is what he seeks. As a matter of fact, the Bible says in Hebrews chapter 11 that….

“Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Now, I wonder how many of you have ever had a job that you did well, but you didn’t like it? You know, maybe like washing dishes, now I’m not talking about putting them in the dishwasher, but actually going through the motions of scrubbing, rinsing, drying, and stacking. This was something that I did that for many years and I did it well, but you couldn’t tell by looking at the dishes whether I enjoyed washing them or not, whether I was happy or whether I was grumbling and complaining.

Well, that’s not the kind of relationship that God wants to have with his people either. You know, where we just kind of go through the motions, trying to keep the 10 Commandments, giving 10%, and doing good things. But God wants us to believe, to seek him, and to be involved with him personally. He wants to connect with us on an emotional level. He wants us to love him, to need him and depend on him. And that’s why he responds to our faith, rewarding those who earnestly seek him. As a matter of fact, I want to show you several more examples.

The Bible tells us in Matthew chapter 9, that there was a woman who couldn’t stop bleeding, she’s embarrassed, she’s not allowed to worship; but then one day she saw Jesus walking down the street and verse 20 says this,

“Woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed." Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment” (Matthew 9:20-22).

Another time, Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem and Luke tells us in chapter 17,

“As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him — and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well" (Luke 17:12-19).

In Luke chapter 18, “As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." Verse 38 tells us,

“He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord, I want to see," he replied. Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you" (Luke 18:35-42).

You see, it’s our faith that moves the heart of God. It pleases him when you put your faith in him. It pleases him when you say, “Father, I’m trusting you to restore this relationship. I’m depending upon you to heal me. I’m relying upon you to provide for me, to help me through this whatever...” And so, when you come to him believing that he rewards those who seek him, he’s pleased, and you’ll begin experiencing God’s healing power.

And so, number one, we’re praying according to God’s will, number two, we’re earnestly seeking him, and then, number three, there’s an element of desperation that moves the heart of God.

## 3. An Element of Desperation

Again, I want to share with you the stories of three different people whose lives really had become unmanageable. They were desperate and yet their lives were radically changed because they came to Jesus in that desperation really needing a miracle. Each of these three, a man with leprosy, a Roman officer, and Peter’s family teach us how to experience God’s power when our own lives are falling apart. All three of these are found in Matthew chapter 8 and so I’ll begin in verse one as Jesus came down the mountainside.

“Suddenly, a man with leprosy approached him and knelt before him. "Lord," the man said, "if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean." Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" And instantly the leprosy disappeared. Then Jesus said to him, "Don't tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy. This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed" (Matthew 8:1-4, New Living Translation).

Now, it’s easy to miss the significance of what happened here, because we don’t have a problem with leprosy in America today. But in Bible times, it was an extremely contagious disease and yet Jesus allowed this man to approach him and he did the unthinkable; he reached out and touched him saying, “Be healed! Now go to the priest and let him examine you.” In other words, “Go get yourself checked out, testify to the power of God, let the authorities verify your miracle.” You see, sometimes when you need to experience the power of God in your life, miracles and obedience go hand-in-hand. Today, there are some of you who are looking for a miracle, but you’re not willing to obey God. And so, you need to know that if Jesus was willing to reach out and touch a man with leprosy, he’s willing to reach out and touch you too, but your obedience is important.

Next, let’s look at the faith of a man who came to Jesus asking for help because his servant was suffering greatly. Now, usually slaves wouldn’t be considered worthy of much concern, but this man’s attitude was different and resulted in him experiencing the power of God. Verse five says, this Roman officer came and pleaded with Jesus,

"Lord, my young servant lies in bed, paralyzed and in terrible pain." Jesus said, "I will come and heal him." But the officer said, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into my home. Just say the word from where you are and my servant will be healed” (Matthew 8:5-8, New Living Translation).

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed, because this Roman officer not only understood the authority of God and the power of God, but he understood the grace of God too. He knew he wasn’t worthy and if he were to receive anything from God, if he were to experience this miracle, that it would surely be by the grace of God. Well, in verse 13 Jesus said,

"Go back home. Because you believed, it has happened." And the young servant was healed that same hour” (Matthew 8:13, New Living Translation).

You see, Jesus was moved because of this man’s desperation, his faith, and his compassion for the well-being of another. The Roman officer teaches us that love, that concern for the well-being of another, is a key to experiencing a miracle in your life.

Next, Matthew tells us that Peter’s mother-in-law had a fever, meaning that she had a serious illness, and the Bible says, when Jesus arrived at Peter’s house, he touched the woman’s hand and verse 15 tells us,

“The fever left her. She got up and prepared a meal for him” (Matthew 8:14-15, New Living Translation).

No sooner did she receive her miracle then did she begin serving Jesus, because experiencing God’s power and serving Jesus go hand-in-hand. Experiencing God’s power doesn’t come through being served but through serving. In fact, Jesus said it this way,

“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all" (Mark 10:43-44).

Today, if you’ve come here thinking “I need a miracle, or I really need God to move in my life” you’re in the right place, because God wants you to experience his power. He wants to bless you so that you can walk in obedience, so that you can reach out to others with compassion, and so you can live a life of service.

Your miracle is within your reach and it’s for that reason when we pray, it may just be a mustard seed of faith, but when we pray, we pray with every bit of faith that we have. And I’ll tell you, nothing can stop me from believing in the miraculous power of God to heal, because I’ve experienced it, I’ve seen it, I believe he can and I believe he’ll do it again. And so, even if he doesn’t do what I think he should, when or how I think he should do it, I’m still going to believe because my faith isn’t based on what he does or doesn’t do, my faith is based on who he is. And so, as we close, we’re going to pray, we’re going to praise him, because we serve a God who does great things.

Pastor John Talcott

Christ's Community Church

303 West Lincoln Avenue

Emmitsburg, MD 21727

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[www.cccaog.org](http://www.cccaog.org)

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