Do you believe in Miracles? Where have you heard that question before?

In 1980 meeting capacity of 8,500 people, the Olympic Center Field House in Lake Placid, NY was packed. The home crowd waved U.S. flags and sang songs like “God Bless America”. The game didn’t air on any national broadcasting networks, so our nation sat by their radios for a play by play or worse they waited for the rebroadcast to take place. Our US Men’s Olympic Ice Hockey Team played against The Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had won the gold in 6 of the last 7 Olympics. With 5 seconds left in the game, Sportscaster Al Michaels says, “Do you believe in miracles?! YES!!!!” The US performed a “Miracle on Ice” and won the match 4-3. The US Team went on to beat Finland and won the gold medal in the 1980 Olympics.

For those of us that weren’t even twinkles in our parents eyes yet, we might know this story from the 2004 movie “MIRACLE”. That was an exciting time in our nations history but I hope I don’t hurt your feeling when I say this… I don’t think God cared which team won that game.

When we talk about believing in miracles maybe my mind is overly churchy but it goes straight to some of the miracles that Jesus did throughout his 3 years of public ministry. During his 3 years there are 37 miracles recorded in the Bible. We know that there are more because John 20:30 tells us, “Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.” So you know what that means? Some of the people He told “Do not tell anyone” actually followed directions...

John 20:31 goes on to say, “But these things are written so that you will believe that Jesus is the Christ, God’s Son, and that believing, you will have life in his name.”

I love so many of these stories of the miracles Jesus did and the truths they teach us!

1) Miracles happen when we understand that Jesus cares about our everyday needs!

I loved that Jesus showed up at the wedding and saw this beautiful new family celebrating. He saw the joy of the bride and groom and the love they shared and the family that supported them. His Momma pointed out to him in private that they were going to be publically disgraced from this evening on because they didn’t have enough wine to serve all their guests. So he chose for his first miracle to bless this new family and their
future marriage. He turned water into wine, not because he wanted to take care of the drunken people later, but because he wanted this family to be blessed in their new marriage. He didn’t want that weight of embarrassments to be laid on them.

You see… Jesus cares for all our needs, not just the spiritual ones. He cares for our needs large and small. Nothing is too ordinary to pray about. He sees every time each sparrow lands on the ground. He keeps track of the number of hairs on your head. He calls the stars by name. He is a great God who is too big not to be concerned about the everyday things of life. Jesus shows he cares when he performs miracles!

(SLIDE 6) 2) Miracles happen when we understand that Jesus transforms our everyday experiences.

Of the 37 miracles recorded in the Scriptures, 29 of those represent healing that Jesus did in people’s lives. Some of those miracles tell us that there were more people involved than just one. For example, Luke 17:11-19 tells us of 10 lepers Jesus was passing on his way from one town to another. “They called out, saying, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!’ When he saw them, he said to them, ‘Go and show yourselves to the priests.’ And as they went, they were made clean.” By going to see the priests these lepers had to believe God was going to do something big. He was going to change their normal experiences of seeing the priests and being turned away from worship. Instead, this time, Jesus healed them as they walked in faith.

Jesus didn’t just come to give us info. He came to give us a transformation. He changes things. He has a way of taking the ordinary and making it extraordinary. He didn’t just come to bring new ideas; he came to make new people. Our God is in the transformation business.

The world wants us to get a new hairdo or a new wardrobe, Society wants us to get a better job or learn a new skill. People want to lose weight or get a face-lift. But Jesus doesn’t want to change your looks; he wants to change your heart. He doesn’t want to give you a new suit; he wants to make you a new person. He doesn’t want to rearrange you; he wants to transform you. You want to look better on the outside, and he wants to make you new on the inside. And when transformation takes place, it shows on the outside. When Jesus healed any of the 35 people Scriptures tell us that he healed, they were changed from the inside out. Yeah he might have healed their physical ailments, but he also brought transformation to their souls! Any of ya’ll who have been
healed of cancer (whether it was through treatments or not) cannot tell me that the faith you had to have during those difficult storms didn’t bring a new view on faith and a new hop in your step when the Doctors told you “The Cancer is Gone!”

(SLIDE 7) 3) Miracles happen when we understand that Jesus extravagantly provides for our everyday requests. Today’s scripture was read to us from John 11:39-44. Where we enter the story Jesus is about to have the team of people roll away the stone to the cave where Lazarus’ dead body had been laying for 4 days. A few days before his death, his sisters had sent word to Jesus that he should come home to be with them, I’m sure with the idea that Jesus would heal him as soon as he got there. When Jesus got word He said to His disciples, “This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” Though Jesus loved this family dearly, He chose to stay put for 2 more days.

This DEFINITELY wasn’t the reaction Martha or Mary wanted to happen. I imagine Martha was frantically running around the house doing whatever she could to help Lazarus get better, while Mary sat with him talking to him and trying to make him feel at peace in his pain. They probably waited and waiting for Jesus to show up and wept for the days following Laz’ death wondering where Jesus was. They were living in the moment, the here and now. However, Jesus had Kingdom vision. His kingdom vision didn't discount his love for this family, he just recognized the bigger picture, knowing they would understand in the end, preferring to bring God glory more than have it their way right then. Maybe you have been in this predicament... Maybe you want God to show up and fix the struggles in your life right now! I know I’ve had these moments and still do. Scripture tells us in Isaiah 55:8, that “God’s thoughts aren’t our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways”. So what makes us think that God’s timing is the same as ours? Even though you don't know God's plans for your future, would u prefer to be apart of the Kingdom vision to bring God glory through your trials? Or not have any struggle, yet also not be able to testify God's glory for your life?

As they got close to Bethany, Martha caught word and ran out to meet Jesus on the outskirts of town. Maybe, you can remember from Luke 10, the feisty, distracted Martha who complained to Jesus that her sister wasn’t helping prepare the meal for Him in their home. I can imagine Martha coming to Jesus with this same
tone, frustrated, hurt and offended. She was questioning Jesus’ character as well as His love for Lazarus. As soon as Martha was to Jesus she said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” Jesus looks at Martha after she says this and simply says, “Your brother will rise again.” I can picture him speaking with complete compassion but letting her know that it won’t happen like she thinks. His thoughts are different, and on a much grander scale. Martha quickly replies, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”

Rather than reckoning with loss, she is trying to blame God like many of us do… Jesus knows Martha’s spirit and her intentions and with that He replies, telling Martha who He really is. Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” Do you believe this Martha? Do you believe that Jesus brings life to the dead?

The more I studied this statement and question, I realized that Jesus was not desiring to confuse Martha, but was desiring to know the condition of her heart in this time of loss. Jesus wanted to know if even though He hadn’t shown up in time to heal Lazarus the way she thought He would, did she still believe and trust Him?

She replied to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.” By not prying or questioning God more, she is displaying the complete trust she has in Jesus. Martha proceeded to let her sister know that Jesus was in town and wanted to talk to her.

Mary, surrounded by all their company took off to meet Jesus and the crowd followed. Again from Luke 10, we have a picture of Mary devoting herself to Jesus, by sitting at His feet, listening to every word she could. This time, when Mary reached Jesus, she again fell at his feet. Differently than her sister, Mary was wrestling and mourning the reality of the loss. Even through they said the same words to Jesus, I’m imagining Mary’s body language and tone was much different. Mary’s was weeping, and through the deep gasps for air in between wails, she said, “Lord, My brother has died.” These words were spoken with gentleness to the point that you know she is questioning how this could have happened as each individual word spoken aloud. By falling at the feet of Jesus from the beginning, Jesus can recognize that Mary still believes in His goodness and truth, without having to ask her as He did Martha. Rather, Jesus is filled with emotion when he witnesses this
event with Mary and also the crowd mourning His dear friend.

Jesus wept with them. Jesus cried with them, revealing his personal agony with the death of Lazarus. Scholars explain that not only was Jesus crying because of the loss of Lazarus, They say Jesus cried because of death. Jesus was angry that sin ever entered the picture and that death was the affect of it.

During His weeping, skeptics realized how much he loved Lazarus, but they also questions why Jesus hadn’t done something. This troubled Jesus greatly and He asked where the tomb was. When Jesus was shown to the tomb, he called some to roll away to stone. Martha very quickly spoke up to remind Jesus that Lazarus had been in there for 4 days decomposing and that he “stunketh” as the KJV describes. I can imagine Jesus just leaning over to Martha, making eye contact and said, “Oh Martha, didn’t I tell you if you believed you would see the glory of God?” Rather than responding, she continued to tell them to roll away the stone. I’m sure she had no idea how God’s glory was going to be revealed and that today was the day it would happen, but she was likely intrigued to see what is about to take place!

Jesus prayed in that moment, declaring He knows that God always hears Him, but He spoke this prayer aloud praying that those surrounding Him would witness this miracle and believe that He is I AM, Jesus is the Son of God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He prayed to bring focus to the crowd of witnesses. Jesus prayed, let them hear, see and believe in me.

Then Jesus yelled out, “Lazarus come out!” You can imagine what happened next… Wrapped tightly in cloth from his head to toe, Lazarus stumbled out of the tomb. Out of darkness into light; Dead and now alive. A miracle has just taken place! Jesus told them to unbind him and let him go.

Who knows what Mary and Martha were hoping and praying for when Jesus got to Bethany, but I seriously doubt they thought Jesus was going to do such as extravagant miracle and raise their brother from the dead! He didn’t come in time to keep Lazarus alive but rather knew if he died and then Jesus could bring him back to life, people would turn to God, believe and give God the glory for this miracle they witnessed.

(SLIDE 8) 4) When miracles happen, they make us want to believe and praise God!

I’m sure Lazarus, his family and all of the community were blown away from this miracle and were
rejoicing and praising Jesus for RAISING LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD!! John 11:45 actually tells us that,

(SLIDE 9) “many of the Jews who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.”

Luke 17:15-16 tells us the response of one of the lepers when Jesus healed 10 LEPERS.

(SLIDE 10) “One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him.” He was blown away at the miracle of this type of healing in his life. He was no longer an outcast in the community, he was able to eat, work and play along with his friends and family. This man had no other reaction than to worship God for this miracle!

When Jesus did turn water into wine, he didn’t just do it for the bride and groom, rather he took the 6 jars of water, holding around 180 gallons and made all of that into wine. God never gives just enough; He always gives superabundantly!

(SLIDE 11) John 2 says, “Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and HIS DISCIPLES BELIEVED IN HIM!”

Sometimes things can seem to be going just awful but God pulls out a miracle and things miraculously turn around and all the people are filled with amazement and filled with great belief and courage.

We gather to worship. We united around prayers. We sing with anticipation of God hearing us. We pray with trust to a merciful God. We are so filled with faith and full of hope believing that in a matter of time God will send an answer. But God doesn’t always come as quickly as we want an answer. And God’s answer doesn’t always come in the form of what we are looking for. But when miracles do happen, when our prayers are answered in God’s timing and God’s way, we are often overwhelmed with the amount of blessings they bring.

Jesus is in the business of turning water into wine, sinners into saints, fear into courage, sickness into healing, sorrow into joy, defeat into victory, despair into hope and death into life! Jesus is in the miracle business and we can know God has amazing plans for our lives because he chooses to engage in life with us so closely.