

THE MAN WITH THE MIRACLE EAR!

John 18:1-10

[Matthew 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50-51]

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Introduction:

The four Gospel records, **Matthew, Mark, Luke,** and **John**, taken together, present a comprehensive portrait of Jesus. Each is somewhat selective, and includes the material designed to contribute to the major focus of the individual Gospel record. Only the Holy Spirit knows why each is so structured.

But many events in the life of Jesus, including almost all His miracles are recorded in two or three of the Gospel records. Interestingly, only the **Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke**, [who see the life of Jesus in a similar way], record the **Transfiguration, His Gethsemane Prayer, and His Teaching on the Second Coming.**

Only **Matthew, Mark, and John** record the **Miracle of Jesus Walking on the Water.** But **all four Gospels** include the **Feeding of the 5,000.**

It is curiously interesting that the **Birth of Jesus, His Teaching on the Kingdom through Parables, and His Declaration of the Beatitudes** are recorded in only **Matthew and Luke.** But there is **one** additional miracle that is recorded only in **Luke's** Gospel record, but the setting for that miracle is included in **all four** Gospel records. It must have special significance!

THE BIBLICAL SETTING

Jesus had served the Last Supper to His disciples. It was night in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus had gone there with His disciples. As they slept, He came to that crisis moment when He prayed the prayer of all prayers, saying, "**Nevertheless, Father, not My will, but Your will be done.**" He awakened the sleeping disciples, and announced to them that the time of His betrayal had come.

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The quiet of the Garden was broken by the sound of an approaching group of people. Along the twisting trails, with their lanterns and torches like giant fireflies, and with swords and clubs, and the slinking Judas at the head, came the squadron of troops to assist the officers of the Temple, sent from the Chief Priest and the Pharisees. They came to arrest Jesus.

The story of the **Man with the Miracle Ear** is found in **all four Gospel records.** Each, however, present the account a little differently.

Matthew, Mark, and John record the act of one of Jesus' disciples using a sword to cut off the ear of the servant of the High Priest. It is only **John** who tells us the name of the servant was **Malchus**, and further, it is only John who

indicates that it was Peter who cut off the ear of Malchus. Only **Luke**, the Beloved Physician, records the healing of that ear.

Matthew and Mark tell us that they came with **swords and clubs**, but **Luke** is not interested in what the unruly crowd carried. **Curiously**, it is **John's** record that fascinates me.

*"Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, **came with lanterns and torches, and weapons.**"*

(John 18:3)

The Old Testament record is clear, for Isaiah declares: "**Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you...The LORD will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory...the LORD will be your everlasting light.**" (Isaiah 60:1, 19, 20)

It is amazing to me that the Chief Priests and the Pharisees who knew the language of the Old Testament needed lanterns and torches to find the Light of the

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World. I can imagine the report of the Captain of the troops as he reported to Caiaphas. The dialogue may have gone something like this:

Caiaphas: “Well, I see you were successful in arresting that rabble-rouser from Nazareth! How did it go?”

Captain: “Well, fine, I suppose, but something troubled me, and still does!”

Caiaphas: “Just what is it that troubled you?”

Captain: “Everything went according to plans, except for that ear.”

Caiaphas: “What ear? What do you mean?”

Captain: “Well, this big fellow, ‘Peter’ I think they call him, took out a sword...quick as lightning...and cut off the right ear of your servant. We might have expected some resistance, but it was not the resistance that bothers me. It’s that ear.”

Caiaphas: “What do you mean...that ear?”

Captain: “That fellow called ‘Jesus’ was calm and caring, and He just picked up the ear and put it back on the servant’s head like it had never been cut off...no blood, no scar...Yes, Sir, I saw it! It’s that ear that bothers me! I can’t look at the servant without being troubled at just why we had to arrest Jesus Who healed that ear. He’s a man with a miracle ear.”

Caiaphas: “Well...forget it...we have Him now!”

Captain: “I can’t! It’s that ear...it troubles me! The Man Jesus was different. It was difficult to arrest Him. I can’t get over that ear...it still troubles me!”

But the major focus of this interesting entry in the record of all four Gospel recorders is not on a man whose

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impulsiveness flashed with lightning speed to cut off a man’s ear. It is not to be found in one man’s noble attempt to defend Jesus. Nor does it center on the singular act of healing a physical wound. Rather, the dynamic emphasis must focus on the caring heart of Jesus.

He was not an opportunist, doing something to prove His power in order to fend off the troops...just the God Who cares!

His was not an act of desperation, diverting attention away from His accusers to avoid being arrested...just the God Who cares!

No! The focus is where it must be...on Jesus, the God Who cares!

When life’s circumstances become difficult for us, when the tide of human dilemma crashes thunderously over our frail lives and we don’t know what way to turn, when the press and the stress and the distress of life wraps its tentacles of pressure around us, we need to understand that Jesus is the God Who cares!

There are three dimensions of “caring” to which this message points. And as Christians, we need to understand all three. If there are people in the sound of this message who do not know Jesus, you need to listen carefully, that you too may come to know the God Who cares.

1. HIS PROVIDENTIAL CARE IS UNIVERSAL.

Mark 4:35-41

One day, when Jesus was near the Sea of Galilee, He used parables to teach Kingdom truth. After explaining the meaning of the parable to His disciples, He said that they should get into a boat and go to the other side of the Sea. As they began the trip, Jesus, being tired, fell asleep.

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A very dangerous, life-threatening storm suddenly came up. The disciples, fearful for their lives, awakened Jesus, and asked that familiar question: “*Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?*” Jesus simply rebuked the wind, and spoke to the sea, “*Peace, be still!*” And it was calm. But did we pass so quickly over that tiny entry in Mark’s account? “*And other little boats were also with Him.*” It is easy to understand that the boat in which Jesus was sleeping was in no danger. And from that there is a fantastic lesson for all who love and follow Jesus. But what about those in those “*other little boats?*” The same storm threatened their lives, but the same calming of the storm touched their lives too! And that is convincing!

Eighteenth century England was about as low as any nation can become without total collapse. Drunkenness, immorality, murder, child abuse, male chauvinism that resulted in terrible degrading of women, and crimes of every conceivable kind had England on the verge of total collapse. But God moved in the heart of a couple of brothers who were attending Oxford University. John and Charles Wesley were raised up by our Lord, and used in such a powerful way that quite literally, England was saved from becoming but a tiny, insignificant blur on the pages of world history. From his father’s tombstone to the far-flung fields of the British Isles to the northern mines and factories...John Wesley proclaimed the powerful message of salvation from sin and the call of God to live a holy life. So radical was the mighty revival, so sweeping the moving of God, that down in the coalmines, the donkeys used to pull the coal carts did not know how to respond to the reformed kindnesses of their masters. When God moves into a community, it affects every segment of society. Yes, His **providential care is universal.**

Providential Care does not mean salvation of the soul, but it does mean that God’s love is unconditional!
It allows people the time and opportunity to come to

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know Jesus. Graciously, and mercifully, God withholds His judgment on the vilest of people. (Read Ecc. 8:11-12) Here is God’s preventient, or preventing Grace! Remember the Man with the Miracle Ear?

2. HIS PERSONAL CARE IS CONDITIONAL. Mark 5:21-43

On another day Jesus, with His disciples, was in the region of the Gadarenes, where He encountered a demon possessed man, and cast out the demons, who immediately entered into some pigs and caused the pigs to go into the sea and drown. Soon thereafter, Jesus and His disciples went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, where he was met by Jairus, one of the rulers of the Synagogue. Apparently Jairus knew about, and believed in the miracle-working power of Jesus, because he fell at the feet of Jesus, and begged Jesus to come home with him, and heal his very sick little daughter. Mark records that Jesus immediately went with Jairus, even though a great group of people followed along.

But as they were going along the road, Jesus was interrupted by a woman who for 12 years had suffered with a serious physical problem. She reached out her hand and touched His garment, and Jesus stopped. The woman was healed. But can you imagine the sudden frustration that must have overwhelmed Jairus. His daughter was dying, and Jesus had agreed to go with him to heal her, but stopped because a woman touched His garment!

It was October, 2001, and the devastating news came to our family. Our grandson, Tyler Secor, just past his 11th birthday was diagnosed with Ewing’s

Sarcoma, one of the most aggressive and difficult kinds of cancer. It is a frightening word...a word of desperation...a word of near hopelessness. His tumor was the size of a large orange, situated in the lower right

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groin area. Chemotherapy was begun almost immediately, but the prognosis was not good. The world of medical science gathered together all its resources in an attempt to treat this young man. Prayer was sought around the world. Literally thousands of God's people were praying. One day as I sat in my home office reading and studying the Scriptures, I felt the urge to get down before God. There, all alone, God dealt with my personal faith. Did I really believe? Finally, the Holy Spirit ministered to me in a powerful way, and assured me that the Great Physician had touched Tyler and healed him. I bore witness to that firm belief, and today he is cancer-free! Does God always heal? Not as we believe He should...according to our wishes. But He **DOES** heal when it is His sovereign will. It is conditional on our asking, and on our believing, and on His will! James reminds us: *"You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.!"* (James 4:2-3)

Personal Care does not mean God shows favoritism, but it does mean that trust in Jesus is an evidence of a relationship with Him! It means that Jesus cares for each one of His own, and He is not restricted by our timetables or our sense of urgency. Nothing takes Him by surprise, and He is always there for us. But it requires faith in the midst of life's circumstances...whatever they may be! Remember the Man with the Miracle Ear?

3. HIS POTENTIAL CARE IS AVAILABLE. Matthew 6:25-34

Jesus was on the grassy hillside, preaching the greatest sermon ever delivered to people. We call it *The Sermon on The Mount*. In the course of His teaching, or preaching as some prefer, He began to emphasize the imperative of putting God at the very center, the heart of our lives, and allowing Him to be in absolute control over all that we are, all that we do, and all that we have. He came to that vital part of His message when He drew His

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listeners into the truth that this life's worries are literally swallowed up in the promise of God's loving care. Those magnificent words of Jesus are forever thrilling:

"Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"

(Matthew 6:30)

For those of us who have lived in Northern Indiana, we are accustomed to our Amish friends. Many of us have personal acquaintances, and perhaps some even have family members who are a part of the Amish community. But if you know something about the Amish people, you know that they prefer a simple lifestyle. They do not enjoy many of the accouterments of technology that so many of us have, enjoy, and have even come to depend on. For example, we so easily take for granted the electrical power that is so vital to many of the conveniences we enjoy in our homes. What is amazing is that one can drive mile after mile on some of the paved roads in Northern Indiana and note the dozens of Amish homes along that road. But on one side or the other of the road will be the tall poles and the wires that carry the electricity. It is so readily available...but so ineffective because people refuse to connect to it! How foolish, some might say. How tragic, others might say. And whatever your evaluation or personal feeling, it is their choice, and as Christians, we respect them for it.

Potential Care does not mean God is a "cosmic bellhop," but it does mean He is always available to care for His children when they have a need, and call on Him, and this is true even though they don't always know they have a need. Jesus continued His instruction, noting that *"Your heavenly Father know that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."* (Matthew 6:32-33) Remember the Man with the Miracle Ear?

SUMMARY-CONCLUSION

1. God's Providential Care is Universal. When He is active in the lives of His people, even the vilest of the vile, the most wretched of all sinners, are the beneficiaries of His gracious care. It is not His **Saving Care** or **Saving Grace**, but it allows people time to consider the greatness of God and His available mercy, love, and grace.

2. God's Personal Care is Conditional. Like Jairus and the very sick woman, we come to Jesus in faith and trust, believing Him for His mercy, love, and grace, and enter into a redeemed relationship with Him.

3. God's Potential Care is Available. In simple trust we come to Him, knowing that He is fully able to provide for our every need in life. Grace to walk the pathways of obedience, and grace to carry us into His eternal presence.

What is God saying to you today? On the surging sea when the storms are all around, do you sense His presence? On the way to your most frightening moment, are you willing to let God work it out in His way...and not yours? In the midst of your desperation, have you learned to connect up with Jesus? Trust Him!