

Why do we call it a miracle, when it seems natural?

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It's a miracle, we say...

*when a couple we know, who waited long, fall pregnant;
when someone with terminal illness is healed, completely;
when we enjoy our chapel, unexpectedly afforded and built by an initially very small congregation of less than 60 members;
when our congregation grows unexplainably;
when an addicted person is rehabilitated;
when our prayers are answered again, and again;
when our children are safe from drugs and promiscuity;
when our young adults and young couples flock to church and insist on having more responsibilities and work for the Lord;
when we leave church on Sundays spiritually nourished and quenched by Word and Sacrament;
when we see how we and our fellow Christians are growing in the Lord;
when the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, is the word of God.*

Yes, we are a sophisticated and educated bunch in our congregation. World class scientists and technologists joined our community. Well educated and blessed men and women with responsible work in business, labour and government share the fellowship of every hard working fellow Christian.

We know we have to work hard and live wisely, even though we depend on the Lord's provision. The couple who are pregnant now, did see a medical specialist and the lady cured from cancer did receive chemo therapy. The building was funded because God's children were generous and passionate about the project. The rehabilitated alcoholic and drug addict went to a Christian rehab centre and we do our best to warn our kids against drugs and promiscuity. We made our young adults feel welcome and taught them to excel in God's work. We work hard at Biblical, expository preaching and teaching and encourage one another to participate in learning and growing in God's Word.

So, why do we thank the Lord for miracles if we did our best and worked hard to accomplish this, even as we are looking with great interest for guidance in the Scriptures? Is it not our clever and hard working ways that caused the wonderful outcomes? Yet we do with much passion thank God on Sundays and on any occasion of prayer and praise, for his miraculous wonders in our lives and our church.

Yes, we use the word *miracle* to describe a whole range of wonders, from the gains of science and technology to the awe-inspiring "mystery", to our downright amazement, when we see our children's growth and development and prosperity.

We do well when we always begin with the Bible and look there for the answer to our question: Are these things miracles, signs and wonders - or simply scientifically explainable events? Well, the Scriptures are full of amazing events where God is portrayed as working supernaturally in human history and as personally involved with the details of the lives of his people. The Bible is completely clear in displaying God's providential power in both ordinary and extraordinary ways.

The God of creation made the world and still commands the forces of nature. That is not only a natural phenomenon but also clearly a super natural divine intervention.

The God of Abraham and Sarah, of Isaac and Jacob guided and provided in answering their prayers in surprisingly, inconceivable ways.

The God of Moses appeared in a burning bush, in fire and smoke, parted the waters, and provided manna and quail and water for his people in the wilderness.

The God of the prophets spoke through them and comforted, challenged and rebuked God's people - at times demonstrating a power that incurred holy fear.

The gospels also tell of the healing and deliverance miracles of Jesus and of the greatest miracle and mystery ever experienced by mankind - the virgin birth, conquering death and glorious resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The risen Christ poured out the Spirit on his Church, he appeared to the apostle Paul and the Bible tells us of God's mighty acts in the days of the apostles and the first Church.

As Presbyterians we, since the time of the reformation, viewed every experience of life as a whole as reminding us of God's creative presence and providence: as sacramental, miraculous and a mystery. The reformers taught us to look for the miraculous in the created order, in every way that God provides for our health, our safety, our wellness - and most all providing the miracle of having faith in the Son, of receiving salvation and of living in the power of the Spirit, which is the power of the resurrected Saviour.

In our age we experience both the incredible accomplishments of science and a new hunger for an experience of the supernatural, the spiritual, and of the divine love, power and might of God. We continue, as reforming Christians and as Presbyterians, to believe in the power of prayer and we believe God can and does work in both natural and supernatural ways every day.

In fact, we actually believe that what is natural, or accomplished through science and technology, through medicine, hard work, careful wisdom and prudent living are only possible through divine creativity, God's unexplained work and provision in every aspect of our lives. We believe that both science and human accomplishment through hard work, are part of God's providence for us and in us.

If we believe that God by his grace and mercy and through our faith provides for our eternal salvation, we also believe in and know his presence with us in every facet of life, in suffering and amidst challenges and pain.

We believe that nothing is impossible with God. That the same God whom we praise for the forgiveness of our sins, and for receiving the very treasures of heaven through the mystery of feasting on Christ and his love, that the same God will now, till the end and at the end, care for us in every aspect of life, as he provides through the natural gifts the supernatural wonders, and through the super natural wonders, grants us daily, natural experiences of life, his love and his mercy.

Nothing is impossible with God and everything is possible with God.

Through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord and his grace and his work through the Spirit - our God reigns and our God provides according to his divine wisdom, will and love.

He naturally provides mysteriously and miraculously!

Soli Deo Gloria!