**Thesis:** What makes a miracle a miracle? We often consider miracles to be events that are extraordinary, improbable, or even impossible. Whether it’s a Christmas miracle in our favorite Hallmark movie or the miracle of birth, we see them as inexplicable phenomena meant to inspire. When Jesus performs miracles, they may be inconceivable to us. But in reality, they’re the most natural events as creation is made subject to its creator - just the way all things were meant to be. But that doesn’t make them any less extraordinary. Jesus’ miracles were grand displays of his glory that proved his power, sparked curiosity, and inspired faith. Though turning water into wine was Jesus’ first, it certainly wouldn’t be the last as he prepared to glorify the Father through his life.

**Introduction:** You’re listening to the Jesus Podcast, a year of stories showcasing the depth of Christ’s love and the glory of God’s truth. I’m \_\_\_\_ your host from Pray.com. It’s great to be with you. Don’t forget to take a second to follow the podcast to stay up to date with all of these captivating stories.

**Context:** This week we’re continuing our look at Jesus’ first miracle of turning water into wine at a wedding in Cana. What could have been a disastrous day that led to years of shame for a young couple was prevented by the loving work of Jesus. But this miracle wasn’t just for the benefit of the direct recipients. Throughout his ministry, Jesus allowed others to participate in miracles, like he does with the servants who filled the jars with water. While he could have easily filled any of the vessels at the celebration with wine, he chose to include those around him. This type of hands-on approach was meant to demonstrate God’s desire to include us in his plans and is a crucial tool for the development of the faith of his disciples. In the second half of our story, we’ll find that the grace of participating in God’s work is something that we can all look forward to as the Spirit continues to work throughout our lives.

**Message:** When we read the Bible, we might find ourselves categorizing all of the stories into one time period distinct from ours. When we read through magnificent moments like God speaking to Moses through a bush set ablaze that didn’t burn, a talking donkey used to stop a wicked prophet from cursing God’s people, or the apostles in the early church performing the same types of healings as Jesus, we may be left wondering why those same events aren’t as prevalent today. But we have to remember that the Bible often captures these moments for the very reason that they were distinct from the day-to-day lives people lived at the time. When Jesus began performing miracles, it was just as surprising to the people then as it would be for us if we saw that same work happening now.

The mission of Jesus during his earthly ministry was revolutionary. He was turning Jewish tradition on its head, instituting the kingdom of God and preparing its citizens, and fulfilling his role as the promised Messiah from Genesis 3. This task required the turning of tides that seemed impossible. So it only makes sense that to prove his claims, he would have to do the impossible. He would have to prove that the authority he carried came from God in heaven. In accomplishing this work, we may not see as many of the same sort of miracles today. But that doesn’t mean the Spirit is any less at work. The miracles we see today are just as extraordinary, with God empowering minds to translate the Bible into every language, stories of families who have nothing being supported by loving communities of faith, and even times where we do see miraculous healings that can only be explained by God’s abiding love in our lives.

But whatever miracles we see in our lives, we should remember that miracles aren’t the only defining attribute of God. We can’t distill our idea of God’s power down to these moments. Miracles are just catalysts used to deepen faith. But through that, there’s a miracle behind the miracle, where we get to see that growing faith put into action as disciples press on to make more disciples. The idea that the modern church of over 2.38 billion believers started with twelve everyday people is a miracle in and of itself. As Jesus performed the miracle of turning water into wine, he was planting a seed in their hearts. A seed that would grow their belief. To trust that every word he spoke to them was true and that they would be the ones who shared his message with the world.

So what do we learn about faith through this first miracle? First, we’re taught to trust in Jesus’ timing. After the stone jars have been filled, Jesus tells a servant to bring a cup of their contents to the master of the feast. We’re not told in the Scriptures when exactly the water turned into wine. Was it immediately after the vessels were filled? The moment the cup was poured? While the servant walked to deliver the drink? Or was it mere seconds before it touched the lips of the master of the feast? In a sense, it doesn’t matter. The point is that Jesus came through in his timing. The servant didn’t need to check if the water had changed. They didn’t ask Jesus when he was going to provide more wine. They had to have faith that, in time, it would happen.

Similarly, just because we don’t know God’s timing or are confused about his process doesn’t mean we should hesitate to listen and obey when Jesus calls us to take a step of faith. Uncertainty in the process is distinct from certainty in God’s promises. Having the former doesn’t exclude the latter. God doesn’t expect us to live without uncertainty. In fact, he expects it. That’s why he requires faith! But over time, as we see his faithfulness, it should grow our assurance in what he’s promised to do.

When we think about Jesus’ ministry as a whole, we see multitudes of people healed. But that doesn’t mean everyone was. It might be easy to wonder why Jesus didn’t just perform endless miracles, spending every second he could finding the sick, blind, or lame and healing them in an instant. With a word, every sick person could have been made well and every hungry belly made full. But there was, and is, a greater plan that God is working out. While Jesus wanted to bless the ones he performed miracles for, his true hope was to lead people to repentance. Blanket healings would have brought physical peace to people’s afflictions, but completely miss the mark on the spiritual healing he wants to provide. While it may seem insensitive for God to not provide all the miracles we think he should, we should trust in his good plan. Think about Adam and Eve. After they sinned, they were removed from the garden. What some may see as a punishment was an act of mercy. We’re told in Genesis 3:22 that God removed them from the garden so that they wouldn’t eat of the tree of life and live eternally broken in their sin. God held off on the miracle of giving them eternal life to first perform the miracle of cleansing humanity of its transgressions. God is good and we can trust that he has good plans.

Through the miracle in Cana, Jesus did more than just save a wedding. He was preparing a foundation for this young couple to honor God in their marriage. Rather than allowing them to start off their marriage with a bad reputation in the community that brought bitterness and hardship, he gave them the blessing of knowing how much God cared for them. He wanted to show them that he loves fruitful marriages that are founded in gratitude for the Lord and find their hope in him. He wanted to give them more than just a good celebration. He wanted to give them a good life.

Jesus wants to bless beyond the material as well. He wants to give us a good life full of his peace, joy, and strength. When we only look for God in the physical spaces, we’re likely to miss how he’s working in the spiritual, mental, and emotional parts of our lives. God cares for us holistically. This is why he calls us to love him with our hearts, soul, mind, and strength. He wants us to be integrated in our worship of him. To not only praise him for how he’s cared for our physical being, but how he’s cared for our hearts, minds, and souls. Miracles only addressed the physical, which is why Jesus didn’t want people to need signs and wonders forever. The miracles were just setting the stage for his work. To grow the faith of the first disciples. And while miracles are still at work today, we can look to more than just miracles to grow our faith. We have so many things the disciples didn’t have. The complete Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, generations of faithful men and women who have spread the gospel message, countless testimonies of the saving and transformative power of Jesus.

So yes, look for miracles in your life. Expect God to do the unexpected. Believe that he’s going to do impossible things in your life. But above all, remember that all of those things are meant to draw you closer to Him.