

## **8<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY – 29/07/12**

**THEME:** Expect Great things from God.

Old Testament Lesson: **2 Kings Ch. 4 v 42-44** Gospel: **St. John Ch. 6 v 1-15**

**Text:-** “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift I told you about, the gift my Father promised. John Baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” **Acts Ch.1 v 4 & 5**

What do you consider of the nature of miracles? Do you think that they are magic? Supernatural events? Wishful thinking or convenient coincidence? Well according to some Theologians they are none of these things! They describe them as Supernormal – in other words normal events that occur when they are needed. In simplistic terms they say that is no more difficult for God to turn water into wine directly than it is through the grape vine & fermentation! Certainly the miracles that I have observed or experienced in my life come under this heading, every day occurrences that occur exactly when needed. Some, over the years I have shared with you, and many I have not. But every instance WAS without doubt a miracle! An everyday occurrence that happened exactly when needed, and, like all miracles they have had certain characteristics that ALL miracles have; faith in God on behalf of the person who is instrumental in the performance, and faith in God by the recipient of the miracle. In this morning's Old Testament lesson, the whole chapter Elisha performs 4 miracles without any hesitation, Elisha called upon God in complete confidence that God's power would come through. And again in our Gospel Jesus also knew what was going to happen and what He would do (v. 6). As always He had the utmost faith in the power that came to Him from His Father. Never any doubt at all!

Yet, many people still doubt about miracles, not all of which are of necessity about healing, as is shown by our Readings today, and in fact in many places in the Bible there are many, many instances of miracles of all types starting as far back as Genesis. All of them showing the utmost faith in God, either directly or through someone else! Because the major part of any miracle is faith & trust in God by all involved! They are, in fact a sign of the divine nature of God! Particularly that part of His Divine nature that is His love and compassion for ALL of His Creation, and especially for us! The Pharisees & Sadducees often made this mistake when dealing with Jesus, they wanted Him to perform to show that He had God's approval, overlooking that these were signs of God's kingdom of love and our reconciliation with Him! It has been said in recent times that the Church as a body ceased to perform Miracles because they also stopped believing in them!

But, make no mistake, the early Church DID believe, because in Acts Ch.1 v 4 & 5 Jesus promised them **“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised.”** And boy, didn't they take Him up on that at Pentecost, immediately after they received the Holy Spirit they spoke of the **“Great things that God has done”**, (Acts Ch. 2 v 11) and in the same Chapter of Acts (v 17) is God's promise **“This is what I will do in the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on everyone,”** (when you get home read Acts Ch. 2 v 17 – 21,) the passage spells out what we can expect from God! Because that was the big secret of the Early Church, and also of the Prophets of the Old Testament; to them God promised great things, and they expected great things from God, in consequence they did great things for God. They finally recognised that God had performed His greatest miracle in the Death, the Resurrection & Ascension of Jesus, and they had finally received His gift of the Holy Spirit. So, from Pentecost onwards, they evangelised, they healed, they worshipped and prayed with urgency, with eagerness, with joy, even unto death themselves. They praised God, they worked with God, and

because they expected great things from God, and they got them and did great things for God. It is for us also to expect great things AND to do great things for God! The promise was for and is for US. Amen