

Miracle

Jesus asks, "Is it easier to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up and walk'?" (Matthew 9:5)

Life brings challenges for everyone and some of you reading this have endured challenges that are unimaginable—war, death, poverty, as well as verbal and physical abuse. As you move through your life you meet all kinds of circumstances, some good and some not so good and others simply horrific. The challenges of life can uplift you and enrich your life or they can bring you down and destroy your life. In Truth, the choice is yours. The common experience is to get rid of the bad and try and hang on to the good. Rarely is the negative experience embraced with an open heart and mind as the perfect experience, the perfect opportunity to know yourself on a profoundly deep level. Rarely are those negative experiences recognized as a miracle that contains the intrinsic power to uplift and strengthen you and everyone you meet. The truth of this was never so clear as it was just recently when I was waiting for a flight in the San Francisco International Airport. My flight was delayed and delayed and delayed and passengers were getting more and more angry with each announcement of yet another delay. Realizing there was really nothing anyone could do all I could really do was wait and see.

Jesus turns to the paralyzed man and says, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!" (Matthew 9:6) After sitting waiting for several hours trying to get comfortable in the very uncomfortable airport chairs, the last thing I was thinking about were the miracles of Jesus. Certainly, there was no expectation of any sort of miracle when a young man walked into the terminal who was quite literally a walking miracle. He was like any other twenty something except where his right arm use to be there was a plastic arm with a metal clamp clutching a water bottle. Where his legs use to be there was two state of the art computerized prosthetic legs that enabled him to walk with a strong confident stride. His appearance made everyone visibly uncomfortable; you could see people quickly averting their attention to the floor, the ceiling, their wristwatch or cell phone, anywhere to avoid looking at him. Much to my surprise I could not stop staring at him, there was just so much light pouring out him I felt instantly like I wanted to meet him. What unfolded next changed my life forever and contains the power to change yours as well. How can this miraculous meeting with this amazing young man help you understand the teaching of Jesus on an even deeper level?

Naturally, with all the thousands of wounded service men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, I immediately thought that this young man must be a veteran of one or both of these wars. Before I could ask him anything, he turned and quickly walked out of the terminal. I continued to look at him as he walked away and said out loud, "That is so intense. We think we have problems because our flight is delayed. Based on what we just saw, I don't think any of us have a problem!" This blunt statement was met with a few unspoken nods of agreement as we all returned to our uncomfortable waiting. A few moments later I was surprised to see this same young man standing right in front of me. Excited to have the opportunity to talk to him I asked, "Are you a vet?" With a boyish smile he replied, "No." "No!" I said in astonishment, "Well, what happened to you?" He replied, "I was hit by a train." This response shocked me even more and with surprise asked, "Hit by a train?! How did that happen? How did you survive?"

Disillusioned

after the events of 911 he explained, "A few weeks after 911, when I was fifteen, I got drunk with some friends and was walking on the railroad track. I did not even hear the train coming." To this I replied, "Do you remember the train hitting you?" He said, "I remember

everything before it hit me, but don't remember the train hitting me? I woke up in the hospital and my arm and legs were gone." He sat down next to me to continue the conversation. There was so much light pouring out of him, he was so alive, so totally whole and more mature than many other young men his age. He said that after he woke up in the hospital the doctors told him that his injuries were so severe that there was no medical reason that he lived.

He said, "It is still amazes me that I lived." And I said, "It must have been a very hard thing to deal with." He had a distant look in his eyes and he said, "Yeah, it was hard. Really hard." I asked, "Do you work with Vets?" He replied, "I work with a some vets to help them through their recovery process after they've lost an arm or a leg. I also speak at colleges and high schools about how you your decisions can impact your life." Smiling I said, "Well, I have to say you are the perfect person for the job." He laughed and said, "Thank you. You are right I am just the right person for the job." Then he paused and said with a smile, "You have been asking all the right questions." It never really occurred to me whether or not they were right or wrong questions, I just didn't want to ignore the obvious that he was the same as any twenty something and so totally different at the same time. I wanted to meet him in the moment, just as he was.

He continued the conversation by explaining that his legs were special prosthetic legs that had a computer chip in the knee. There were even plastic parts that came off and he knelt down and showed me that as well. Rather excitedly he told me he was leaving soon for a special surf camp for amputees and that he had a lot going on as he pulled his MAC out of his backpack to work. Our conversation slowed down as his attention was drawn deep into his computer screen. A few moments passed by and he looked up from the glow of his screen and said, "The accident has made stronger. It has made me a better person. You know it is not your disability that defines who you are. Your disability is the moment that you get to discover who you can be. Who you were meant to be!" Several minutes passed by as he continued with his work. Not long afterward the loud speaker announced his flight for San Louis Obispo.

As he started to pack up his computer, I said, "My name is Jill, what is yours?" A big smile spread across his face as he replied, "Cameron, my name is Cameron." As he was stuffing his MAC into his backpack he looked up and said, "You know I have no idea how or why I lived and I am so thankful. Every single day, I am so thankful just to be alive." He paused, looked me deep in the eye and said, "Ever day is a miracle. Every single day!" Then Cameron held out his powerful left arm and shook my hand. In complete amazement, I watched him walk away. Just before he entered the doorway leading to his plane, he paused, turned around and as a big smile spread across his very handsome face he waved goodbye.

This entire miraculous meeting is etched deep into my memory like a diamond shining in the sun. It was a moment of divine perfection

that occurred simply because my flight was delayed and delayed and delayed.

When I got home I Googled Cameron to see if there was a way to connect with him. It was not at all surprising to discover that he is a superstar athlete and has inspired doctors to create the prosthetic legs that not only enable him to walk, they enable him to run! Cameron was so humble, to it was a bit surprising to discover the extent of his superstar status and that he has won several gold medals in running events.

And based on first hand experience was glad to see that he is recognized around the world as a profound inspiration to all who meet him.

Truly he is a miracle man, not only does he compete in running events, he can swim, play golf, kayak, surf, and later this year his is going to compete in a triathlon. And in spite of all of his incredible athletic talent, the light and enthusiasm that naturally radiates from his presence simply makes you want to smile.

An online article reports that Cameron also participates in Camp Ability, a camp for children struggling with limb loss where he is able to physically demonstrate what is possible. The article quotes Cameron as saying, "This camp helps these kids learn how to use prosthetics properly. It helps build character and confidence. The spirit, enthusiasm and determination of these kids is phenomenal. They help me just as much as I help them. It's a privilege to be in their presence." Truly, it is an honor and privilege to have had the miraculous opportunity to be in Cameron's presence!

In addition, he has been interviewed by CBS, CNN, and Discovery. I hope this video interview inspires you as much as it inspires me:

Cameron

did not waste any time feeling sorry for himself. He met the challenge of his accident full on by taking full responsibility. In a recent Syracuse University article Cameron is quoted as saying, "Almost immediately, I was like, OK, what do I do now? I knew I had put myself there on the tracks. I was responsible for my actions. I knew it was up to me. I could let this adversity keep me down, or I could take this adversity and make it into an opportunity and do something with it." Like

Cameron, Jesus does not meekly say "try" to stand up. He says with a loud confident voice "Stand up!" Cameron demonstrates just how powerful it is not just to "try" but to take full responsibility, throw away the wheel chair of thoughts like, "You will probably never walk again," and simply, open your heart and mind to the possibility that not only can you walk you can run.

It is by having the courage to take responsibility and directly meet the seemingly insurmountable thoughts and feelings, the obstacles that are standing in your way, that regardless of your past or your current circumstances you can stand up! Jesus knew, and Cameron demonstrates, the truth of who you are is limitless. You are freedom itself! If you open your heart and embrace the challenges of your life, they will up lift you, revealing who you are at the core or as Cameron says, 'Who you are meant to be'; Looking deep within yourself, deep within your heart, gives you the opportunity to discover the infinite Silent Shining Light that you are and always have been!

You have the power to open your heart and mind to meet the challenges of your life. And if stop right now in this moment, and open your heart you can receive Cameron's gift to you: Every single day is a miracle! Every breath you take is a miracle! Every single moment of your life is divine perfection unfolding! Jesus questions your doubt by asking, 'If You can?' And explains, 'All things are possible if you believe.' (Mark 9:23)

How are you going to meet the challenges of your life today?