

Signs and Wonders Will Follow You

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Key Scripture

Mark 16:17-18 (ESV) And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not harm them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.

Sermon in One Sentence

Authentic Christian belief, empowered by the risen Christ, is accompanied by demonstrations of God's supernatural power that validate His message and extend His kingdom.

Introduction

Imagine a world where the extraordinary was ordinary—where illnesses vanished with a touch, unspoken languages flowed effortlessly, and danger recoiled from the faithful. For many Christians today, such a vision seems confined to ancient history or dramatic missionary tales. We often live with an unspoken question: "Are signs and wonders still for us today, or were they reserved for a special era of the early church?" This question cuts to the heart of our faith, probing whether the power of God is a historical artifact or a present reality.

The problem, perhaps, is that we have domesticated our faith, trimming it down to a manageable size, one that fits neatly within our rational frameworks and predictable routines. We preach about a mighty God, but often live as if His might is on permanent sabbatical. We yearn for revival, for an undeniable display of God's presence, yet sometimes our expectations falter.

But what if the very Scriptures themselves promise a different story? What if the commission given to the first disciples was not a temporary assignment, but an enduring truth about the life of faith? Our key scripture today, found in the concluding verses of Mark's Gospel, does not merely describe what happened *then*; it proclaims what *will* happen. It invites us to reconsider the scope of God's ongoing work through His believers.

Historical & Biblical Context

The verses from Mark 16:17-18 are part of what is commonly known as "The Longer Ending of Mark" (verses 9-20). While some ancient manuscripts omit these verses, and scholarly debate continues regarding their authorship and originality, the early church consistently treated them as Scripture. Moreover, their theological thrust aligns perfectly with the broader biblical narrative of a powerful, miracle-working God who confirms His word with signs (Hebrews 2:3-4). This passage serves as Jesus' Great Commission, specifically emphasizing the *attendant signs* that would follow those who believe and proclaim the Gospel. It was given to the eleven disciples after Christ's resurrection, before His ascension, as He was

commissioning them to go into all the world.

This context is vital because it reveals Jesus' expectation for the ongoing mission of His church. He wasn't just sending them out with a message, but with a divine endorsement. The signs were not the message itself, but divine "receipts" that validated the messenger and the message. They were God's way of saying, "Yes, I am with them; yes, this is My truth." For us today, it means that the spread of the Gospel is not meant to be a purely intellectual exercise but often a dynamic encounter with the supernatural power of God, breaking into human affairs.

Main Point I — The Divine Mandate and Its Credentials

Scripture: Mark 16:15-16 And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

Before Jesus speaks of the signs that will follow, He gives the core command: "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation." This is the primary mission of the church—to declare the good news of Christ crucified, risen, and reigning. The signs are not ends in themselves, but divine endorsements of this message. They are the credentials, the divine "proof of concept," that validate the authority and truthfulness of the Gospel proclaimed by believers. Just as a diplomat carries official papers to prove his authority, so too God equips His evangelists with supernatural demonstrations.

The emphasis here is on the *Gospel* as the central dynamic. It's not about individuals seeking power for its own sake, but about the power of God accompanying the proclamation of His saving truth. When we faithfully share the message of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, we are operating within the divine mandate, and it is in this context that God promises to confirm His word with accompanying signs. This understanding recalibrates our perspective: the power is for the sake of the message, not the other way around.

Main Point II — Supernatural Power for a Supernatural Mission

Scripture: Mark 16:17a And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues...

The specific signs listed are not random; they address fundamental spiritual realities and challenges that confront humanity. Casting out demons speaks to the spiritual warfare foundational to the Christian life, demonstrating Christ's victory over the forces of darkness. Speaking in new tongues (or varied languages) points to the global scope of the Gospel, overcoming communication barriers to reach every tribe and nation, as seen powerfully on the day of Pentecost. These are not merely flashy tricks, but strategic acts of God's power designed to advance His kingdom and dismantle the strongholds of Satan.

This section reveals that the Christian mission is inherently supernatural because the God we serve is supernatural, and the enemy we contend with is supernatural. It demands more than human eloquence or intellect; it requires the manifest power of the Holy Spirit. When we encounter skepticism, opposition, or spiritual bondage, these signs serve as undeniable proof points, drawing attention to God and His ability to transform lives and circumstances. They remind us that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against

spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6:12).

Main Point III — Divine Protection and Healing as Kingdom Demonstrations

Scripture: Mark 16:18 ...they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not harm them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.

The final set of signs speaks to divine protection and miraculous healing. The imagery of picking up serpents and immunity to poison may be understood both literally, as in the case of Paul on Malta (Acts 28), and metaphorically as protection from spiritual harm and danger in the pursuit of the Gospel. It underscores God's commitment to preserve His messengers as they carry out His mission in a hostile world. It's not an invitation to recklessness, but a promise of God's sovereign care.

The promise that "they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover" is a powerful testament to God's compassion and His desire to restore brokenness. Healing was a central aspect of Jesus' ministry and continues to be a tangible demonstration of God's kingdom breaking into our world. It's a sign that the King cares about our bodies as well as our souls, and that His ultimate plan involves complete renewal. These signs collectively demonstrate the comprehensive victory of Christ over sin, sickness, spiritual darkness, and death itself—all fundamental aspects of His kingdom.

Illustration

Consider the story of George Müller, the 19th-century evangelist and founder of orphanages in Bristol, England. Müller was renowned for his unwavering faith and refusal to solicit funds, relying solely on prayer. Time and again, Müller experienced supernatural provision and divine intervention. One morning, the children were seated for breakfast, but there was no food. Müller gave thanks for the meal that was to come. Immediately, a baker knocked on the door, saying God had prompted him to bake bread for the orphans. Simultaneously, the milkman's cart broke down outside the orphanage, and he offered the milk to the children so it wouldn't spoil. This wasn't a "sign" in the charismatic sense of healing or tongues, but it was a clear and undeniably supernatural provision, following the belief and prayer of a man committed to God's mission. It demonstrated God's faithfulness and power, authenticating Müller's ministry and strengthening the faith of countless onlookers.

Practical Application

- 1. Pray for boldness to proclaim the Gospel:** Recognize that the supernatural is tied to the mission. Start by asking God to give you opportunities and courage to share your faith, knowing He desires to confirm His Word.
- 2. Cultivate a heart of expectant faith:** Regularly read accounts of God's supernatural work in the Bible and in contemporary testimonies. Challenge your preconceptions about what God can and will do in your life and through you.
- 3. Seek opportunities to pray for the sick:** Don't limit healing to medical professionals. Humbly and prayerfully lay hands on those who are ill, asking God for His supernatural touch, remembering His promise

to recover.

4. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading: The manifestations of power are gifts from the Spirit. Pay attention to spiritual promptings to pray for someone, speak a word of encouragement, or address spiritual oppression.

5. Prioritize spiritual growth and holiness: While signs are a demonstration of God's power, they are best stewarded by those walking in close fellowship with Him, ensuring that the glory goes to God and not to the individual.

Discussion Questions

1. How has your personal experience shaped your understanding of signs and wonders in the church today?
2. What do you believe is the primary *purpose* of signs and wonders according to Mark 16?
3. In what ways might our lack of expectation limit God's ability to work powerfully in and through us?
4. What practical step can you take this week to live with greater anticipation for God's supernatural activity?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Son, Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We pray for a fresh outpouring of Your Holy Spirit, that we, Your believers, might walk in the fullness of Your power. Forgive us for our unbelief and infuse us with a vibrant, expectant faith. Equip us to proclaim Your Gospel with boldness, and we ask that You would confirm Your Word with accompanying signs, for Your glory alone. Amen.

Benediction

Now go, empowered by the Spirit, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to all creation, knowing that the Lord works with you and confirms His word through the signs that follow.