

Cooke, TonyMiracles and the Supernatural Throughout Church History

26. When the Miraculous Does Not Occur

This chapter faces the hard reality that not every hoped-for miracle happens. It teaches that faith is not only about changing circumstances but about trusting God's goodness even when deliverance does not come, and it points to the Holy Spirit as Comforter and to eternity as our final hope.

Key takeaways

- Hebrews 11 celebrates great victories, but the same chapter honors believers who were tortured and killed and still 'obtained a good testimony through faith.'
- Gerald Brooks names three kinds of faith: Triumphant (changes circumstances), Transformational (changes the person), and Transcending (trusts God despite bad outcomes). Most teaching stresses only the first.
- In Acts 12, Peter is miraculously freed in fourteen verses, but James is executed in a single line. God delivers some and not others, and Scripture does not always explain why.
- Even Jesus grieved (at John the Baptist's death), yet He turned from His sorrow to heal the sick and feed thousands—disappointment need not end our expectation of God's power.

- Paul saw many miracles, yet left Timothy, Trophimus, and others sick without blaming their sin or lack of faith. Healing was never a switch he flipped at will.
- Everyone healed or even raised (like Lazarus) eventually died; our hope must reach beyond this life. The Holy Spirit's role as Comforter matters as much as His role as healer.

Passages worth keeping

“Our faith must be greater than any circumstance we ever deal with. Faith is more about heaven than it is about earth.”

Frames the chapter's core: faith that transcends outcomes, not just faith that changes them.

“And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.”

Anchors the reader's hope in eternity rather than in earthly deliverance.

How it connects

The chapter binds together Proverbs 3:5 (trust God, not your own understanding) with Isaiah 61:1 and Matthew 5:4 (Jesus heals and comforts the brokenhearted), reframing unanswered prayer within God's larger, eternal goodness.

Scripture referenced

- **Hebrews 11:35-40** -- Faith heroes who suffered and died still gained a good testimony.

- **Acts 12:2-10** -- James killed in one verse; Peter miraculously freed—God's differing outcomes.
- **Romans 12:15** -- Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.
- **1 Corinthians 13:9** -- Our knowledge is partial; humility about what we can't understand.
- **Matthew 14:13-14** -- Jesus grieves John's death yet moves to compassion and healing.
- **Revelation 21:3-4** -- The eternal hope where God wipes away every tear.