

SAINTS & MIRACLES

David Halbrook

Kateri Tekakwitha, a 17th century Native American, was recently declared a saint by The Catholic Church for allegedly interceding for Jake Finkbonner, resulting in his recovery from a life-threatening flesh-eating bacteria in 2006. Beside Kateri, Jake credited the doctors' 29 surgeries with saving his life and reconstructing his face from the bacteria's damage. If Kateri really appealed to God for Jake, why the need for life-saving or reconstructive surgery?!?

1. **Who is a saint?** Paul wrote to the saints in Corinth who were washed and sanctified by Jesus' blood after hearing, believing, and being baptized (Acts 18:8; 1 Cor.1:2; 6:11). Based on these verses, are you a saint? You cannot become a saint after death even if a human council says you can.

2. **Genuine miracles** Contrast Jake's alleged miracle with Jesus' miracles. After Jesus healed Malchus and the woman with bleeding problems, did they need reconstructive or life-saving surgery (Luke 8:43-44; 22:50-51)? The record of miracles in the Bible is very different from claims of witch doctors, Buddhists, Pentecostals, and Catholics. Beware and contrast Bible miracles with modern miraculous claims.

-- *Editor's Note:* At the end of this year, in order to balance our spending with what we have to spend, we will likely reduce the frequency of our articles in *Arkansas Weekly* to every other week. Let's maximize the money we are spending in this effort. One person at a time, find a way to make everyone who knows you aware of these articles, so that possibly they'll come to you with questions or comments. Most of your friends probably won't talk to "the preacher"—are you willing to help them?

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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“ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN TO YOU”

Daniel H. King, Sr.

Perhaps you have heard the story of the bride who said to her mother regarding her new husband, “Pierre is perfectly wonderful to me, mother. He gives me everything I ask for.” To which her mother replied, “That merely shows, my dear child, that you are not asking enough.”

An ancient prayer (dated around 1662) says, “Grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually.” The Savior taught the principle of asking in order to receive, and asking well. Here are his exact words: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Luke 11:9-10).

What the Lord may be suggesting in this teaching is that our problem is often that we do not ask, or do not ask for the really important things, or even that we do not request persistently and tenaciously those things we really need. This latter point is particularly important for our own lives today. Now, I am not referring to food, clothing, and shelter, or even the forgiveness of our sins. These matters are certainly taken up with Heaven each and every time we speak with God in prayer, and often more than once in the same prayer! It is other things which I have in mind here.

They are those things which perhaps we do not pray for because we do not really seek them, and so do not wish to knock upon the door behind which these treasures lie. We do not ask for these things because we do not actually want them. Below I have listed some of those things I have in mind: *(article continued inside)*

1. Opportunities for Service to God and Our Fellow Man.

Have our lives gotten so busy that we have pushed out God completely? Some folks are so busy with their jobs and other activities that they are too occupied to come to worship half of the time, let alone set aside any time at all for “extra-curricular” activities like visitation or personal work. When a work day at the church building comes up they are engaged beyond their limits already, and so they let others who are “not so busy” take up their slack. (You would be surprised who makes it to those work day projects!) They never can make room on their schedule for attending church business meetings, nor can they make it to the nursing home or sickbed where other members may need their encouragement or comfort. They just don’t have the time.

Now, do you think that such folk are including in their prayers a request that God may send their way opportunities of service either in the kingdom of God or for benefit of their fellow-man? I think not! That would probably be the last thing in the world they would ask for. Nevertheless, the Bible still says, “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is” (Revelation 22:12).

2. Prospects for Conversion to Christ and His Truth.

Is our own “conversion” very much in question these days? Do we feel that words like “dedicated” and “committed” refer to others but not to us? When people at school or work bring up the subject of religion do we flee into a far corner away from them, or do we meet the questions and issues squarely with firmness and resolve, conviction, and knowledge? The early disciples seemed to have been eager to share their faith with others, as evidenced by the growth and spread of their faith among those whom they met in the neighborhoods, marketplaces and workplaces of the first century (Acts 8:4). Those early Christians turned the world upside down for their Lord because of their enthusiasm and excitement for the Lord and his Truth.

Are we today looking for or praying for prospects? To have converts you must first have prospects! Any salesman will tell you that in order for you to make one sale you must first have several prospects; then, out of those several prospects he may only convert one into an actual transaction, a sale. In our experience with bringing people to the Lord, it has almost universally been the case that gimmicks and special techniques are virtually worthless. One interested, concerned, and committed Christian on the other hand may bring many people to Christ in a lifetime if he or she is praying toward that end and is constantly “on the lookout” for prospects.

But some of us are not praying for prospects. In fact, we are hoping they are found by someone else and not us. We don’t have time for them. Or, we are afraid we don’t have the knowledge necessary to teach them. Maybe we just don’t care whether they are saved or damned! That was certainly not Paul’s attitude: “Brethren, my heart’s desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved” (Romans 10:1). Undoubtedly this is the most essential ingredient to bringing others to the Lord, then or now. So, let us pray for prospects that the kingdom of God may be increased and the lost may be brought to Christ.

3. Wisdom and Knowledge of the Word of God.

This is one thing that some folks could never be motivated to pray for. After all, if they did gain such knowledge, then the first thing you know the elders would ask them to teach a Bible class, or lead in public prayer, or even preach occasionally. That would be the worst! Yet, my friends, that was precisely what Paul prayed for on behalf of his friends and brethren at Ephesus (Ephesians 1:16-20).

We are not praying for knowledge of God’s will, in far too many cases, because we fear the responsibility which we know will attend it! I have every confidence that if we ask we will receive it, for the Lord’s promises are ever true (Luke 11:10).

Let us begin to pray for the things which really matter, not merely for the minimal expectations of life and ministrations, but for great usefulness and extraordinary utility in the service of the Master. <http://kscoc.com/?p=372>

Timothy had known the word of God from a youth. Paul says that “*from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*” The greatest blessing that Timothy received was his training by his mother and grandmother; the greatest blessing that any one can receive is to be taught the Bible from childhood up. Parents can do no greater thing for their children than to teach them the word of God. The richest legacy that parents can leave their children is the inheritance of a good name and an unwavering faith in God; the wisest thing that children can do is to receive the training of father and mother in the “*chastening and admonition of the Lord.*” A Christian home can have a greater influence on children than anything else. Parents should feel the obligation to teach the word of God diligently to their children, and the children should be taught early in life to receive the word of God into their hearts.”

[H. Leo Boles, *Elam’s Notes*, 1930, p. 327]