

"MIRACLES AND PRAYER"

(Acts 4:23-31)

(Pete Greig)

There are three riders I would like to place upon all the miracle stories recounted in *Dirty Glory*¹.

1. Miracles are rarer than they seem in this book

Don't forget that a full decade of actual living has been condensed into these pages— and I've deliberately picked out the exciting bits because, well, you would want your money back if I'd told you all the boring stuff instead. I want you to know that my life isn't an unending stream of supernatural occurrences, partly so that you don't get disillusioned with just how boring I can be if we ever actually meet, but also so that you don't get a downer on the normality of your own daily experiences (give it a decade, and you'll be surprised what happens). C. S. Lewis says: "The very conception of a common, and therefore stable, world demands that [miracles] should be extremely rare."* He's right, of course, but then again...

2. Miracles aren't as rare as you may think

"I believe in miracles," sang the soul band Hot Chocolate, before continuing, slightly less helpfully, "Since came along, sexy thing." We believe in miracles, we believe in the power of prayer, because Jesus is alive and he promised to answer us. You don't have to kiss your brains goodbye to believe this stuff. My last book, *God on Mute*, was honest about unanswered prayer, and a lot of people ended up reading it. I'm so glad they did. I hope I can now talk with equal honesty about miracles. No one becomes a Christian because God doesn't answer prayer! There are 222 prayers recorded in the Bible, excluding the Psalms, and only six of these are unanswered. That ratio sounds about right to me: thirty-six answered prayers to every one that isn't. There are far more blessings in our lives than we sometimes realize. Amazing things happen; and it's important to remember and recount these encouragements, because that's how we grow in faith. In fact, it's how half the Bible got written. If you only have one miracle story, tell it again and again until you have another one. And feel free to steal a few of ours.

3. Miracles aren't really miracles

The Hebrew mindset recognized that God is intertwined with normality, disguised in the mundane, caught up in the physical realm as well as the spiritual one. He heals supernaturally, but also through medicine. He speaks through angels, but also through donkeys. You can worship him at church, but also riding your bike down a steep hill at top speed and screaming for your life. The miracle stories in this book are classified as such merely because they are hard to explain scientifically. But there are endless things that science can explain which are still infused with God's mystery and presence. Like a starfield at night, or a human iris, or a baby born with its own unique fingerprints. If you feel like you don't see many miracles, try celebrating God's presence in the normal stuff, thanking him for every coincidence, and yes, cheesy as it may sound, counting your blessings. As you thank God for all the really understandable stuff, you will one day soon—sooner than you might think—find yourself thanking God for a few things that those nice people in white coats (shrinks and scientists alike) can't fully explain. When that happens, you might like to try recording your experiences in a journal, and then you could one day draw the threads together and help me write the next book in this series of *Red Moon Chronicles*.



¹ Greig, Pete, *Dirty Glory: Go Where Your best Prayers Take You*, Colorado Springs, NavPress, 2016.