



*Florene Nordyke*

Miracles. Some define a miracle as an incredible event that cannot be scientifically explained. Events which happen normally are sometimes called “miracles.” But real miracles—things that happen with no logical explanation—bother people. People fear miracles because they fear being changed; though ignoring them will change us also.

An AARP survey reports 80 percent of people 45 and older believe in miracles; 37 percent have actually witnessed one. Of those who believe in miracles, 84 percent say they happen because of God, thereby sustaining their faith. Twenty-nine percent of those polled say they’ve witnessed divine healing but the types experienced range from physical healing to economic assistance, like a gift of money in the exact amount needed to pay an overdue bill.

When asked to write these devotionals for *Fruit of the Vine* I already had a mental list of personal miracles—so many it was hard to choose only seven. My husband Quentin and I lived in Bolivia and Peru for 13 years among the Aymara people. We experienced many miracles, in our family and in the lives of the Aymaras. I hope this week of devotionals will cause you to remember times when God provided for you in some incredible way.

In the picture above two of my grandchildren, Garrett and Sophia, and I admire the first leaves and buds of the clematis plant I wrote about. Quentin and I live at Friendsview Retirement Community in Newberg, Oregon.

*BIBLE READING: Exodus 14:13-14, 21-22, 31*

I took one step then bent over in pain. I had been discharged from the hospital the day before, and I felt pretty good—until the pain. My husband was not home. I couldn't move to the phone. All I could do was pray. Hours later, after a frustrating emergency room experience, I was admitted; the ER doctor had no idea why I was in such pain. My surgeon was on vacation and it was the next day before the backup surgeon saw me. By then a large amount of blood had collected in my abdomen—I was bleeding to death. The next few days are a blur but I went into surgery again as the doctors frantically tried to stop the bleeding. I received 36 pints of blood and 18 of plasma. Finally the bleeding stopped.

I spent a week in ICU, another week in intermediate ICU and two weeks on the surgery floor. I had lost partial vision in one eye due to very low blood pressure, but I was alive. I had stood on the banks of my own Red Sea, facing the waters of death. But God—as he did for Moses and the Israelites—made a path for me.

A miracle? No doubt in my mind. God heard the prayers of countless people who prayed for my deliverance. That was 12 years ago. I live each day with gratitude for the miracle of life.

*SONG: God Leads Us Along*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Jesus, you are the Great Physician. Thank you for the many times you have healed me. Teach me to ask for your help and teach me to be grateful when you do.*

—Florene Nordyke

*BIBLE READING: James 5:13-16*

Laurel was three days old. We had just completed Spanish language studies in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and were preparing to travel to La Paz. The day after her birth we received a telegram which simply said “Nordykes to Peru.” I wondered how we could cope with the move with a two-year-old son and a new daughter.

But all was not well—Laurel had a fever and a huge sore on her leg due to a staph infection—very serious because she was newly born. We gave her injections of penicillin and prayed. People at “home”—folks in Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends—prayed.

We watched in wonder as our tiny daughter recovered quickly. We continued with our plans to travel to La Paz, Bolivia, then prepare for the move to Juli, Peru. The mission work among the Aymara people across the border in Peru was a fairly new adventure for the Northwest Friends Church. We were to be the third missionary family to live in Juli and work among the Peruvian Aymaras.

A miracle? Yes indeed. Laurel healed quickly. We moved to La Paz, then Juli where we lived for two terms. God heard the prayers of his people. Today (48 years later) Laurel is a busy wife and mother to four children with a heart for ministry and witness as God leads her. God had plans for this tiny baby with the big illness. This mother’s heart thanks God every time I see her—our miracle baby.

*SONG: He Touched Me*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Father, teach me to trust you for my children and their needs.*

—Florene Nordyke

*BIBLE READING: Psalm 91:1-2, 14-16*

I pumped up the pressure on the Coleman stove, preparing to heat a bottle for our ten-month-old daughter. We used a Coleman stove at home in Juli, Peru, on the *altiplano* (over 12,000 feet in altitude), so I was used to lighting the stove. But we were in Pichu, a jungle area of Bolivia. We were enjoying the warm climate and low altitude a few days while missionaries Mark and Wilma Roberts were on vacation.

Back to the stove. As I lit the match and touched it to the gas valve it seemed like the kitchen erupted in flames. The counters, cabinets, even the front of my clothes were burning. The little gas tank was full and as I pumped, some gas leaked, and the match flame ignited, spewing burning gas everywhere.

I don't remember praying—it happened so fast. My first thought was to get the stove out of the house before it exploded. I carried it outside, wrapped it in a big rug handily nearby, then returned to the kitchen expecting to see fire damage everywhere. But there were no flames. I looked down at my blouse and skirt—no flames. Not even blackened places where the fire had burned.

A miracle? Major miracle for sure. God prevented injuries to me and our children and damage to Roberts' home. He put the fire out!

*SONG: God Will Take Care of You*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Jesus, you are with us every minute and sometimes we need miracles. Thank you for the times you have performed miracles in our lives.*

—Florene Nordyke

*BIBLE READING: 1 Kings 17:9-14, 16*

I typed all morning the mimeograph stencils for the extension classes Ed Cammack and Quentin taught in the Peruvian countryside. Afternoons Marie Cammack and I ran the stencils making copies for the classes. Evenings we prepared them for the next day's classes. So our weeks went. We felt it was a vital ministry—bringing Bible education to Aymaras who wanted to learn but couldn't leave their homes to attend a Bible school. Theological Education by Extension it was called—a Bible School without walls.

One afternoon, while running the needed copies, our mimeograph ran out of ink. The men were out in the country and more ink was in Puno—a day's trip away. What were we to do? We had to have those lessons ready. We prayed.

We shouldn't have been astonished but we were when we checked the ink container again—there was ink! What had just happened? Gratefully we ran the lessons. The ink lasted until we could go to Puno. I don't remember how many pages of lessons we ran, but there were many. Like the widow's oil for her bread making, there was sufficient ink for our need.

A miracle? Certainly. There was no way that ink container could hold enough ink to run all those pages. We had seen it empty. God saw it too. This was his ministry and he didn't want it interrupted.

*SONG: Great Is Thy Faithfulness*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Father, we want to be faithful in our walk with you. Thank you for the times you have done wonders in our midst, not only for our good, but for the good of others.*

—Florene Nordyke

*BIBLE READING: Genesis 9:8-17*

I was a new missionary and very nervous as I began my first Bible class. The Aymara women had walked a long way to Juli and were seated on the floor along with several babies. They chattered noisily as I taught the class. I spoke in English, Marie Chapman translated into Spanish, and an Aymara woman translated into Aymara. It was cumbersome I admit. My students didn't look at me, nor did they appear to be listening. They were too busy visiting and caring for babies.

"Lord," I prayed. "What do I have to teach these women? You have to speak to them." The lesson was about the first rainbow God put in the sky and God's promise to never destroy the earth's people by water again. The rainbows are a beautiful reminder of that promise.

Finally I ran out of notes. Suddenly I became aware of the silence. The women had just learned that the rainbow was not an omen to be feared, but a gift from the Creator. The Holy Spirit had blessed this truth to their hearts. They rejoiced.

A miracle? Praise God, yes. My feeble little lesson was used by God's Spirit to teach these women a beautiful truth. He cleared fear from their hearts and replaced it with joyful gratitude. Plus he encouraged one nervous missionary. Miracles have a way of blessing everyone.

*SONG: God Put a Rainbow in the Sky*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: God, you are the great Creator of heaven and earth. Thank you for your promises, and for the rainbows in our lives—evidence of your commitment to your promises.*

—Florene Nordyke

*BIBLE READING: Mark 4:26-32*

“Our beautiful clematis is dead,” I thought as I looked at the brown, brittle branches. We had enjoyed beautiful purple blossoms as the plant climbed up the trellis. I was ready to replace it. Obviously it was not the evergreen variety which remains green all year.

My husband was optimistic. “Just wait,” he said. “Let’s see what happens.” The winter had been extra cold for the Oregon Willamette Valley with many hard freezes, icy sleet, and snows. I was sure our clematis had died.

It was still cold and rainy in early spring when I examined our “dead” clematis again. I saw green leaves growing on those “dead” branches! The “impossible” had happened.

What gardener has not looked at the tiny brown seeds he plants then marveled at the green, healthy plants producing wonderful tomatoes, carrots, or beautiful flowers? God designed plants and trees to grow from tiny, lifeless-looking seeds and roots. He made that clematis plant to survive freezing weather to come alive again. Even as the disciples grieved over the lifeless body of Jesus after his crucifixion, God was planning Christ’s resurrection.

New life. The winters of grief, disappointment, health issues, and personal issues may seem impossible. God gives new hope, new growth, and productive lives again.

Miracles? Yes, every spring I’m reminded of God’s creativity as I admire our clematis plant covered with blossoms.

*SONG: The Easter Song*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Springtime is surely a time of miracles as roots and seeds “come alive.” Jesus, give me new life in you—all year long.*

—Florene Nordyke

*BIBLE READING: Psalm 34:1-3, 15-20*

I heard the smack before he began to cry. Rushing to the crib I saw our two-year-old son on the cement floor. Always the adventurous baby, he had tried to climb out of his crib. He made it out alright, right on his head onto the cement floor. I picked him up and ran across the yard to the house where missionaries Oscar and Ruth Brown lived in LaPaz, Bolivia. Ruth took over the care of our newborn daughter while Oscar, Randy, and I got in the pickup to drive to the clinic in lower La Paz. Quentin was downtown on errands. How I wished we could contact him. God graciously directed us through the downtown area, for suddenly there was Quentin walking up the sidewalk.

I was so grateful that my husband could be with Randy in the surgery room. I feared for Randy's life. I prayed as I waited for the "bad news." It took a long time and many stitches but we took Randy home and he recovered completely. Today, at 49 years of age, he has only a scar and pictures we took of his "owie." God touched our little boy with healing beyond the doctor's care.

A miracle? We believe so. A fall like that onto a cement floor could have been very serious. We know God answered our prayers.

*SONG: There Is a Balm in Gilead*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Father, may your angels always watch our every footstep and breath. Thank you for the many times you have cared for us.*

—Florene Nordyke