**The Dinner Bell is Ringing**

***32****Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda.****33****There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed.****34****And Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed.” And immediately he rose.****35****And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord. (Acts 9:32-35, ESV)*

 God’s miracles are like the ringing of a dinner bell – if you answer them, you will get stronger in faith and your life will change.

 Greetings in the Lord as we talk today about God’s call, which is sometimes like the ringing of a dinner bell, meant to call us to a meal. Back in the day, when a family worked in the fields and a hot meal was ready, there would be a bell near the kitchen that would be rung so that the family members would return from the fields and have the meal hot. God’s miracles are just like that. In fact, God uses each episode in the Scriptures to invite us to a spiritual meal, so that we would eat, be satisfied, and grow. Today we’re going to talk about that spiritual call. My prayer is that God will intensify our spiritual hunger, so that when we hear the spiritual dinner bell ringing, we would have the right answer to it. (Let’s talk about these callings).

 God calls us to Himself through His deeds – but what is important is our recognition of the calls and having the right response to Him. The book of Acts talks about how Peter had a foundational role in the flourishing of the early church. In a town called Lydda, not far from Jerusalem, he experienced a memorable event. First, he found the church there and stayed in the house in which it gathered. Then he met a paralyzed man who had been that way for eight years by the name of Aeneas. Amazingly (if you pay close attention to the verses), Peter did not technically pray for him. Neither do we read that he fasted for him, knelt in prayer for him, or made any other effort to build up his own faith to say what he did, with Aeneas’ healing as a goal. Peter simply declared what he was seeing and sensing out loud, as if he was describing an event. He said that Jesus Christ heals Aeneas. Then, even more baffling than that, he told the paralyzed man to get up and make his bed. In other words, he connected his spiritual sense and the faith that he had with real life. There was no hesitation of Peter’s part; we do not see any trace of doubt or delay in his actions. He made his declaration into a practical command very naturally and immediately. Doing the latter became the means by which all the residents of that area saw the miracle and turned to the Lord Jesus. All it was, was a practical expression of faith based on a declaration of faith. It was one dinner bell to whom every person ran to sit at the table.

 Many say that God’s miracles are the dinner bells that lead to salvation in Christ. There was once an alcoholic who became a believer. He was asked how he could possibly believe all the nonsense in the Bible about miracles. "You don't believe that Jesus changed the water into wine do you?" He said, "I sure do, because in our house Jesus changed the whiskey into furniture."

 God is not only expecting faith from us for miracles, but also that we recognize His call when He calls us closer to Him in our faith-walk. Each prayer that the Lord answers is a bell for us. Each miracle is a call to remember to get closer to God. Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, God is always inviting us to pay attention to His dinner bells – to pay attention to his invitations – to pay attention to his signs. Why does He do that? The reason is because when you have the right response to His call, you will be spiritually and psychologically satisfied, and you will grow in your faith.

 Decide today to pay attention to God’s dinner bells. Decide that you are going to understand what they are. Do not ignore God’s miracles, so that you can grow and see your ministry develop even more.

 God’s miracles are like the ringing of a dinner bell – if you answer them, you will get stronger in faith and your life will change. May God give us the discernment to see His works and to be encouraged and strengthened by them, so that we may strengthen others around us. May the Lord bless you all. Amen.