

Even there, your hand
will guide me Your
right hand will hold me fast

Tell them stories



Antes la desolada,
Deleite ya de Dios



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JARS *of* CLAY

*One family's journey of faith, doubt and
discovering God's love through the miraculous*

BECKY CRETNEY

For Daniel and Ariadna.

May you always have eyes to see the hand of the Almighty at work.

And may the Lord be with you always.

May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble!

May the name of the God of Jacob protect you!

May he send you help from the sanctuary

and give you support from Zion!

May he remember all your offerings

and regard with favor your burnt sacrifices! Selah

May he grant you your heart's desire

and fulfill all your plans!

May we shout for joy over your salvation,

and in the name of our God set up our banners!

May the Lord fulfill all your petitions!

Now I know that the Lord saves his anointed;

he will answer him from his holy heaven

with the saving might of his right hand.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses,

but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

They collapse and fall,

but we rise and stand upright.

O Lord, save the king!

May he answer us when we call.

(Psalm 20:1-9, ESV)

Preface



Have you ever witnessed a miracle? Perhaps something that defied human logic, a moment too unlikely to be called coincidence, or a series of events so astonishing it made you pause in wonder. Maybe you have seen an incredible answer to prayer, or sensed quiet signposts pointing you towards a new direction—or even towards God Himself.

I have. Millions of people have. So I wouldn't be surprised if you had. In fact I would go as far as to say that life is a series of miracles, signs and moments of wonder. And that when you look in the rear-view mirror of your life you might think: *Wow, what a miraculous web of connections.*

But what do I mean by miracles?

I once asked three teenagers that question, and their answers surprised me. One said a miracle was an answer to prayer. Another called it a break in the laws of nature. A third described it as God intervening in human life. That conversation shaped my own thinking.

Here is the definition I arrived at: I believe life itself is a series of miracles, because it is God who writes and sustains the laws of nature and the life within them. If that is true, then a miracle may be less about something breaking those laws and more about a moment when we suddenly see his hand at work in what once seemed ordinary.

In other words, could it not be that a miracle is simply a widening of our vision? Could it be that God is continuously working in both the ordinary and extraordinary, maintaining or interrupting the laws of nature, but that for a fleeting moment we witness his work? This glimpse might then make us pause in our otherwise busy lives and allow us to discern some of his purpose.

This is the lens through which I see the world, and the perspective from which I tell this story. You may not share it, and that is completely fine. This book is not an argument to win, but a story to consider, and you are welcome here whatever your conclusions.

Maybe you cannot accept this definition because you do not believe

in God. Having witnessed something incredible, you have carefully analysed it, and put it down to freakish chance.

Or perhaps you don't know whether to believe in a god or not, but you know you've lived something extraordinary.

You may recognise the hand of a god behind a miracle, yet be unsure who that god is—or whether that god is a person at all.

Finally, you may believe in God. You might even have gone as far as to keep a record of all the miracles you have seen, to bear witness to how a guiding hand has used miracles in your life to shape the pattern of your story.

Whatever your beliefs and experiences, I hope you will enjoy reading my story and perhaps go back in time to savour the moments in your own past that have left you wondering if God was afoot.

This little book is a record of my family's journey thus far, including some of the miracles I have witnessed and how I have interpreted them. All the events described here are true to the best of my recollection. I have sought permission from those named in these pages so they, too, are living witnesses to what I recount.

I hope that, as you read how I believe God has shaped and directed my family's life, these pages may help you reflect on how he may be carefully moulding yours. Because although this traces my story, this story isn't really about me. I am just one of the millions of lives he has permanently and painstakingly altered. This story is about the author of those miracles, the one who is in control, who gently calls, shapes and moulds, the one who loved us first.

As you read, you may see echoes of your story in mine and recognise the pattern the Almighty has been lovingly weaving through your own life. It may be that God will use this story of his to bring you closer to him, to gently break and restore you. Maybe he will prompt you to keep a record of your own wow moments. How wonderful would that be, if we could all easily recall the miraculous and were willing to share the sheer joy or wonderment of it with others?

My prayer for you is that your eyes would be opened to see the great and wonderful things the Almighty has done—and will yet do—in and through you. And that as a result you would walk closely with your God, with a song of praise on your lips and joy in your heart as you are called to follow him.

In many ways, this is the heart of what I hope to achieve through this book:

*Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that
you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or
let them fade from your heart as long as you live.*

*Teach them to your children
and to their children after them.*

Deuteronomy 4:9

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Introduction



This book traces the story of my family and me through a series of miracles, signs, and wonders. To help tell that story clearly, I have divided each chapter into two parts.

First, each chapter begins with a brief vignette from our family's life. These sections simply recount events as they unfolded, inviting you into small moments that, taken together, form the pattern of our journey.

Second, each chapter concludes with a section titled *A miracle, a sign, a wonder?* In these pages I reflect on what those events might mean. I ask questions such as: What can I learn from this chapter of our lives? Are there parallels in Scripture? And, looking back, can I discern what God might have been doing or showing us?

The first part of each chapter is factual and true to events as I remember them. Where other people are named, they have reviewed the account to ensure its accuracy.

The second part of each chapter is, by nature, more personal and imperfect. It represents my own reflections and interpretations. After all, how can any of us fully understand God's purposes? These sections are offered humbly, as one person trying to make sense of the ways in which God has worked in our lives.

One small thread runs through all these chapters: at home we keep a jar I painted with little pictures—tiny reminders of moments when God's goodness broke through. Each chapter corresponds to one of those images, a way of remembering what we might otherwise forget.

When I first began writing, this book contained many more stories than it does now. In the end, I chose to share only a selection of the miracles we have witnessed—enough, I hope, to give you a glimpse of what the Lord has done.

Finally, a brief note about Scripture references: some quotations include the translation used (for example, MSG or NLT). Where no translation is indicated, the passage is taken from the New International Version (NIV).

PART ONE: ROOTS AND ROADMAPS

These chapters tell how our family story began, through moments of calling, doubt, and reluctant obedience. Looking back, what once felt uncertain now reveals a pattern: God at work, guiding step by step.