6. Jez the miracle worker

Jez and his Dad stories were first written as 1-minute Monday-Friday thoughts for Pennine Radio

"When I get there," said Jez, "I reckon I'll have a bit of a job. Aren't people going to find it hard to believe I'm anyone special?"

"Don't worry," said his Dad. "You're my son, remember. People will eventually recognise the family characteristics – at least, those who know anything about me will."

"What family characteristics?" asked Jez.

"I created the world," said his Dad. "I thought up the whole idea as an expression of my love. People will see that what you're doing is putting my love into action."

"Just like making the world was love in action?" said Jez.

"Yes," said his Dad, "but this will be taking things a bit further. You're the main part of my plan to put right all that's gone wrong in the world. When you get there, the miraculous way you start putting things right will show quite clearly that you come from me. The miracles will be a kind of sign of your authority."

"Dad," said Jez, "what actually do they think a miracle *is*?"

"Well," said his Dad, "when you start putting things right, the way they should always have been, it'll sometimes seem that you're doing the impossible. *That's* what they call a miracle."

"I was planning *telling* them about you and the way you want things to be," said Jez thoughtfully.

"Oh, there will be plenty of opportunity to speak to people," said his Dad. "You'll certainly have to do that. Indeed, people may well think it a bit of a miracle that you can speak with such authority and power. That will help them believe in you. But some are going to find it harder, and miracles will be an added help for them."

"You mean it'll sort of jerk their attention away from things as they are – to things as they should be," said Jez.

"That's right," said his Dad. "Miracles will not only be doing good things in themselves. They'll also draw people to believe in you, and in the truth of what you say."

Jez thought about this for a bit, and then began listing things that had gone wrong with his Dad's world and were causing suffering – things he'd have to start putting right.

"Some people are blind," he said. "Some are lame. Others are deaf and dumb. And lots of people have diseases that need curing."

"Yes," said his Dad, "these are all wrong. And when you begin to put them right they'll certainly be called miracles. But don't think that's all you're going for."

"Oh, I don't," said Jez. "Healing sickness is only part of my job. I realise that."

"What I mean," said his Dad, "is that you mustn't just rely on miracles. Otherwise people will concentrate on them and forget to listen to your message."

"But the miracles are surely part of the message?" said Jez.

"Yes, they're a part," said his Dad. "But remember that the *main* thing is to get people to abandon evil and seek good. Everything you do or say is for that end."

"It's going to be a big job," said Jez thoughtfully, as he looked ahead.

"I think the hardest thing you have to do," said his Dad, "is to keep the balance between being a star and a servant."

"How do you mean?" asked Jez.

"Well," said his Dad, "whenever you have to do anything spectacular – a miracle of healing, or even a miracle of understanding and teaching – there will be a risk."

"A risk?"

"Yes. A risk that people will think you're a star. They'll flock to you and try to set you up as something, because of the power you have."

"Well, how will I cope with that," asked Jez.

"What you've got to do," said his Dad, "is show that all these miracles *fit in* with your message of help."

"Being a servant, you mean?"

"Yes, being there for people. Helping them to see that the only hope they have of putting right what's wrong in the world – even with miracles – is by leading a life of love. A new life, based on faith in you."

"Faith," said Jez. "You say people will have to have faith in me."

"Yes," said his Dad. "There's precious little you can do for anyone if they've no faith in you."

"What about the miracles?"

"That's the point!" said his Dad. "You'll be able to do very few miracles without the faith of the people you want to help."

Jez looked puzzled.

"Miracles will certainly help some people to have faith when they see them happen," said his Dad. "That's quite true. But, and this is important, you can't work miracles to help or heal people against their will. If they don't start off with some faith in you, just some, then there's no way they can use what you have to offer."

"So how will I manage?" cried Jez. "It's catch 22!"

"Remember," said his Dad reassuringly, "remember who you are and who you've come from. You have more than a little of your father about you, and once people sense *that*, it will give them the faith they need."