

Signs, Wonders, and Weirdos

(Acts 2:43) (Acts 5:12-16)(2 Peter 2:1-3)(1 John 4:1-3)(Acts 2:17)

Yearly Theme: “Joy is...”

Series Title: “Acts of Joy”

October 11th, 2020

Something to think about:

When was the last time you truly experienced the Holy Spirit? As Christians, have we become okay with the apparent lack of the Holy Spirit's power in the American Church? Do we just accept it because we can't get our mind around that kind of Power? Do we believe God still works in supernatural ways? Would we be willing to acknowledge it? To embrace it? As we continue looking at the first church and their relationship with God, it becomes very apparent that there is one glaring difference between the Church in Acts and our Church in the United States. Let's take a look at Acts 2:43.

Acts 2:43

⁴³A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.

We see this happening again in Acts 5:12-16:

Acts 5:12-16

¹²The apostles were performing many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers were meeting regularly at the Temple in the area known as Solomon's Colonnade. ¹³But no one else dared to join them, even though all the people had high regard for them. ¹⁴Yet more and more people believed and were brought to the Lord—crowds of both men and women. ¹⁵As a result of the apostles' work, sick people were brought out into the streets on beds and mats so that Peter's shadow might fall across some of them as he went by. ¹⁶Crowds came from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and they were all healed.

So, what's happening? Why can we see the work of the Holy Spirit so visibly during the birth of the church but now we hardly ever see him manifest in the American and European church? In my opinion, we have lost a major component of what it means to be a Christian, and because of this the church is hurting. We see the Holy Spirit working and moving throughout the old and new testament, but we are ok with the idea of him being “silent” now. To be fair God has had times of “silence” most notably the 400+ years between the books of Malachi in the old Testament and Matthew in the New Testament. However, during that time, his people were pleading for him to move and work, and a remnant remained poised and ready to act when he did. We see this made evident with Simeon, who is a man who patiently and consistently waited on the miraculous and could see the messiah when he met Jesus at his dedication.

Are we poised and ready for the Miraculous? Do we even believe it's possible? Are we pleading with God to move? I believe that we as the church have come to fear the supernatural. The devil has used the supernatural to frighten, distract, and lead the church astray. Because of this, in an attempt to guard ourselves, we have cut ourselves off to the supernatural. In so doing I believe we have also suppressed the works of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, even though it's harder to discern the good from evil rather than just reject all supernatural outright, we must do the hard work so that we don't miss God's supernatural works.

1 John 4:1-3

Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. ²This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. ³But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here.

So what do we do? How are we as the church supposed to interact with the supernatural side of God? I believe that we must be in the proper posture to experience the Holy Spirit and that posture isn't some magic spell but rather a natural progression of Christian faith.

Key Point: “The Christian life devoid of the Holy Spirit is meaningless”

1. It should start with us having Awe (fear) for God (Psalm 33:8, Proverbs 1:7, Hebrews 12:28)
2. This Awe should lead to us acknowledging with our hearts and minds that God has control and dominion over all things (Rev 4:11)
3. This should cause us to thirst for God, so we read his word and pray (2 Timothy 3:16-17, Psalm 119:105, Joshua 1:8, Matthew 4:4)
4. The word teaches us to wait for the Spirit of God to Move (don't try to manufacture it) (John 3:30, Acts 1:4)
5. Finally, when the supernatural does happen we are ready for it because our hearts and minds are poised and ready to accept any works the Lord wants to do and we have studied scripture so we are able to test and discern if it is false. (2 Timothy 4:1-5, 2 Peter 2:1-3)