

Mission 11 – The Supernatural

Acts 2:40-47

And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” **41** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. **45** And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. **46** And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, **47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.**

Introduction

We continue our look at who was the early church.

We note 4 things about these early Christians.

They:

- a. Devoted themselves
- b. To the Apostles teaching
- c. And to the fellowship and
- d. The breaking of bread and prayers

In other words they were:

- a. Passionate
- b. Teachable
- c. Accountable
- d. Spiritual

We started looking at the early church because here you have a group of people who are our closet model and example of what the Christian church should be.

These people just turned from being the mob that cried Crucify Him to the first people to experience HIS saving love and grace and as a result of this revelation they went on to “turn their world upside down”

Now you have heard me say many times that I long to see a reformation in our lifetime, a movement of the spirit of God that sweeps our nation and the world.

The word Authentic means that it was not copied.

It is trust worthy
It is valid
It is not false

I believe that what we need is an authentic movement of God that has a lasting impact.

Paul S. Rees said:

"Revival and evangelism, although closely linked, are not to be confused. Revival is an experience in the Church; evangelism is an expression of the Church."

Let us start today by looking at this scripture as it is. Now this will be pedantic and repetitive, but I am being deliberate and purposeful.

I need to ask you to try not to view it through the blinders of your previous denomination.

The blinders of your personal experience, or

The blinders of your family stories of cultural accounts

But let us look at the word and SEE what it is saying.

When we read this account of the early church we notice a very clear progression.

These people were first of all passionate for the things of God.

Their life had been turn around.

They had been changed for all eternity and they were in love with the Man who had brought that about, Jesus Christ!

You know so many Christians seem to have lost this.

We have lost this open throttle, non-restrained passion for Christ

Everything we seem to do as church is sanitized.

It is clean

It is busy, but not effective.

R. A. Torrey

"We are too busy to pray, and so we are too busy to have power. We have a great deal of activity, but we accomplish little; many services but few conversions; much machinery but few results."

Then secondly out of this Devotion that gave themselves to knowing this God who first loved them.

Now this is important.

We live in a generation who have had modeled to us that a passion for God is in fact only found in, emotional extremism.

That a passion for God can only be expressed in irrational and often ridiculous behavior and beliefs.

That wasn't the case in the early church.

The love for Christ first engaged the heart, then it challenged the mind.

These people first knew in WHOM they believed. They now needed to know WHAT they believed.

You are saved by the renewal of your mind, not the removal of your mind

It was said of Tozer:

His sermons were never shallow, There was hard thinking behind them, and [he] forced his hearers to think with him. He had the ability to make his listeners face themselves in the light of what God was saying to them.

I think that is important.

A sermon should give you something to chew on all week long.

It should be the sort of thing that makes you think,
Makes you go over again,
Makes you dwell on and examine certain areas of your life,

Out of Devotion
Out of Doctrine

The third area Fellowship

The natural bi-product of a love for Christ and a love for His Word is a love for each other.

Church is about loving God and loving people.

Not attending and doing, engaging on every level with everyone in a meaningful way.

Then out of Devotion, doctrine and fellowship comes personally and spiritually.

Corrie ten Boom

"Don,t pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it. A man is powerful on his knees."

True Christian Spiritually is always a deeply personal matter before it ever has a public manifestation.

You are who you are in your shed before you are who you are in the pulpit.

Then a change happens

At this point in the narrative, there comes a change

At this point in the recounting by Luke of the early church, there comes a change.

You have heard me all say at different times

"Before you were saved, the gospel was all about you, now that you are saved, it is all about them"

That is what happens at this point

Some of you have had no problem whatsoever with the historical account so far

Some of you will say "Ah yes, I agree with everything. I agree this is how it should be, I agree this is what church should look like, this is acceptable. This fits with my doctrine"

But now we come to this, now we come to the part that upsets all the local neighborhood brand churches apple carts

Out of Spirituality on a personal and corporate level

As a result of this, the natural byproducts of this...miracles,

Signs and wonders

Arthur Wallis

"Apostolic preaching is not marked by its beautiful diction, or literary polish, or Cleverness of expression, but Operates "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." -

So it is with the life of a Christian.

It was not passion alone that was needed to change the world

It was not sound doctrine and teaching that was needed only to touch the minds of men

It was not fellowship only that was needed.

It was not a corporate expression of a persona devotion that was needed to manifest Gods love to people around them.

No...what the world needed then, is the same as the world needs now – power form another world!

The supernatural is the tool that was given to the early church as the proof that the same God that raised Christ from the dead also quickened their mortal bodies

The Supernatural is not the domain of the ever weird!

But is the domain of the everyday

It is not the domain of the mega-superstar-Christian

But the daily bread of the saints!

Before I got saved, I messed with some new age and occult stuff

And I knew the reality of the supernatural

When I got saved I saw entire churches deny it ever existed

The occultist knew God was real and Jesus was real

The modern church seems to deny the reality of anything but the material and the temporal

But not this early church

The supernatural was a bi-product of healthy and authentic spirituality and to stop its natural manifestation is to deny a tree its fruit.

The early church and the early Christians were mandated by Christ to move in the power of God to expand and establish the kingdom.

The reason I believe that the church in the west is struggling is because she has come to rely too much on her own schedules and programs and not enough on the supernatural.

You can build a crowd through marketing; you can only build the church supernaturally.

I believe that a church whose aim is to be accepted, popular and populist is fulfilling its own agenda and not living out the mission statement of Christ and the Mission statement of the local church.

Lets have a look at the mission statement of Jesus Christ

Ephesians 2:19-21 ESV

(19) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

(20) Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

(21) In whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

- You and I are called together to work in cooperation and make up a wonderful thing called the body of Christ.
- We are called to be the physical evidence of a supernatural work.
- The natural manifestation of the spiritual world.
- Everything that we build, all that we are called to be is based upon the teaching that is passed down to us... But the stability, the thing that locks it all together is the cornerstone truths that are the full measure of Christ.
- And only on us manifesting, believing, seeing and living those truths can the church become all that it is meant to be and rise to become a holy temple for all the earth believers and non-believers to see.

A cornerstone...

A cornerstone is a large stone at the base of a building, which by it's sheer size binds and under girds the structure. It is the intersection stone, the place of the meeting of two walls and in our case the intersection part of two worlds.

Matthew 16:18-19 ESV

(18) And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

(19) I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

He is the place where the impossibility is an every day occurrence,
He is the fulcrum of the manifestation of all that God wants us to be
and that we can be to humanity.

- Upon this Rock,
- Upon this revelation
- Upon this revelation of who Christ is and what He has done, the church will be build and rise to it's fullness.

John G Lake said:

The human being is God's marvelous, wonderful instrument, the most marvelous and wonderful creation of all the creation of God. It has the incredible capacity to receive and reveal God.

When God wants to touch or heal, or deliver a man, the healing or touch does not fall from heaven, but it does come through the medium of the child of God.

Therefore, God has given us the exalted privilege of being co-workers with him. And among our high privileges is to radiate, to give forth from the love-passion of our souls, the courage and strength to help others souls come to God.

A Christian is unique.

He stands alone.

He supersedes all how have gone before.

He will not have a successor.

He is mankind at it's best and God's best effort for mankind.

Now a cornerstone has six sides.

Each of these sides represent an aspect, a completed work that makes up the whole foundational stone, the complete summary of all that Christ is wanting to do and is still doing in the earth today.

Luke 4:18-19 ESV

*(18) "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
(19) To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

The first aspect of the Mission statement of Jesus is:

1. To preach the good news to the poor

The word poor here in the Greek means:

- 1) Reduced to beggary, begging, asking alms
- 2) Destitute of wealth, influence, position, honor

The poverty that is spoken of is spiritual

But the principal I believe can be applied materially as well

Poverty is not of God, in any aspects.

I don't believe that God wants to make a person spiritually wealthy to watch them die of hunger.

The bible is full of references to God blessing His people; it is not brain damage to argue against this.

God promises to meet our needs, not our greed!

It's the only command I would have you dwell on.

2. To heal the broken hearted

We are fallen people in a fallen world.

I am constantly and continually overwhelmed by people's capacity for cruelty to each other.

And I am constantly and wonderfully surprised at the brilliance of God and His ability to heal and bind up the broken hearted.

This is a very real thing that God does for his people.

3. Proclaim Liberty to captives

Bound by sin, bound by sickness, bound by death, bound by fear

So many people spend their lives bound up and fearful of things.

Christ has promised that His burden is light, HIS yoke easy

4. Recovery of sight to the blind

- Physical healing in all services,
- Remove the scabs of religion, and
- Doctrinal errors

5. Liberty to the oppressed

Oppressed spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally
To see more people freed from religion

6. Acceptable year of the lord

A year of celebration, freedom, prosperity, repatriation, released from bondage and jail.

Every one of these aspects is an aspect of the miraculous

Is an aspect of the redeeming work of Christ

But then someone might say...

Well that is OK for Jesus, that is what He does, the disciples were never ask to do that, We the church, we don't ever have to do that stuff

Starting a revival amongst family and friends

In fact that is the opposite of what Jesus asked His disciples to do.

Jesus told his disciples, I want you to start revivals amongst family and friends using the supernatural tools you have at your disposal.

Luke 10:8-9 ESV

(8) Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you.

(9) Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

In this verse, Jesus gives his disciples a simple four-step plan on how to start a citywide revival

1. Go where you are celebrated

Go where you have relationship
Go to family members and to friends
To people from work
To people from the football club

2. Fellowship with them.

Don't be hung up on your religious comfort or practices.

People accused Jesus of being a glutton and a wino.

He fellowshiped outside of the normal group of people in a way that offended the religious peoples refined sensibilities.

Now this is not an excuse to live a lifestyle of sin and excess, but what I am suggesting is that some of you have to get over your bad selves

And realize that you are the light of the world and sin cannot rub off on you, but you can rub off on sin

Offend your families and friends with your passion and fire you have for God.

Leave them with the issues, don't take any home.

3. Heal the sick; do service, cure, restore the health of feeble and infirmed.

Don't justify why healing doesn't happen, but show them that it does and show them that Jesus is who He says he is and can do what he says he can do.

4. This is reference to a general text that was to make up a part of all their sermons

Mt 3:2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

Based upon the miracles, based upon the evidence, people will be hungry to know this Jesus that we are so keen to tell them about.

The question of evidence

The power of God, it seems to me, has been reduced by the actions of many to a trick to be performed as opposed to a tool that was given to us. It has been used as a gimmick to raise funds for ministries instead of the right and resource of every believer.

We have lost the why behind the power of God.

Acts 1:8 ESV

(8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

The reason we were initially given power, and still have access to the power of God and are able to do supernatural signs and wonders, is because we are asked to be witnesses!

What is a witness?

Someone who has evidence

What is our evidence?

Mark 16:17-18 ESV

(17) And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues;

(18) They will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

And these signs

These tokens

These evidences

Will follow them that believe

Why most people cannot be a witness for Christ, or they struggle so much with it, is because they have no evidence.

Do get upset about it, and get ticked off about it, yet determine to do something about it.

Beccy and I did.

A person with experience is never at the mercy of a person with an argument.

I think the church should be judged not by the size of the crowds, but the evidence of the supernatural!

This was the same criteria by which Jesus asked that his ministry be judged

John 10:37-38 ESV

(37) If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me;

(38) But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."

Clarke:

Jesus was saying:

I desire you to believe only on the evidence of my works. If I do not do such works as God only can perform, then believe me not.

The crowds cried for evidence, they demanded it

John 2:18

Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

The religious people demanded a sign:

Mt 12:38

Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."

Jesus doesn't argue with this, he does debate the need for the sign. He doesn't say... *"There there, unfaithful people. You need to walk by faith and not by sight"*.

In fact he does the opposite

Gill says:

Christ appeals to his miracles as proofs of his deity, sonship, and Messiahship, and desires no other credit than what they demand.

Basically, I have delivered, will you believe?

That to me is evidence!

We have had people leave our church because e they saw a miracle or received a prophetic word, and run down the road to a place where that does not happen.

It should be the other way; people should leave places because there is no power!

The case for Thomas

Thomas is a classic case of “seeing is believing”. And to be honest with you there is nothing wrong with that. Where the challenge lies is with people who see and choose NOT to believe.

John 20:25-29

25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"

27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus never called Thomas doubting - we have given him that name, Jesus just called him Thomas.

Jesus just reached out to Thomas in the midst of his fear, his doubt and his disbelief and said – touch me, feel me, whatever you have to do, do. Whatever you must see, see; only believe.

We have a world that is fearful, dying, desperate and caught in a fog of disbelief.

Most of them want to believe, they just need to see to believe.

We live in a world where lots of people are making a presentation of some sort of who Jesus is. Some false, some a version of reality.

The only way they will know is if you live the life Jesus lived, say the things Jesus says and do the things Jesus did.

Reading authentic miracles are the literal tests and the clear indication the God is alive and well on planet earth!

That was for then, not for now

There is a group of churches who engage in something called dispensational theology.

They say that things like healings, and signs and wonders, were the day of the Apostles and not for now.

They say that only the Apostles could do that sort of thing, that we cannot now.

That may be their experience, but it cannot be taken as correct theology.

There is nothing in the bible that says that the mandate that Christ issued for how the church should form and function died with the first generation of Apostles.

They say that only the Apostles could do miracles

Then why do we get this exhortation from James, the brother of Jesus, James the leaders of the church in Jerusalem?

James 5:14-15 ESV

(14) Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

(15) And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

He didn't say, bring them up to Jerusalem to see the Apostles

He didn't say...take them to Ephesus to see Paul and Peter at the crusade meetings.

He said, call people of spiritual maturity and faith, people in your local congregation and get you some repenting, some praying and some healing happening.

It's not that hard folks. Lay hands and they shall recover!

Now does this mean I see 100% of everyone I pray for healed?

No! But that is not my job. My job is to lay hands on 100% of people who I can help.

The rest is up to God.

It is about his sovereignty and desire. Not my popularity or reputation or social acceptance.

I love these guys with their dispensational theology!

It only takes one small miracle and it ruins their entire argument.

One account of God doing a miraculous thing,
A supernatural thing,

And their argument is shot to pieces!

JONI

RONDA

STEVE

Every week we have our supernatural Sunday Night Service

Every week see God touch and change lives

Every week we pray for the sick

We pray for people in a state of mental or emotional anguish

Come to SSN not because you need a miracle, but because someone else has come who needs your faith!

Come and feel and see God move in a different way

The Supernatural Signs and wonders is the natural bi-product of a healthy Christian life