

## The Mission 9 - Spirituality

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.

Acts 2:42

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

We come once again to our study of the lives of the early Christians and the creation of the early church.

We started our series some 9 weeks ago and we called it The Mission.

The reason I called it The Mission is because I wanted to bring a sense of clarity to what the mission of the church is.

I feel that we have lost that.

That we have lost sight of the mission and role of the church in our society.

If you read about the lives of great military men of great military conquest you read about their commitment to the mission. You read about how the mission galvanized and focused the troops.

If you wonder around Macdill Air force Base where the USA central command is located you will see offices for the Air force, the Marines, the Navy and the Special Forces.

Different branches, different functions, different powers, different roles – one mission.

The church of Jesus Christ has one mission, to deal with the spiritual state of men and women.

This is not a discussion point. This is not something that we need greater clarification on.

I have heard some people say “Well our church... we just catch the fish, someone else can clean them.”

Well that is not right. You don't get to rewrite the mission.

Other churches say “We don't do evangelism, we are a teaching body. We do discipleship.”

You don't get to choose to have a passion for souls.

It is a mandate, a mission from heaven.

So that is the job of the church catholic – the universal church.

The interpretation of that mission here makes up our vision.

Our vision of:  
One World  
One Chance  
One Savior

Our vision of bringing a living Jesus to a dying world.

Our vision of a reformation in our lifetime. A Christian Revolution for our children.

Everything we do must serve that vision.  
Everything we do must under gird that vision.

Nothing must be allowed to pull us from our path.

The Father laid out the mission to His Son, and the Son gave everything, His desires, His wishes, His longings, His passion, His feelings, His energy, His body and His blood to fulfill this will of the Father.

You see I believe the church at large has lost this. I believe church for so many has become about meeting my felt needs.

About my wants, not His will.  
About my destiny, not His desire.  
About my feelings and not His mandate.

If we can get a picture, a clear image of the early church and the people who built it then we have a chance to become all that we are called to and achieve all we are supposed to.

If we have seen a drop in the power, influence and place of Christians and the Christian church in the last 25 years – and we have – we need to examine the attitudes and choices we have made that have allowed us to live this way.

Let's peel back the paint, fix what needs to be fixed and move on and change the world.

## **Recap**

We noted in our looking at the life of the early Christians, we noticed 4 things about them from v. 42

Acts 2:42

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

- a. they devoted themselves
- b. to the Apostles teaching
- c. and to the fellowship
- d. the breaking of bread and prayer

In other words they were:

- a. passionate
- b. teachable
- c. accountable
- d. spiritual

They were devoted:

Loyal  
Dedicated  
Faithful

To what....?

To the Apostles doctrine and their fellowship.

To the people they were called to.

To the people they meet Christ with, in other words to their church.

It wasn't an issue of convenience, but conviction.

It wasn't a matter of comfort but passion.

And out of this passion for doctrine.

Out of this commitment to their local church the fruit of their spiritual walk started to take place.

Did you notice that the early Christians did not develop spiritually in isolation?

Did you notice that they did not start with their prayer life?

Luke says the early Christians started with a devotion, a commitment to fellowship, sound teaching and their local - what we today call church.

And as a result of that they became spiritual.  
And as a result of their personal spiritual walk, supernatural signs and wonders followed.

**Let's first talk about what spirituality is not.**

**Spirituality is not Christian mysticism or Pentecostal weirdism**

I received an email this week from a ministry that runs on of the biggest Christian wealth creation conference in the nation

He has some of the biggest Christian speakers/names in America

One of the side businesses he runs is called Wealthy Wares

This is what his website says:

*We are a manufacturing and distribution company that offers unique custom products. Currently we are offering a line of distinct anointing oils that can help focus your prayer life on strategic areas as Holy Spirit leads*

He will sell you 1/3 oz of Stewardship Oil that represents the tithe and wealth given to Jesus for only \$10

You rub this on your head while your pray and this helps you tithe

**Or there is the Wealth Transfer Oil**

This represent the wealth transfer to Jesus by the 3 wise men

There is the Climbing the Business Mountain Oil

Then...and this is one of my favorites:

## **The Breakout oil**

This again from the website:

Cinnamon for the fire of God. Ylang Ylang, is a romantic sent that helps overcome, fear, anxiety and depression. This is used because it is a fragrance that is created by God but not found in the scripture. It is to break us out of our religious mindsets and rekindle the fire of God's love

So this guy is telling me there is something that is not in the scripture that is going to help me over come religion

Now when you have people like this, there is a great term, it is also not in the bible for them...I cant use it in mixed company...and I know it is not in the bible, I check today to see if I could quote it

So lets just call them twits

When people like this are the only experience or reference point for the supernatural or the Holy Ghost then there is no wonder that full gospel churches are looked upon as freakish and weird

Hey...these guys freak me out

## **Spirituality is not the domain of women only**

Now I do not say this to deride the very spiritual woman that we have in our church, but to challenge the culture norm we have come to accept

*That spirituality is women's business*

*That church is what women do*

*That is mums job to teach the kids ho to pray or read their bible.*

The bible is one book by 66 authors – all of them men

The first 5 books of the bible is simply the story of seven men and the God they pursued

The greatest religious poet was a warrior king called David

The greatest love story and guide to sexuality – The Song of Solomon's was written by the wisest man who ever lived

I have never met a godly Christian woman who said "I wish my husband would be less spiritual. Or I wish my husband wouldn't go to prayer meetings or church, or I wish my husband would stop praying for the family and sharing his faith"

But I know a bunch that have seen me and crying asked "What can I do to have my husband pray with me, read the word with me, study and lead me...."

The only man in a church that is given the responsibility to disciple the men is the pastor, therefore the pastor discipled the man, the man discipled his family.

Sir, I am not held responsible for the spiritual state of your family – I am only held responsible for the spiritual state of mine.

Authentic Spirituality is not the domain of women only

### **So What is Spirituality ?**

Well as we have seen coming out of last week, Authentic Spirituality is a result of True Fellowship

## **True Fellowship promotes authentic spirituality.**

In modern times people have gotten so concerned with the tossing away of anything that appears religious.

instead of developing a clearer definition of authentic spirituality they have devalued, defiled, or deformed anything that appears spiritual.

They have said we need to 'modernize the church.'  
We need to be relevant.

They have renamed disciple as works.  
They have re-branded profanity as earthy communication.  
They have rewrapped lascivious as liberty.

And in reality what they have done is devalue true spirituality.

They came up with mocking names like 'you are just being super-spiritual,' or you are a fanatic.  
You are a member of a cult.

Truly a fanatic is someone who loves Christ more than you...I want to raise a Church full of Jesus Freaks, not Luke Warm Losers.

True fellowship actually helps you keep a healthy balance.

You are not surrounded with a bunch of clones but like-minded men and women.

If you get a little too excitable and decide to do a 120 day fast someone in true fellowship will turn up with ice cream and tell you you're a nutter.

If you need a break through and you need to fast and you have never done it before someone you are in fellowship with will say, 'I will walk beside you.'

## **Authentic Spirituality embraces and encourages personal discipline**

I am not responsible for your walk with Christ

You are

I can help create the environment

I can ensure the level of teaching and preaching

I can walk with our staff to ensure excellence with all we do....but that is not Authentic Spirituality

By the very nature of the term:

Authentic

It means, genuine, real, valid, bona fide, not copied

Your walk with Christ is something you must engage in on a daily basis

You must pray

You must read you bible

You must share your faith

These are individual expression of a personal conviction, nit the corporate trappings of a state run faith

## **Authentic Spirituality promotes balanced and open discipleship**

Discipleship is derived from the word discipline

Discipline means:

- Conscious control over lifestyle or activity
- Order
- Training to ensure proper behavior

The functions of any good church is to bring direction, correction and protection to its members

The job of any shepherd worth his salt is to bring direction to the body, correction to the body and protection to the body, either from themselves or outside influences

Pastoring is not a popularity contest – although many of the modern depictions of it would have you believe it is such.

Pastoring is a commitment to help people achieve what they could not achieve by themselves. Pastoring is leadership and it involves the development of leaders.

I am always aware of what Jesus said when he told His followers to be prepared to be hated by their generation

When the church is too popular, she is not doing her job

She is called to be salt on the wound of sin in the world

Light that exposes the state of it's depravity.

Not American Idol for the Spiritually lame

## **Authentic Spirituality is a passion for the things of God**

What a sad state we have become when Christians no longer encourage each other to pursue Christ, but rather we brand someone as not being culturally irrelevant or not relating because they have a passion for prayer, the supernatural or the things of God

Why is it that some people spend all their time trying to drag people down from their moral standards instead of giving them room to live by their convictions?

## **Authentic Spirituality is a daily walk**

It is doing a daily thing with Jesus

A daily thing for Jesus

You Christianity cannot be lived out in blocks of time, seasons of your life.

You can't say...after college, I will get it together

After school

After the kids

After the first year of marriage I will start to be committed to Christ and Church

After my business gets off the ground

Your walk with Christ is a daily walk.

It is a walk of consistency and purpose

This brings us to our next point

## **Authentic Spirituality confronts and deals with the Spiritual Strongholds in peoples lives**

*Matthew 12:29-30*

*Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.*

*Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.*

In Ephesians Paul talks about principalities of the air, cosmic powers, spiritual forces (for evil) in heaven places.

He is talking about the realm of the spirit and how the spiritual realm is a reality and has an influence on the every day life.

He goes on and talks about our victory and he talks about how a Christian has the armor and the ability to wage war.

Now we know we win....we have read the last chapter...but there is still a war going on and a battle to fight.

Paul says something interesting in Eph 6v12 that our war is not against flesh and blood.

The inference here is that, although it seems like we are fighting people, we are really fighting forces unseen.

Forces that people have allowed to control their life.

Forces that people have allowed into their life.

Areas that people have never corrected or attended to.

So we have to deal with spiritual forces on a **personal level**

The other thought is that over certain areas, over certain cities or countries there are certain spiritual forces at play that manifest themselves in a cultural way.

In Australia, Canberra is very liberal, Queensland is very lascivious and Sydney is very materialistic. Three different cities, three different characters, three different spiritual influences.

LA is very lascivious, Dallas is very religious and New York is very Narcissistic. Three different cities, three different characters, three different spiritual influences.

Here is one more thought, every generation has to deal with the Strongman of their times. They have to battle the forces that are arraigh against them in their generation.

In the 40's it was poverty  
In the 50's it was pasturing  
In the 60's it was the devaluing of the Word of God etc

So you have three levels in which you have to deal with Spiritual attacks and spiritual forces.

- Personal
- Cultural
- Generational.

As it is with people, so it is with us as a church body, us as a city and us as a nation.

### **On a 'Personal level'**

I mentioned a clear dream I had a couple of nights ago on provoke about the story of our church property. About two spirits that attacked leadership on this church property historically.

They brought accusations against the leadership, not against the moral character of the leadership but against, direction and intention.

They tried to pervert was a pure motive, a pure heart and the peoples best interest.

Now that is not an issue we have with the leadership of our church.

We have the best team and the best leaders that I have ever worked with

But on a “personal or local level” I believe that the spirits of the air that plague us and the strong men that we wrestle against are dissention and murmuring.

This area is full of churches that are competing for business not raising disciples.

If I get ticked of at McDonalds...what do I do?  
I go to Sonic and buy food and I walk in there and tell everyone I am here and never going to McDonalds again.

What does McDonalds’ do? Cheer and welcome you

They cater to the murmurers, they cater to the disenfranchised by making everyone comfortable about everything and confronting nothing.

I had a guy this week tell me that he liked going to so and so church because they never made him feel uncomfortable about his non-biblical sexual lifestyle.

### **On a ‘Cultural level’**

This part of Texas has seen the wild and woolly in the natural and in the spiritual. Many of the great moves of God started in Texas. Many of the great Christian ministries were born here and so have the flaky and weird.

This city is very religious.

Jesus talked a lot about Pharisee, they were the religious people of his day.

They talked the talk, but their character, their hearts didn’t add up. They said one thing, but did another.

They knew the words to say to impress people, to sound righteous, but their aims were always to bring bondage and destruction.

Jesus said of them that they put milestones around people necks. That the weight of their bondage and accusations were always destructive.

He said they looked like white washed tombs on the outside, but where rotten flesh and destruction on the inside.

A religious spirit will do that to you.  
A religious spirit will contaminate the pure with the impure.

Jesus was very specific when dealing with this, He said, a little leaven spoils the whole lump. He was teaching His disciples that you cannot tolerate even a little of this self righteous attitude in yourself or those around you

### **On a 'Generational level'**

As a generation the biggest issue we face is fatherlessness.

We have a generation of boys raised by women who do not know what it is to be men, husbands and fathers.

We have a generation of girls raised without the protection, affirmation or wholesome affection of a father.

This results in them not being whole as women, wives and mothers. A generation of girls being raised by women who hate men.

They are broken and have no true models of real men.

Again, it is an issue of fatherlessness. Girls are dating these boys who don't know what it is to be a men, husbands and fathers. Little girls desperately want to know their daddy loves them and will be there no matter what.

You combine these two groups and what you have is generational disaster one family unit at a time

The challenge with fatherless children is that they have never been said no to.

They don't like being disciplined.

They don't like being corrected.

If things don't go their way, they lash out and throw a tantrum.

They run to the wrong places for affirmation and affection

They run from places of strength and balances to places that they can either be the abuser or abused.

### **How does one do spiritual warfare against this spirituals?**

So how does one 'bind' these strong men?

Well how do you beat a spirit of pride?

Humility

How do you overcome a spirit of covetousness?

Generosity

How do you overcome a spirit of sloth?

Hard work

### **So how does this apply, How does Authentic Spirituality deal with the issues we faces as a generation?**

#### **On a 'Personal level'**

So how do you over come a spirit of dissention and murmuring?

You have heard me say it before....you are either a shield for your leader or a sword in the hand of your enemy

Be it at home  
In the workplace  
In church life

You have to choose sides

Staying neutral is a decision, you have made a choice  
Throwing down your shield and saying I am not fighting is worst than  
either running away or fighting for the enemy

You are deceiving yourself and all around you  
You are deliberately making holes in the fence, holes in the wall

The only way to deal with this Spirit is to confront it.  
You have to expose it

You have to ask people the hard questions

Because dissention and murmuring only like to hang out in the dark  
corners.

They only like to sneak around the back

*Ephesians 5:11-13 ESV*

*(11) Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but  
instead expose them.*

*(12) For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do  
in secret.*

*(13) But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes  
visible,*

Undermining spiritual leadership is something that Paul dealt with in  
Galatians.

It is something that started between James and John as they walked  
with Christ.

We have to watch it in ourselves, we have to watch it in each other  
and help each other stay pure and teachable.

## **On a 'Cultural level'**

How do you overcome a religious spirit?

You make sure that all that you do is biblically based

*2 John 1:10 ESV*

*(10) If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting,*

You work very hard to ensure that although the packaging is different, the package is the same

The method may changed, but the message never does.

You steer away from cultural trends

You stay on point in terms of message and method.

You become very intention about all that you do and do not allow yourself to be moved by the winds of doctrine diversity and popular culture

You don't allow emotionalism to play a role in key decisions

You seek wise council in the areas of major decision. Balanced council, council across generations

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## On a 'Generation Level'

How do you deal with a spirit of fatherlessness?

This is probably the hardest one because it is depended upon the heart of the senior leader and the attitude of those that follow

Paul said there are many instructors, many coaches, but not many fathers

*1 Corinthians 4:15*

*15 For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel*

Instructor means:

- tutors/guardians/teachers/coach?

The definition of a father is altogether different.

Father:

- the founders of a family or a society that is animated by the same spirit as himself
- one who infuses his own spirit into others, who impels and pushes, challenges the mind.

A father literally takes that which is within him and puts it within another.

<b>Coaches</b>	<b>Fathers</b>
Are paid for what they do	Love what they do
Professional pastors	Dedicated disciplers
Is an occupation	Is a lifestyle
Selects you	Gave birth to you
Will drop you from the side if you don't cut it	Will never leave you nor forsake you
Will pick you based on performance	Will love you in spite of performance
Will change teams	Heads up the team
Is in it for the season	Is in it for the long haul
Yells from the side line	Cries in the locker room
Tells a player how to play a game	Prepares a child for a lifetime

A father and families are meant to provide 3 very distinct things to a child

1. Direction
2. Correction
3. Protection

A Father is meant to fulfill the role of

1. Prophet
2. Priest
3. And king within the home.

These are the same three things a church is supposed to do

It is supposed to bring direction, correction, protection to its people

True Spiritually produces two things Fathers in the faith

Sons and daughters in the faith.

You cannot have a father in the faith if you are not prepared to be a son or a daughter

The amount of relationship is dependant upon the level of intimacy

If you do not allow someone to speak into you life, if you don't open your ears, nothing they can do will make you hear

### **Authentic Spirituality is outward looking, not inward looking**

**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.

Before you were saved, Christianity was all about you  
Now it is all about them

That is what the early church was like

This was not something that they consumed  
This was not something that was about all that they could get out of it

This was something that they shared  
This was something that they wanted the world to know about

The didn't go from house to house whining or bickering about their neighbors or the preaching or the Apostles

They went from house to house joyfully sharing all that Christ has done for them and in them

Joyfully sharing their faith

Gladly giving and receiving

This was not a program they implemented

But a person that they loved and they wanted to tell the world about Him

We have CD's in the foyer for you to give to a friend

We have books you can buy

A community on line you can join and send to your friends

People share the love, the joy, the hope, the passion that Christ has done in your life and for your life

### **Authentic Christianity always results in the supernatural**

The word Authentic means that it was not copied

It is trust worthy

It is valid

It is not false

Out of all this

Out of Devotion

Out of Doctrine

Out of Fellowship

Out of Spirituality on a personal and corporate level

As a result of this, the natural by-products of this...miracles

Signs and wonders

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

And I knew the reality of the supernatural

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

The occultic new God was real and Jesus was real

The church seemed to deny the reality of anything but the material

When I got saved

I read what Jesus said

And I wanted to do what Jesus did

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

But notice this

The starting point is not prayer

The starting point is devotion

The next is doctrine

Know what you believe and knowing that Jesus said this stuff was true

Then came church

Then you don't attend a crusade, you bring your need and faith to Church, to the fellowship

Come to SSN not because you need the miracle, but because someone needs your faith

Come and see the Holy Ghost move so you can learn to move in the Holy Ghost

Then they went from house to house celebrating all that God had done

You see I was going to end this series this week.  
I was going to say nothing more about joy.

But as I said earlier

I was praying I realized how many of you have lost your joy.  
How many of you are fearful.  
How many of you are hesitant to give of your tithe and offering.  
How many are hesitant to trust God and walk in His love

So we will take time next week to talk about walking in the presence  
of God