

WORSHIP SERVICE - 5.24.2025

PART 15 - REVERENCE AND REVIVAL

I. INTRODUCTION

- What would it take to make the church in any given community impossible to ignore?
- What we are seeing of the early church in Acts is such a church.
- In our passage today, we get another glimpse of the community of faith walking in divine power, holiness, and gospel effectiveness.
- But this is not just a record of WHAT WAS but a summons to WHAT CAN BE.
- As we walk through our text, may we be challenged by the early church's example to live boldly for Christ, trusting in his divine power to work in us and through us, to walk in the fear of the Lord and the fullness of the Spirit.

Acts 5:12-16

Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. 13 None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. 14 And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, 15 so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. 16 The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

II. CHURCH OF PURITY AND PROCLAMATION

- What we read follows the sobering account of Ananias and Sapphira. The judgment that came upon them demonstrated the great care and concern the Lord has to preserve the purity of his Church.
- After this event, Luke gives us another snapshot of the church in action.
- The emphasis is on the signs and wonders that were being done by the apostles and increasing growth of the Church.
- The opening statement in the first part of v12 is interrupted by a new line of thought that begins in the second half of v12 and continues through the end of v14. Then the statement about signs and wonders continues in vv15-16.
- V12b-14 is a parenthesis in which Luke is conveying a remarkable reality of the early church.
- V12b "And they were all together in Solomon's Portico."

- Luke is underscoring again the unity of the believers. They were in one accord.
 - This is a repeated theme in Acts. They are a unified church.
 - A familiar setting is referenced—Solomon's Portico.
 - This is the location in the temple complex where Peter and John powerfully proclaimed the gospel after the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate.
 - The site of that first preaching continued to be very important for the church after that time.
 - They took their bold witness to the heart of Jerusalem.
 - They were not hiding. They were in the most public, visible, and accessible place possible.
 - This sets the stage for the opposition and persecution that will follow.
 - The apostles, together with the whole church, continue their gospel witness.
-
- V13 sets up an interesting parallel: Though the believers were held in high esteem, none of the rest dared join them. And yet, more than ever people were coming to faith in Christ and being added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.
 - "None of the rest dared join them..." who is Luke referring to?
 - Probably Jewish people in general who are not part of the congregation.
 - Despite their reluctance to associate with the believers, they held them in high esteem.
 - Greek: megalynō ("to glorify or magnify")
 - They respected the conviction, beliefs, and devotion of the believers.
 - They respected the way they cared for one another.
 - The church was having an influence on those outside of her.
 - These people were reluctant to join them because they realized this is not a community to commit oneself to lightly. There is a cost to being part of the community of faith.
-
- Now, you would think after the death of Ananias and Sapphira, that the church's growth would stall a bit.
 - But the opposite happened.
 - V14 And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.
 - Despite threats from without and threats from within, the community of faith multiplies.
 - The purity of the Church, upheld by God's disciplining judgment, created a reverent fear that deterred insincere commitment.
 - God's holiness is both attractive and terrifying. (e.g. Mt. Sinai, Moses drew near while the people stayed at a distance.)
 - God's presence in the church, among his people, attracts yet demands reverence.
 - That's the tension we see happening in our passage, attraction to the gospel but reverent fear of God's judgment.
-
- Are we walking in the reverent fear of the Lord?
 - Are we living holy lives that shine with distinctiveness that reflect God's character?
 - Can others feel the weightiness of the presence of God with us?
 - A people living holy and reverent lives before the Lord are impossible to ignore—they stand out—they're different.
-
- We're reminded yet again of the sovereignty of God in salvation.
 - Nothing can hinder those whom the Father has given to his Son from being drawn to him. (John 6:44)
 - That should give us confidence to proclaim the good news.

- Nothing, not even human fear, can keep the gospel from effectively calling sinners and converting them from sin to salvation.
- Go public with your faith. Don't hide it!

III. A CHURCH OF POWER

- The prayer in Acts 4:30 was answered.
 - Acts 4:29-30 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, 30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."
 - Luke doesn't give a detailed account of miraculous healing as he did with the lame man at the gate but rather gives a general statement of the renewal actions of the apostles.
 - The public ministry of the apostles, as Christ's Spirit-empowered witnesses, is authenticated by this display of divine power to heal the sick and deliver those afflicted with unclean spirits.
 - When you read of the apostles performing these miracles you should see that as God's stamp of authority on them, confirming the gospel.
 - They are the human instruments God is using to powerfully proclaim the gospel testifying to the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - There are no apostles today like the twelve who were eyewitnesses to his resurrection and were with Jesus throughout his earthly ministry, and who were divinely commissioned by Christ after his resurrection, to be his Spirit-empowered witnesses.
 - We know that the power displayed to heal the sick doesn't come from them.
 - They are the human instruments of divine enablement. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit.
-
- Hebrews 2:1-4 Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. 2 For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, 4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.
 - What God was doing by the hands of the apostles were not random acts of supernatural manifestations for the personal fame and glory of the apostles but purposeful demonstrations of His power to validate the gospel message.
 - The signs and wonders were designed to point men and women to a spiritual truth by these uniquely commissioned witnesses.
-
- The apostles were foundational to the propagation of the gospel, the building of the Church and their testimony has forever been inscripturated in God's Word to continue to instruct the church today.
 - With the canon of Scripture completed and with the passing away of these apostles, the need for the signs and wonders to validate both message and messenger has also passed away.
 - This was not intended to be an ongoing and normative part of the life of the church but a unique aspect of apostolic ministry.
 - It is the reason we do not see this type of apostolic ministry function today.
 - 2 Corinthians 12:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

- Does that mean that God no longer does miracles today?
- Of course not! God is free to work above and beyond his ordinary means of providence.
- Yet there is no greater miracle than someone being brought from death to life.
- Can God heal the sick and should we pray for healing?—of course he can and does and we should pray for someone's healing.
- Can God deliver a person from an unclean spirit?—yes he can and he does.
- But we don't need signs and wonders anymore to authenticate the message of the gospel.
- The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. (Romans 1:16)
- We need to trust God's sovereign power to work through his ordained and ordinary means: the preaching of the Word and the ministry of the Church.

- The apostles were so active in their public ministry of proclamation with the confirming signs and wonders that they were drawing widespread attention.
- People were coming from all of the surrounding areas around Jerusalem to bring the sick and afflicted to be healed.
- What we see is that the church's influence was spreading beyond the walls of Jerusalem.
- They were beginning to fulfill the Lord's charge and mission to be his witnesses not only in Jerusalem but in Judea. (Acts 1:8)
- The sick were being healed and those afflicted by unclean spirits were being delivered by the hands of the apostles.
- The power of God was displayed as the gospel was proclaimed.
- We see the apostolic and the church's ministry mirroring Jesus's ministry.
- Luke 4:23-24 And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. 24 So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them.

- How can we be a church of power today if these kinds of signs and wonders aren't normative or necessary?
- Well, it means to boldly proclaim the good news in the power of the Spirit.
- But it also means to be moved with compassion for the lost and the destitute in our community and around us.
- Matthew 9:35-38 And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."
- We need to be moved with compassion asking the Lord to send us out as laborers to bring them the words of life.
- And we need to trust God to powerfully work through his gospel and through us to see lives healed and transformed for the glory of God.
- We need to trust God to grow his church through the faithful preaching of the gospel.
- We need to pray for the sick and suffering, trusting God's power to heal spiritually, and if he wills, to heal physically.

- As God gives us opportunities to minister to the poor, the hurting, and the afflicted in our community, we must rise to the occasion.
- Some of you have been on the sidelines, it's time to commit to deeper engagement with Christ's church.
- We need both purity and power to effectively proclaim the gospel and be a church of impact and influence.
- We need God to be at work in us and through us just like he did with the early church.
- We need to pray for a genuine revival in our church and in our community to see multitudes drawn to Christ.
- We want to be a church of reverence and revival not comfort and complacency.
- May God make us a people who hunger for his presence and his power, who walk in his holiness, and proclaim his gospel to the ends of the earth.
- That is a church impossible to ignore.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?