

True Revival

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Acts 2:42

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

When we get to this place in the book of Acts, we find some important verses for the believers in this present day. We get a picture of the community of God in the early church, showing us what godly living can really be like and the close-knit relationship that should be between God's people.

There was a way given them of the Holy Spirit, bringing them into focus. It brought them into the realm where they saw the need of responsibility: The church couldn't just sit by, or things would soon evaporate and fall apart.

Let's take a look at what they did back there in the early church: First, we are told that they continued in the apostles' doctrine. That word *doctrine* refers to the Bible teachings of the apostles, the message God had taught them. Bear in mind that the apostles were well taught. They were taught of the Lord as they followed Him. They heard Him day after day laying out the teaching foundation for the New Testament church. The early church continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine (teaching) and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

The Need for Togetherness

This was their lifestyle. There was a necessity that they were brought into such closeness. They were going to have to stick it out, putting their hearts and their faith together.

The multitude of believers is already beginning to mount. Right here we find about 3,000 souls were added to the church in one day! What were they going to do with all these souls? They couldn't neglect them. They had to do something to get the church of Jesus Christ established. They had to have the mind of God to go forward together.

They seemed to feel that closeness, one with the other, would be an answer for them. In most anything if you get too scattered, it's like a flock of sheep that is scattered. That's when the sheep get in trouble. You're going to have to go looking for those sheep on the hillside. When the sheep are scattered, it wears the shepherd out searching for them. He'll need a team of good dogs if he's ever going to get them back together again.

We bear in mind that togetherness is really a key for the church to go forward. The new believers continued together, steadfastly moving forward in the apostles' teaching.

Now they had to go somewhere to receive that teaching. They had a good sized congregation here (about 3,000 souls). They've got to get to work teaching these people the doctrines of the Word, teaching them the way of the Lord, or they might turn and go back to the law of Moses again.

So, they continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. This was a great company of people who had become one body, one church. They were God's people, all banded together in a body. Why shouldn't they have that closeness, then, in their everyday relationships?

And in breaking of bread, and in prayers: having communion together and praying together as a body.

If we'll do the right things, all we do will come out right. I mean, if we do something wrong, we won't get right to come out of it. If it's wrong, it's wrong, and if it's right, it's right. To do what's right means that we have to be led by the Spirit of God. This is the key issue of being led. If we're not led by the Spirit, what will we be led by? We'll be led by ourselves, led by man, but not by God. We have to recognize and realize the importance then of our being led of the Spirit.

Marks of True Revival

Acts 2:43

And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

They're doing something right here. God is letting them know that He was working. Anybody looking on would have to say, "Those men are over there teaching that multitude, and God is working wonders and signs by them." Those great signs and wonders and miracles are going to have an effect upon the moving of God in the church: the church, then, being able to grow and see the hand of God's blessing.

It isn't every day that you see God stretching His hand out to do these type of things. There may be days when we cry out in prayer, "Oh, God, we need You to move, we need You to do these things."

Well, let's do what's right, then. Let's make sure we're doing what's right — making sure our walk is upright before God, making sure we're being obedient to the Spirit of God, that we're doing what God wants us to do — so we'll be ready and prepared.

God Moves for His Glory

God is willing to do what He said, and in telling us about revival, He always stresses certain points He wants us to understand. He will pour out His Spirit in true revival, but He has a

reason for doing so. He will work signs and wonders and miracles for one reason: and that reason is for His glory. We have to always keep that in mind. It's not going to change.

We often think of reasons for God to move: "God, if You would do this, it would accomplish that." But that's just human reasoning: "God, *if* You . . . *then* this would happen." We try at times to say, "God, we know a whole lot about this (maybe just a little more than You do), and so, we want to tell You how to do it." Is the end of your wanting God to move telling Him why He should do it?

In my praying about revival, God asked me what purpose I thought He had in wanting to bring revival. The reasons I spoke of in my prayer closet were valid reasons. I didn't give any reasons that He would frown on. But He simply told me that He wasn't going to move for those reasons, but He would do it for one sole purpose.

Then He told me that the reason He would bring forth revival in this last day with signs and wonders and miracles would be for the sole purpose of bringing glory to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Let God Do Things His Way

We've got to get past trying to get it to go our way, and let God have His way. Let God be in control. And God, in His way, will bring revival. And we'll see Him bringing us into a relationship where He'll do it His way.

Push any way you want to, you can't push this thing. As people, we are ever pushing against a brick wall, trying to push it out of our way. We push and push and push, and it still stands strong. Listen, we can't always push things out of our way, and we don't need to push anything out of our way — except for some of our own ideas.

We want to be in the realm and in the place where we tell God, "Lord, this is what You said, and we know You will move in Your way and in Your time."

The Book of Acts Example

Here in Acts are a people moving in the direction the Lord would have them to move. These verses should help us to understand that God was going to move in the midst of them.

What I'm saying is this: God has moved to bring them into the faith, and now He is in their midst to work these works. We see Him in the midst of His people beginning to work signs and wonders and miracles.

There's a place here where God would work these works for His glory. Now, there are things that would bring the glory — such as someone getting healed, or blind eyes being opened, or deaf ears, or any other great work of God.

This is what God's purpose is. He's going to work, and will start to work, in the midst of His people. Here's a pattern given to them.

True Revival Brings the Fear of the Lord

It says that fear came upon them all. God's moving in their midst caused them to have the fear of God. This is necessary, having the fear of God: not to be afraid, but to have a godly fear. The fear of God is a healthy fear. The fear of God is a good thing. It is having a great respect for God that we're going to walk in His ways, following Him as He leads.

We want to be in the realm where we have this fear in our hearts and lives, that our experience is tempered with the fear of God. We're not playing church. We're not playing games with God. We're sincere before Him, serious about our walk and about our daily lives. We're sincere about our work for God. We're striving, then, in our hearts to do the will of God, to follow the leading of the Spirit, and not to take upon ourselves to build a new cart religion (see I Samuel 6:1-11, and I Chronicles chapters 13 and 15). We don't need anything like that. We don't need some kind of a new cart to haul revival.

What we need is to stay right in the center of the road, to hold fast and hold firm that we're going to do the will of God. We want to do more than just determine to do His will, we want to *do* all that He wants us to do.

Now, in Acts we can see the fear that came upon everyone — and suddenly God began to move with many wonders and signs.

Water Wonders

Wonders: we find some of His wonders in the Word. You know the story of some of these wonders well. What greater wonder do you know of than the water wonders?

Water wonders! Way back in Moses' day there was the night when they had no way to go forward. They faced the Red Sea before them, and to retreat would be to fall into the hands of the Egyptians who were pursuing them.

God said to Moses, "Don't cry to Me. Just tell the people to move forward." This would be like facing a brick wall and having God tell you to just move forward. So, they began to obey God, as Moses stretched his rod out over the sea. God opened the way that night through the sea, by forming a wall of water on either side with a dry path through the midst. He made a way of escape that night, and they crossed through the midst of the sea on dry land! That was a wonder. Yes, that was a wonder no matter how you size it up. It was totally impossible — yet God did it.

You cannot make a wall out of water! To make a wall of water on the left hand and a wall of water on the right with no water in between? That's impossible — in the natural. Try it. Go over to the sink and pile up some water on each side of the drain. See if you can make it stand up on either side with a little opening in between where there is no water. Do you think you could do

that? It just defies nature. It defies our understanding. How does one pile water in a heap? How do you make it like a wall?

I'll tell you how to do it: First, you start out by being God. But if you're not God, then forget it. Unless God is moving, you will never do it. Only God can do such a wonder. With man it is impossible, but with God it is so possible that we read where He did just that.

Now, the main reason for that miracle was to show us God's mighty power, His mighty hand, to do wonders before His people. He wasn't putting on a show here for the Egyptians to see. They were so blind (not that they couldn't see in the natural). They decided they were going to chase after the children of Israel through that path in the Red Sea. But they got out there and suddenly something happened.

When the children of Israel came out on the other side of the river and everyone was safe, Moses held his rod out again, and guess what happened? That water came down again and there was no way to cross over. The Egyptians were still out there in the middle, and they all drowned. That was God working another wonder.

New Testament Wonders

Back here in Acts in the upper room we look at the early church. It's the beginning of the church of Jesus Christ. It's the only church at the time, the start of the church. It was a small church when God poured out the Holy Ghost, filling them all. Then 3,000 more were added, and the church was well on its way.

But it had to be done God's way. His way would be with signs and wonders and miracles. This would stir a lot of people. This would meet a lot of needs.

Acts 3:1-3

Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

Not only did something happen to that man that day, but thousands more were turned to the Lord as the result. We are told that 5,000 more were added to the church! We have to look and note that great things can happen when God is moving with signs and wonders and miracles.

This is what one can expect in a revival sent of God, where God pours out His Spirit to do things that all who see can't help but know that it is God moving by His Spirit.

Where are Intercessors Today?

What do you need? Is your case hopeless? Could you use some help from God? Would it take a miracle from Him? Should you expect Him to reach out to you? Should you be praying to that

end? Should you live in the expectation that God would meet your need through His power and might?

Where are the prayer warriors these days who have shut themselves up for a season to pour out their hearts in intercession before God? Where are those people who see that things would happen if only somebody would shut themselves up with God to pray and intercede?

You don't have to be a person of great stature to do this. You can be like the little maid that was up in Naaman's house. Boy, she may have been just a little maid, but when she moved in faith something began to happen. We aren't told if she prayed, but she did direct Naaman to the place where he could be helped. And we find that because she spoke up, Naaman was delivered from leprosy.

It was all because this young maid spoke up about the God of Israel, spoke of the prophet of God who could heal Naaman of his leprosy. She talked about her God as one who could do it, talked about her God who could deliver Naaman of his leprosy.

Luke 4:27

And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

Not many lepers were being cleansed back in those days, but we find that Naaman was. God was saying something through all that. Bear in mind that God, wanting to move, will always turn to that which is His to use: His discretion to use signs, wonders or miracles. It's His choice.

Where's there a young maid today? Where is that person who says they are going to pray for God's power to be manifest? someone who is going to be concerned for those in need of God's power? someone who is going to intercede that God will move?

How many times will they pray before they can testify, "I got an answer to my prayers today. God is moving. Revival has come."

So, we don't want to ever think that somehow we can detach prayer and supplication from the gift of God, from the move of God, from the power of God being manifest.

God Moves Through Regular People

I want you to understand now that these verses of Scripture in Acts speak not only of the works of the apostles, but of God moving amongst regular people who were part of the church. God was moving, and He was moving among them.

Acts 6:8

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

Acts 8:5,6

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people

with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

They soon got in the place where the church was moving on. This sure looks like revival, like a genuine outpouring of the Spirit.

Signs, Wonders and Miracles

We want to see in this message the work of the Holy Ghost, the way God works with signs and wonders and miracles, how God moves.

We can expect God to move in this last day, working signs and wonders with a mission in mind: bringing glory to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God. Signs and wonders and miracles! In these last days this ought to be in our hearts.

Maybe some have lost their vision to step aside: that vision that they might do a great work today by getting alone before God to cry out and intercede, seeking God to move in these days.

Acts 2:1

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

They were all doing what the Holy Spirit had led them to do, and down from that upper room they came speaking in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. The power and anointing of the Spirit of God was upon them, and great things happened that day.

And today God wants great things to happen. But sometimes maybe we don't feel enough responsibility to make an effort. Somebody has to pray and seek God. Somebody has to intercede.

Who Will Seek It Out?

Who's going to pray? You say you don't have time? Well, you need to make time. We all need to take time to seek God each and every day.

God wants to work, many times, far more than we want Him to. Oh, we say we want Him to, but do we make an effort to intercede and pray to that end?

Acts 2:42,47

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers . . . Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Do you like that? We realize the people had done something, but it was the Lord who added souls. It was the Lord who worked signs and wonders and miracles, and it was the people who praised Him and glorified Jesus.

And the Lord added to the church once a month? . . . How often were souls being added to the church? Daily!

That had to be God. Look at what He did to accomplish this. Look at how He moved. Look at how He brought His power to bear.

This is the kind of thing we should want God to do today. This is about the greatest framework of true revival that one could ever find. It's simple, right to the point. Men did what God told them to do — and He did the rest.

It was God who brought the power, God who brought the anointing, God who worked the signs and the wonders, God who did the miracles, and God who was affecting the lives of many, many people.

This was the early church. It looks to me like they got started off on the right foot.

And today we want to be in tune with the Lord. We want Him to guide us, to direct us, that He might be glorified in bringing forth revival.

Your schedule might be busy, but perhaps it's too busy. Are you taken up with things that are not necessary, things that keep you from having time to pray and seek God each day?

We need to step aside and get into our prayer closet to seek the mind of God, seek God to move, seek Him to bring revival.