

Eternity Daily Bible Study

(A ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Walking In The Spirit - 53

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Topic: Spiritual Ministry: Greater Works

Date: 8th October 2009

Physical ministry is limited by money, labor supply, building size and so on. However spiritual ministry is only limited by the supply of the Holy Spirit, who is given abundantly to those who believe. Jesus told His apostles they would do 'greater works' because of the spiritual supply that He was going to provide to them after His ascension:

John 14:12-17 MKJV *Truly, truly, I say to you, He who believes on Me, the works that I do he shall do also, and greater works than these he shall do, because I go to My Father. (13) And whatever you may ask in My name, that I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (14) If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. (15) If you love Me, keep My commandments. (16) And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, so that He may be with you forever, (17) the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see Him nor know Him. But you know Him, for He dwells with you and shall be in you.*

The 'greater works' are done 'because I go to the Father' - that is because Jesus would ascend into the Heavens, take captivity captive and pour out the Holy Spirit and various ministry gifts upon those who believed (Acts 2, Ephesians 4 plus John 14:16,17 above).

At this point after the ascension, Jesus is enthroned in Heaven at the right hand of the majesty on high (Psalm 110, Hebrews 1:1-3) and we can pray to Him as our High Priest (Hebrews 4:12-16) so that if we ask anything in His Name He will do it ((John 14:13,14).

Thus the ascension of Jesus Christ has HUGE implications for spiritual ministry:

1. We have God answering our prayers and requests and moving on our behalf
2. We have immense amounts of spiritual power made available through the Holy Spirit who gives spiritual gifts to men and who will enable us to do 'greater works' .

The only resource that is absolutely essential for effective spiritual ministry is God the Holy Spirit. Only God can cast out demons, heal the sick, raise the dead, convert sinners, work mighty miracles and so on. Without God none of these things happen.

The fact that our ministry is limited by our financial budget is a terrible lie. Some ministries believe they can 'do nothing' without funding. That is simply not true. None of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 accomplished their ministry goals through a stewardship program or ministry development fund. Moses did not need to raise a million dollars before going to see Pharaoh and Elijah did not have wealth when he stood and confronted the prophets of Baal. Gideon did not have an office and the three young Jews in the fiery furnace did not have an insurance policy. But they all had faith and they all had God on their side.

No amount of gold or silver could have made the lame man at the Gate Beautiful walk again - but God could, and God did.

You can have the biggest buildings and best programs on the planet and it can all be empty human activity. Or you can be like Peter and John and 'have none' and be able to heal the sick and convert 3000 people on one day. The critical element in ministry is not funding, it is the supply of the Holy Spirit! (Now if God has given you abundant funds and a big building, that is great, but do not rely on that rather rely on God!)

The glory gets into our soul through prayer, faith and believing the word of God. We need more anointing, more faith, and more reliance on God. When we have faith then God turns up and we see miracles and conversions. Without faith all we have left is ecclesiastical machinery.

Galatians 3:1-5 MKJV *O foolish Galatians, who bewitched you not to obey the truth, to whom before your eyes Jesus Christ was written among you crucified? (2) This only I would learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing of faith? (3) Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, do you now perfect yourself in the flesh? (4) Did you suffer so many things in vain, if indeed it is even in vain? (5) Then He supplying the Spirit to you and working powerful works in you, is it by works of the law, or by hearing of faith?*

We are very easily persuaded that this is not so. Strong personalities tell us that we can begin in the Spirit – but that is only a beginning, even a fine beginning, but after that we will require programs, buildings and a bureaucracy if our ministry is to 'be credible, have status, line up with the latest business practices' and so on. And of course 'to be effective' we will need the latest church consultants, expensive development programs, websites and a big billboard down on Main Street.

Jesus, the apostles and the heroes of faith were very effective and they had few if any of those things. Building are incidentals, not essentials. You can be effective preaching in the fields to coal-miners (John Wesley was). And Martin Luther began the Reformation as a humble monk with few possessions of his own. Anointing with the Holy Spirit is the key ingredient for ministry effectiveness. All the other things are mere props and tools to be used along the way.

The supply of the Holy Spirit is so vast and so complete that we are only perhaps glimpsing the very fringes of it. The Holy Spirit can create a mighty apostolic ministry out of the most poverty-stricken circumstances. We see people in India and China doing great works for God on \$150 a month, riding bicycles, walking barefoot, living simply. And the ministry of the apostle Paul was not limited when he was destitute:

1 Corinthians 4:9-13 MKJV *(9) For I think that God has set forth us last, the apostles, as it were appointed to death; for we have become a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men. (10) We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are honorable, but we are despised. (11) Even until this present hour we both hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place. (12) And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; (13) being defamed, we entreat. We are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.*

Now the point of all this is not to shame or to accuse anyone but rather to point out where the true source of our power lies and where our confidence and our hope should be. We can do greater works, and we can do them no matter what our financial circumstances are – because of what Christ has done for us through His death, His resurrection and His ascension into Heaven to reign at the right hand of God on High.

There are no fixed limits to your ministry. Money cannot limit your ministry. Being in prison cannot limit your ministry (e.g. Paul's epistles). And being thrown into a fiery furnace or being nailed to a Cross cannot limit your ministry. And geography cannot limit it - John the Baptist preached in the remote Judean wilderness yet he was heard. If God is with you no man or circumstance or demon can be against you!

Romans 8:31-39 MKJV *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (32) Truly He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ... (35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written, "For Your sake we are killed all the day long. We are counted as sheep of slaughter." (37) But in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us. (38) For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

God wants to do 'greater works' through you as you believe in Him. God wants to increase His glory through you. God wants to touch the hearts of men and women through you. But you must believe. You must call on God for the anointing. You must know for absolutely certain that without Jesus 'you can do nothing' (John 15:5) but in Him, and with the anointing, you can 'bear much fruit' (John 15:1-8).

Do not think, even for a single second, that you can accomplish any spiritual ministry of any sort by your own power and piety – you simply cannot (Acts 3:12). As you become utterly dependent on God, as you abide in the vine, as you exercise faith, as you believe, then the Holy Spirit will abundantly come upon you and move in you and move through you to the nations.

Ephesians 3:20-21 MKJV *Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, (21) to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, forever. Amen.*

Blessings,

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