

Eternity Daily Bible Study

(A ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Walking In The Spirit - 54

Studies in this series can also be found online at www.globalchristians.org/walkspirit/

Topic: Spiritual Ministry: Fear & Faith

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John 14:12-13 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.*

We have seen that spiritual ministry requires God the Holy Spirit to show up. For many people that is rather frightening. What if God does not show up? What if people are not healed? What if the demon is not cast out and what if the Spirit-led worship is a disaster? There is a fear of appearing foolish. Even a fear of diminishing "God's glory" through such public forms of "failure". We think: "O my goodness what will we do if God does not show up on Sunday?"

So from this small unbelieving question, from this lack of faith we start substituting for the Holy Spirit. Instead of proclaiming the Kingdom we proclaim the church or the denomination, instead of preaching the Word we preach human reason, instead of Spirit-led worship we have professional orchestrated worship programs. Gradually every function of the Holy Spirit is replaced with a "program" until even sanctification is a "counseling program". (Now outside the Church, there is nothing wrong with counseling, but when it is viewed almost as a substitute for actual grace, then it becomes wrong).

Now in order to do all this frantic substitute activity that 'keeps face', that shows that God is real - even though we secretly believe he would never show up on Sunday; we need facilities, committees, websites, development programs etc. Over time this results in an empty organization, an institution, that tries to 'protect God'. Its hollow. It is full of secret unbelief. And its scared half to death of ever really being asked to deal with the awesome and the Holy. James deals with this kind of doubt in his epistle:

James 1:6-7 MKJV *But let him ask in faith, doubting nothing. For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. (7) For do not let that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord;*

Our doubt about God turning up becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy because the person who doubts 'receives nothing from the Lord'. So we see that this series of 'little fears' eventually has catastrophic consequences for the spiritual life and for the proclamation of the gospel. So what can we do about it? How can we move from fear to faith?

Lets go back to John 14:12 above. This verse is a promise, straight from the mouth of Jesus, that God will turn up in amazing ways if we just truly believe on Him. Indeed we will see the incredible miracles of Jesus, plus even greater works (which are left undefined).

Whatever else it means, it means that the really big stuff was not going to end with Jesus, or even with the apostles, but would flow from: *he who believes on Me* – which is from anyone who has faith. Lets look a bit more at the phrase “he who believes on Me” :

John 7:37-39 MKJV *And in the last day of the great feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. (38) He who believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (39) (But He spoke this about the Spirit, which they who believed on Him should receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

So we see that faith unlocks the 'rivers of living water' – torrents of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit flowing from our innermost being is the power behind all true spiritual ministry. This again is a promise from the lips of Jesus.

We also find that 'he who believes': is saved (Mark 16:16), does not come into condemnation (John 3:18,5:24), has everlasting life (John 3:36,5;24,6:47), has passed from death to life (John 5:24), shall never hunger or thirst (John 6:35), will be resurrected (John 11:25,26), believes in Him who sent Jesus (John 12:44), will not be ashamed (1 Peter 2:6), has overcome the world (1 John 5:5) and has the witness in himself (1 John 5:10). Believing drives the entire spiritual life from start to finish!

God wants us to move beyond spiritual timidity to have power, love and a sound mind:

2 Timothy 1:6-7 MKJV *Therefore I remind you to inflame anew the gift of God, which is in you by the putting on of my hands. (7) For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

Timothy had let his fears get in the way of his faith and his gifting. Paul was urging him to go on, to believe, to be a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Fear sometimes masquerades as common sense, respectability and many other things. Following the Holy Spirit seems risky and even foolhardy (which may be the reason Paul called himself a 'fool for Christ's sake'). Yet it is those who are led by the Spirit who are the sons of God (Romans 8:14).

Elijah is a good example of bold spiritual ministry:

James 5:16-18 MKJV *... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous one avails much. (17) Elijah was a man of like passion as we are. And he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for the time of three years and six months. (18) And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth caused its fruit to sprout.*

Elijah fully expected God to answer his prayers because he was being led by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not lead you to pray for things that God does not want to do!

Bold spiritual ministry comes about once we realize that the Holy Spirit is leading us and that God is with us in that endeavor (which is why the first 50 studies were about being led by the Spirit and communicating with God). Once we understand the 'initiatives of heaven' we can step out and be bold and know, for sure, that God is going to be there because it was His idea in the very first place!

Jesus gives us some tantalizingly brief glimpses into this process in His life and ministry:

John 5:19-20 MKJV *Then Jesus answered and said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He sees the Father do. For whatever things He does, these also the Son does likewise. (20) For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all the things that He Himself does. And He will show Him greater works than these, so that you may marvel.*

John 5:30 MKJV *I can do nothing of My own self. As I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of the Father who has sent Me.*

John 8:38 MKJV *I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you, then, do what you have seen with your father (the Devil).*

John 12:49-50 MKJV *For I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say, and what I should speak. (50) And I know that His command is life everlasting. Therefore whatever I speak, even as the Father said to Me, so I speak.*

John 13:3-4 MKJV *Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and went to God, (4) He rose up from supper and laid aside His garments. And He took a towel and girded Himself.*

John 14:31 MKJV *But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father has given Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go away from here.*

So we see that Jesus saw what the Father was doing and did likewise (John 5:19), sought only the Father's will not His own will (John 5:30), spoke what He saw with the Father, indeed God commanded Jesus as to what to say and what to speak (John 8:38, 12:49,50) , had God communicate to Him his identity and His destiny yet was humble about it (John 13:3,4) and fully followed the commandments that He received from the Father, even going to the Cross (John 14:31).

Now of course we are not Jesus Christ, but we are called to be in His image and to do His works, and we are to be led by the Spirit and to follow God's will and God's commandments in all things. In Acts we see that the apostles took this leading of the Holy Spirit very seriously and that it was part of the dynamic life of the early Christian Church.

So how do we go from fear to faith? First we must put aside our doubts, pray to God, listen to God and then act on what we hear. We must believe that God is honorable and will back up His words and His commandments with His power.

Yes this is risky and yes it may take some practice, but is far better than receiving nothing from the Lord. God WILL turn up. He promises to turn up and there are thousands of testimonies about Him turning up for those who believe.

Blessings,

John Edmiston (johned@aibi.ph)

Pastor – Eternity Christian Fellowship

Chairman/ CEO Cybermissions

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