

"We sell the gospel short if we see the need for miracles as optional."

It is tragic when the high water mark for the Church is our celebration of what is humanly possible. We build buildings, raise money for missions, feed the poor, and perform countless other endeavors that are essential expressions of the gospel. These must continue, but never at the expense of neglecting the specific things He commissioned us to do: invade the impossible. He commanded His disciples to heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils, and cleanse lepers and to teach their converts to do the same. That unending commission makes evangelism, healing, and deliverance the responsibility of every believer.

Once the Spirit of the resurrected Christ took up residence in us, powerlessness became inexcusable. The power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in us, longing for expression through the body of the one He rested upon two thousand years ago. He wants to do it all again: this time through millions, not just one.

The gospel is a gospel of power and must become manifest through supernatural demonstration.

Miracles are not optional. They are so important that Jesus hung the entire weight of His identity and ministry upon them saying, "If I don't do the works of the Father, don't believe me" (John 10:37). That is an amazing statement when you consider all the witnesses throughout history sent to reveal and confirm the identity of Jesus Christ. Nature proclaimed who He was. Angels also declared His identity and purpose. The Old Testament prophets, and even the Law, spoke of Jesus as the Christ. But when He came, He put the credibility of all of their messages on the line by highlighting one remaining bit of evidence, without which the message of all the rest would be nullified--the works of the Father must be done through Him. A study of the Gospel of John leaves little doubt as to what was meant by "the works of the Father." They are miracles, signs and wonders. I long for the day when the Church stands before this world and declares, "If we don't do the works of the Father, don't believe us. If miracles are not present, you're off the hook." The perspective of Jesus on the absolute need for miracles must affect the way we think and pray. If not, we will always sell the gospel short.

We must face this reality: we were drafted into a lifestyle that is impossible apart from an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit; it only works the way Jesus modeled it. The Spirit that remained upon Him enabled Him to do only what the Father was doing and say only what the Father was saying. Only in the context of intimacy with God do we enter the life where nothing is impossible.

As we learn to embrace the responsibility of demonstrating the normal Christian life of miracles, we enter a realm of impact that has been understood by very few. Exposure to the realm of the supernatural interventions of God changes something in the leader that cannot be brought about through leadership seminars and books. As good as these tools are, they don't begin to touch the intangible shift that takes place in the life of the leader who has constant exposure to the miracle realm. "Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel" (Joshua 24:31 NKJV).

As long as Israel had leaders who had been exposed to miracles, they had a heart for God. It is

unlikely that the generation of leaders that came after the Joshua/elder group had a calculated plan to lead Israel away from God. Coldness of heart and rebellion don't usually come suddenly. But in the absence of a life of miracles is seldom found a life of radical obedience to God. Exposure to the supernatural works of God brings about the equivalent of a spiritual DNA change in the leader that also engenders in the people a passion for God. Apostolic leadership always empowers instead of controls. And the empowerment for a passion for God is one of the most necessary, yet often neglected, traits in church leaders. When leaders live under the atmosphere of heaven, their exposure to miracles (heaven's atmosphere on earth) increases their capacity to bring the people of God into their supernatural potential. We are indebted to the world to bring not only a message; we owe them an encounter with God. And there is no better way than to live a supernatural lifestyle where the works of darkness are destroyed as we serve people with the effective and delivering power of the love of Christ.

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