

Our Pride: The Biggest Roadblock to People Being Saved
May 3, 2014

A friend of mine recently posted a question on Facebook saying, “I just can’t understand why someone would rather die and go to hell instead of accepting Jesus as [their] Savior. Decisions, decisions, decisions”.

It really does boil down to decisions. It is puzzling that many churches and church leaders would rather preach the Bible without allowing the Holy Spirit to manifest His power, confirm His word, and thereby convince the unbeliever that Jesus is the Son of God. Preaching without the demonstration of His power is NOT the Gospel. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit’s job was to convict the world of sin (Jn 16:8). We must allow Him to do His work His way, not our way! He is God Almighty! Who are we to scoff at His ways?! **There is no substitute for the fire of the Holy Spirit!**

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not optional equipment for the Church. They were decided upon by the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit but are looked at by the Church as foolishness. Isn’t it ironic that the gift of tongues, viewed as the least of the gifts by so many Christians, Church leaders and denominations, was the very gift chosen by the Holy Spirit to reap 3000 souls on the day of Pentecost!? I find it rather amusing!

Jesus didn’t think the manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s power was foolish, but rather said this in John 15:22–27 (NASB95) —

22 “If I had not come and **spoken to them** (the preaching part), they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 “He who hates Me hates My Father also. 24 “**If I had not done among them the works** (the power part) which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. 25 “But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, ‘They hated Me without a cause.’ 26 “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, 27 and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

Jesus clearly connected preaching the Good News with the demonstration of the Spirit’s power, i.e. the works; both were equally necessary in His ministry. We must demonstrate the power of the Spirit (allow Him to testify) both inside and outside of the Church, or we as ministers will be guilty of only doing half of what we were sent to do. We dare not be found to be unfaithful stewards of what He has given us to use!

Why is it that the Church sees so few conversions? I would submit that the Church has rebuffed the Holy Spirit and no longer desires Him to move in power. Where is the power of God in the Church and where is the church that allows the Holy Spirit Himself to testify IN POWER who Jesus Christ really is?! I would submit that we, the Church, have become arrogant, thinking that the Gospel is nothing but words. As a result the world doesn't think that Christianity is anything but another religious philosophy.

Paul condemned this when he said in I Cor 4:20 - **For the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in POWER.** It is a tragedy that the Church in America believes and operates in the opposite of what Scripture clearly proclaims. Why should the Church choose to be powerless, when so much of Heaven's power is available to us?!

Paul went on to say-

1 Corinthians 1:18–20 (NASB95)

18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."

20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

From my perspective, the Lord destroyed the wisdom of the wise AND the cleverness of the clever, when He flowed through the 120 ministers on the day of Pentecost with the gift of tongues. Wouldn't you agree? If so, why fight it? Why continue to wrestle with, and scoff at, what is clearly the chosen Biblical strategy to win the world to Christ? The Church has no answer for the large urban centers of the world without the power of the Holy Spirit; there simply won't be enough money to get the job done if we continue being poor stewards of what we have already been given, the powerful gifts of the Spirit! However, if we become faithful stewards, the Lord will give us all the resources that we need.

Approximately six years ago, an executive at a global ministry reported to me that it cost the Church in the United States \$1,000,000 per convert. I'm not suggesting that one convert is not worth \$1,000,000...far from it! What I am suggesting is that the Lord demands something that is far more precious to us than money – our pride. We love to quote II Chron 7:14, but we skip over the first criteria the Lord lays down that will open the door to His blessing—"If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves, pray and turn from their wicked ways, then...." He is calling us to humble ourselves and submit to how He has chosen to operate in and through us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There is no getting around it. This is His strategy and the sooner we align and embrace it the better. Our prayers will never be heard until we humble ourselves and confess our rebellion against the Holy Spirit.

We are being called to die to what **we think** is the right way to minister the Gospel to a lost and dying world. Proverbs 3:5 confirms this by saying--

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart And **do not lean on your own understanding.** **6** In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. **7 Do not be wise in your own eyes;** Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.

Shutting the door to the power of the Holy Spirit expressed through His gifts flowing in and through the believer, is choosing to lean on one's own understanding, and in the final analysis is rebellion. Why would we refuse the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power when the lost are thirsty for it? Why would we deny THE KEYS (the gifts of the Holy Spirit) Jesus died for that were freely given to us, designed to unlock the unbeliever's heart to the Gospel? Church leaders that do not change, refusing to submit to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the manifestations of His power, will perish. How do I know this? The Holy Spirit has spoken this truth to me time and time again. Rest assured He still speaks to those that desire to listen and partner with Him in His ministry. Church leaders dare not resist or grieve the Holy Spirit now or in the days ahead.

Until the Church and its leaders humble themselves and align themselves with the wisdom of Heaven and submit to how the Holy Spirit has already chosen to flow through the believer to win the lost, we will see very few conversions. We must remember that we can do nothing without the Holy Spirit, let alone accomplish the Great Commission. It would be foolish to even try...and yet we do.

The time has come to die to our pride and follow the Master. Jesus is calling, "Come home, come home. All who are weary, come home." Let's lay down our ministry burdens, our ways of doing things and repent. Let's welcome the Holy Spirit and His ministry into the Church and see a mighty harvest of souls.