

Week 2: A Power We Must Receive - The Comfort of the Holy Spirit

Day 11: Expecting the Supernatural

The Passage: 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

The Focus: "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power." (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)

The Meditation: "My message . . . [was] with a demonstration of the Spirit's power."

Empowering Truths: One of the most probing ministry questions I have been asked was by a humble, fruitful Christian leader I admire greatly. After a discussion about the attractional ministry model we were using, he inquired, "If the Holy Spirit suddenly left your ministry, what would change? What could no longer be done because the Holy Spirit was gone?"

I had to admit I could still preach engaging, relevant messages, have an excellent band that rocked the house, have a social networking plan that connected people to one another, and provide stellar programming for the entire family. Sadly, I had to face the truth that I wasn't expecting the supernatural because I could do okay with the natural.

The apostle Paul in today's passage has this same concern. He's saying, "I didn't want your faith to rest on persuasive words like the popular orators in our culture employ. I wanted you to taste the power of God! So I came with wise teaching and supernatural ministry." This was Paul's ministry pattern, "by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God . . . I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:19).

We wonder why God shows up in more supernatural ways across the ocean than he does across our neighborhood. Could it be that our desperation and expectation are different here? Could it be that we have other alternatives so the supernatural is a "last resort" instead of a "first response?"

I remember traveling to a remote location in the Dominican Republic to host an evangelistic dinner for what we thought would be twenty people. We had food for twenty, but eighty showed up. The closest store was an hour away. So we did the only thing we could do: we prayed over the food to ask the Lord to multiply it. Over the next twenty minutes all eighty came through the line, and the beans and rice never ran out until all were fed. After the miraculous meal we preached the gospel, and most of those folks became believers that evening.

In Matthew 9:27-31, Jesus is followed into a house by two blind men seeking healing. He asks them, "Do you believe I am able to do this?" They reply, "Yes, Lord!" Then Jesus says something we must not miss. "You will have what your faith expects" (TPT).

Our faith creates expectations. Oftentimes our expectations are based on natural cause and effect more than on supernatural intervention. This is one reason for such little prayer in the church. We are more dependent on our wise words or smart strategies than on God's divine responsiveness to our prayers.

We must once again expect what only the Spirit can do. William Temple, the powerful Anglican priest, replied to his critics who regarded answered prayer as no more than coincidence, "When I pray, coincidences happen; when I don't, they don't."

If we would see the results Paul saw in his ministry, we must use his methods. We must expect a demonstration of the Spirit's power as we preach the truth.

Power Truth: When our expectations are for God to do what only God can do, then we will see more of what God wants done.

Our Prayer: Lord, forgive me for conducting ministry like I can make it happen on my own. Forgive me for having expectations based on persuasive words rather than on the power of your Spirit. Launch me into the adventure of supernatural expectations. Empower me to lead like you are still doing miracles of conviction, salvation, deliverance, healing, reconciliation, calling, and more . . . because you are!

