

Why the Power of God Must Be Displayed for Effective Evangelism

There is a huge emphasis in the evangelical church on evangelism, church planting and the like. This is good since the church should never be separated from its mission of proclaiming Jesus to this lost world.

In light of this, I believe the church will fall short of its goals unless we incorporate signs, wonders and miracles into our methodological norm as we evangelize. The Scriptures are replete with passages equating the knowledge of God with His display of the supernatural. For example, the Old Testament is full of examples such as Abraham and Sarah having a child past the normal biological age, Moses doing signs and wonders in Egypt so that His power may be demonstrated to the world (Rom. 9:17) and Elijah calling down fire from heaven to demonstrate that the Lord is the true God (1 Kings 18).

What about the New Testament? First of all, Jesus told His disciples that they would receive power to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). This power was primarily centered on the ability to be a witness to the resurrection of Christ. The biblical narratives after Acts 1:8 show that the primary reason for this power was so the apostles would demonstrate the Word by healing the sick and performing miracles.

Acts 5:12-16 connected extraordinary signs and wonders to God. This added multitudes of believers to the Lord. In Acts 8, we see how Philip was able to turn the whole city of Samaria to the Lord by moving in the power of signs, wonders and miracles. Paul, the apostle, also utilized this method of evangelism. Acts 14:3 says that the Lord bore witness to the word of His grace by granting signs and wonders to be done by

their hands (Paul and Barnabas). In Acts 19:11-12, it says that God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul while he was ministering in the city of Ephesus.

Later on, as recorded in Acts 28:1-10, Paul was able to bring the gospel to the whole island of Malta after he healed the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius. (This happened after God supernaturally spared his life after a poisonous snake, which was supposed to kill him, bit him.) In 1 Corinthians 2:1-4, Paul said that when he preached the word, there was always a demonstration of the Holy Spirit and power so that their faith would not rest on the wisdom (or rhetoric) of men but the power of God. The supernatural move of the Holy Spirit likely was a normal occurrence in the life of all the early churches as we read in Paul's letter to the Galatians (Chapter 3:5). Paul said that God supplied their church with the Spirit and miracles through the hearing of faith.

Furthermore, in Hebrews 6:5, it says that believers during those days experienced the powers of the age to come. (If we consider the context of this book as well as the entire New Testament, this passage seems to be referring to the power of the invisible, supernatural God, intervening in the lives of men through miraculous healings, supernatural signs and wonders.)

Hebrews 2:4 also says that the Lord bore witness to the word from the Lord Jesus and His apostles by granting them signs, wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit. The apostles of the first-century church needed to depend upon the power of signs and wonders to preach the Word of God. How much more should we depend upon this to convince this present generation of the reality of Jesus.

Furthermore, all through the four Gospels, we see how Jesus moved in the word of knowledge, word of wisdom, the gifts of healing and the working of miracles to demonstrate that the Father sent Him into the world (John 5:36-37). In John 9:1-4,

Jesus said that a man was born blind so that He would be able to demonstrate the works of God through the healing in this man.

In John 4, we also read how Jesus operated in the prophetic gifts of the word of knowledge to convince the woman at the well that He was indeed the Messiah. In John 11:42, we also read that Jesus prayed and thanked the Father in public for what He was about to do when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. This was to demonstrate that the Father sent Him. If Jesus, the perfect God-Man, needed the miraculous (even though He was the greatest preacher the world ever heard), how much more does the present-day church need to depend upon the power of God to spread the gospel of Christ.

This present secular humanistic society we live in will not be convinced merely by good rhetoric and visceral worship experiences during a Sunday morning service. They need to experience the glory, presence and power of God almighty!
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