

Pt. 4 The Price of Pentecost (continued)

Acts 1:12-14

[read text]

The early church had none of the things we seem to think are so essential for success today: Bldg./money/staff/internet/faxes/reputation/programs...so why were they so successful? Because they had the 1 thing most churches today do not have: The power of God on their ministry.

The glory days are in the past, because the glory of God is departed (not His presence, but His power [glory])

I want this to be a place that's more than just another church, but where people get the help they need, where lives are truly touched and changed!

It's a shame that our veterans aren't getting the medical help they need!

Joke—an enlisted man in military felt sick/wife said to go to military hospital on base/found 2 doors, one for emergency, other for non-emergency/went for non/long hallway/door for “sick”, another for “injured”/ “very sick” or “moderately sick”/officer or enlisted/went thru enlisted, found himself back in the parking lot!

Went home/wife asked if he went to hospital/sure did/get help?/no, but boy are they organized!

I see us becoming a well-oiled machine, and there's nothing wrong w/ that, but there's so much more that the masses are looking for...the real thing!

(We can have greeters in place, music just right, temperature just right *{not often}*, but w/out the power of God it doesn't matter a bit!)

We're talking about paying the price to be the kind of church God wants us to be. Good churches don't just happen by accident...somebody has to be willing to pay the price.

Acts 1 shows us **4 principles which will lead to the** kind of soul-saving, community-changing **power of Acts 2:**

We talked about *obedience* last time [ATM], and will continue today w/ the next one...but let me give you all 4 so you can be thinking about them:

1. **Obedience**—waited in Jerusalem (that place [Moses in Exodus])
2. **Unity**—v. 14—one accord...God doesn't bless fussing and fighting...a house divided cannot stand. (Satan tries to orchestrate division using someone from within -- We must strive for unity and reconciliation. If all else fails, historically, we will protect unity even if it means they who cause strife cannot stay.)
3. **Prayer**—v. 14—they prayed for 10 days, preached for 10 minutes, and 3,000 got saved (today we want the opposite!)
4. **Godly leadership**—choosing Matthias...applies to our leadership, pastoral, deacons, teachers, etc.

We used the illustration of a spiritual ATM:

Obedience in...Attendance/Tithing/Ministry

Obedience was the first of the 4 areas listed in ch. 1 in order to get the blessings of ch. 2

Let's move on to...

2. Unity

v. 14—one accord

2:1—one accord

2:46—one accord

4:24—one accord

5:12—one accord

If ever a church strives for full unity, there's just no limit to what God can do...He'll allow us to move from ch. 1 to ch. 2!

Obviously, there was a wonderful unity among these early believers...they had the same goals/vision/purpose/mind

They sensed that they were on the threshold of something big and great...it was about to happen, and it would change their world forever...and so they agreed this was no time for arguing/petty squabbles/hurt feelings/power struggles.

Each was living for something bigger than themselves! That's the kind of church God blesses.

Some may think it was easier for them than for us...wrong! They were just like us, and I could show you scriptures which show these same people not always getting along...during this 10 day prayer mtg. there was probably a good bit of apologizing which had to be done!

Ill.—Martha going to Mary to apologize for being critical of her worship while she was working in the kitchen/and Mary admits she never helped out as much as she should have at home/they hug and make up and are now in one accord (unity)

James and John approach other disciples and apologize for sending their mom to try to make them get preferential treatment...they realized it was arrogant, prideful, egotistical...ask for forgiveness, got it, and now they're in unity!

Maybe Thomas stood up to confess his unbelief, and for calling them liars...and the wall that had separated them ever since came tumbling down and they're in unity!

God loves to bless churches like that...where members are quick to forgive/allow for human weakness and frailty/put what's best for the church ahead of own personal feelings/filled w/ peacemakers instead of troublemakers.

I'm not saying people can't be led of God to separate, agreeing to disagree. Sometimes it is one of His ways of moving one out of the nest to fly on their own. [Paul and John Mark] But even they should be Christians about it and come together in unity of the faith!

Prov. 6 lists God's hate list:

Proud look/lying tongue/hands that shed innocent blood/heart that devises wicked imaginations/feet swift in running to mischief/false witness speaking lies/...and he that soweth discord among the brethren.

That means that if you decide that your way is most important, that your feelings matter most, and you take things into your own hands, you're guilty of doing one of the 7 things God hates the most, as you sow discord among the brethren!

3 thoughts on unity /

3 ways to be a peacemaker...not a troublemaker!

- Some people have in their nature, wherever they go, to just be disturbers of the peace, the center of the storm, a whirlwind of strife and tension and animosity...but Jesus said not to be a troublemaker...be a peacemaker!
- The first sin recorded in the Bible separated man from God.
- The second sin separated man from man.
- But when Jesus came it was as the Prince of Peace, helping make man once again right w/ his God and w/ his fellow man! But there will be no lasting peace, until the Prince of Peace returns again to set up His earthly kingdom!
- Now that I'm saved, I'm already a citizen of God's kingdom, a child of the King, I ought to be a peacemaker, not a troublemaker.

1. I must take a new look at me. [*honestly, soberly, sincerely*]

a. Troublemakers are always exceedingly selfish.

It's always about...

- (1) how will this affect me
- (2) what will happen to me
- (3) what's in it for me
- (4) is this fair to me
- (5) am I getting my rights and my just due?

Jesus said, he that loveth his life shall lose it...in other words, if you always think of yourself, you may think you're advancing and getting the upper hand, but you'll always end up getting the short end of the stick...the Lord will make sure of it!

b. Balance: there's always a place for legitimate criticism/complaints...

- (1) A person is not a troublemaker just because they criticize or have a complaint.
- (2) Some of the best changes we've made here resulted from thoughtful input from you!/constructive criticism.

(3) I've learned a lot from criticism and very little from compliments!

ill—Ruth Graham interview on TV/cleaned house thoroughly/then TV lights set up, turned on/saw dust she'd never seen before!

Ever had that moment when 'the light comes on' and you can see your own sin that was once hidden? Maybe it was because you were focused on scouring for faults in others that you couldn't see your own glaring weaknesses!

Some feel qualified to spend their energies correcting those around them, but need to shine the lights of heaven on themselves first!

c. I must be emancipated from myself!

(1) I cannot bow at the shrine of self any longer.

(2) A peacemaker doesn't think little of himself...he doesn't think of himself at all!

Ill.—one day Lincoln walked down the road w/ his 2 boys / they were fussing and having a fit / somebody opened their door and said, it sounds like your boys are upset today, what's the problem? / He said, the same thing that's wrong w/ the rest of the world. / "What?" / I've got 3 walnuts and each boy wants 2 of them!

Yes, we need to make an emancipation proclamation, and get free from ourselves!

2. I must take a new look at the many.

a. I have to learn to see others thru Jesus' eyes, objectively.

b. Then I'll find it hard to say, how can they be like that?

Why do they do that?

c. The peacemaker knows why...it's because they are human!

d. And the best of men are still men at best!

Attention, newer believers! Know in advance that sometimes even Christians will fail you and do you wrong. They may lie about you, they may steal from you, or they may let you down. Don't be surprised. Now, don't go looking for it, but if it happens, you can be understanding if you know this in advance.

Maybe they are a victim of 'self' or a victim of 'Satan'...either way, we can view them thru the eyes of Jesus, and be a peacemaker.

3. I must take a new look at the multitudes.

a. The peacemaker...

(1) has a Biblical worldview,

(2) only wants God to be glorified,

(3) wants His gospel to be spread,

(4) always keeps the main thing the main thing, focusing on eternity and not temporary values.

Whether I have my rights or not doesn't matter much in light of eternity. Whether I have been treated unfairly cannot compare w/ the huge difference between heaven and hell after this life!

We must all have 1 concern which outweighs anything else we do:
reaching the lost!

Once we're all consumed w/ that, it's easy to overlook the little things in each other's lives.

Phil. 1:27 *...stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel*

As long as we both keep our eyes on the goal, we'll head in the same direction in one accord, in unity!

Then "I" am not important, "they" are.
"My rights" are irrelevant next to "their needs".

III—One day all the tools in the shed had a meeting/

Bro. Hammer stood up to lead, but nobody liked him...he always knocked people!

Bro. Saw was always cutting people down

Bro. Screwdriver went round and round, talking in circles

Bro. Ruler never thought anyone measured up

Bro. Sandpaper rubbed people the wrong way!

They parted company, went to opposite ends of the shed, but then one day the carpenter from Nazareth came in, picked up the ruler and measured, used the saw to cut, hammered and nailed things into place, used bro. sandpaper to create a beautiful finish, and w/ all these tools the carpenter had built a beautiful pulpit from which to preach the gospel!

At the end of the day the tools got together and realized all they could accomplish when they stop focusing on each other, and simply place themselves in the hands of the Master!

The disciples decided to walk in complete obedience, and unity, and they turned their world upside down...Decatur doesn't need to be turned upside down, but right side up! And we can experience the things we find in Acts 2 if we're willing to pay the price of ch. 1!

How can we practically apply these things?

1. Learn to control your speaking.
 - a. Know when to open your mouth and, more importantly, when not to.
James 1:19
Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

-“2 ears – 1 mouth – Do the math!”

-“*If your lips you would keep from slips, 5 things observe with care:
To whom you speak. Of whom you speak. And how and when and where!*”
 - b. To a large degree, the difference between a peacemaker and a troublemaker is whether or not you have learned to control your tongue!
2. Learn to control your thinking.
 - a. It's not enough to just keep quiet. You need to have the mind of Christ.
Proverbs 23:7 *For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...*
 - b. Troublemakers live according to their feelings.
Peacemakers live according to their will.
They realize they have a choice in the matter!
 - c. The good news is, if I make my will do what is right, then good feelings will follow.
 - d. When the Bible says, “Love your enemies” it's not a suggestion, it's a command! It's true, and I'm living proof, you cannot hold bad feelings toward someone you pray for! And you won't pray for someone you are holding onto bad feelings about! The promise: They will be called the children of God!
 - e. Children are like their parents. Maybe you have your father's eyes, or your mother's nose. Well, when you return kindness for anger, or tenderness to someone's bitterness, you'll remind people of the God of peace...the Prince of Peace! They'll say, wow, she must be God's child! They remind me of Jesus!

Conclusion...You can do this...at home, at work, at church, out in this community.

1. Take a new look at me, and get rid of selfishness.
2. Take a new look at the many, and see them thru God's eyes.
3. Take a new look at the multitudes and realize what's really important.
4. And practically, learn to control your speaking and your thinking, and you will be a peacemaker!
5. Unity will help our church move from Acts 1 basics to Acts 2 blessings!