

THE RECONCILER

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REDISCOVERING THE WONDER OF THE GOSPEL

The gospel that went forth across the earth after the ascension of Jesus was accompanied with signs, wonders, miracles, and supernatural guidance, the assistance of angels, persecution and martyrdom. It lovingly but firmly confronted both the pagan misrepresentation of the nature of God, the humanistic world order of the day and even false misrepresentations of the Bible Message itself.

For several decades there has been an effort among those who recognize the place and power of the Holy Spirit to recover the supernatural element of Christianity, which is often notably absent in the intellectual, religious philosophy that accompanies the name of 'evangelical Christianity'.

But has the pendulum swung too far? Have we become overly focused on signs, wonders, miracles, prophecy, supernatural guidance, dreams, visions, shakings, falling down at the expense of the gospel itself?

We certainly are in favor of all genuine supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that we would receive power when the Holy Spirit 'comes upon you and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and .. to the ends of the earth.' (Acts 1:7-8)

The problem is not that we have reacted to the intellectual formalism of many churches by focusing too much on the supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit. The problem is that our focus on the supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit has

itself gone out of focus. In focusing on the supernatural signs that accompany the gospel we have in large measure forgotten the power wonder of *the gospel* itself. We have isolated signs and wonders from the supernatural *accompaniment* of the gospel, the gospel itself.

The power that Jesus gave His disciples was not primarily the power for signs and wonders - it was the power to comprehend, communicate and be transformed by the gospel. As we proclaim it in all its glory and wonder it will be accompanied by the miraculous evidence of God's Holy Spirit. The signs are not the message. They are the smile of heaven on the message but they are not the message.

The message of the first believers was not that God works signs and wonders, or that angels are being used in guidance. Their message was: *"Jesus Is Lord "He has ascended on high after taking the judgment for our sin on the Cross, reconciling us to God, and giving us a share in His Resurrection Life through the gift of the Holy Spirit." Our mission is to present this wonderful 'gospel' to all so that they can put their faith in this redemption and receive its benefits.*

Much of the church has actually become *bored* with the gospel because they have reduced it to a mere message of pardon from sin. To add excitement to jaded worshippers it has resorted to a wide variety of supplements, including political and social activism, speculation about end times (mostly fear centered) and endless search for another experience, which will

prove to me that I really am special. While consumed with these diversions many churches have no program of evangelism whatsoever.

How could the church become bored with the glorious gospel? Because it is not focused on it and does not really appreciate the awesome dimensions of it. (Some Bible colleges and denominations are actually organized to conceal some dimensions of the gospel, lest it threaten their wine-skin)

This gospel is the power of God to salvation. (Romans 1:16) It is God's power

- To lift us from the penalty and power of sin and reconcile us to Himself. (Col. 1:13)
- To transform us from sons of darkness to sons of God and make us partakers of the divine nature. (1 Peter 2:10; 2 Peter 1:4)
- To extract the heart of stone from within us and to implant His own Spirit in us. (Ezekiel 36:26)
- To release us from condemnation and the curse into His favor and blessings. (Galatians 3:13)
- To release us from aimlessness into His great plan (Jeremiah 29:11)
- To heal us from the devastating work of the evil one who has marred the image of God in us. (1 John 3:8)
- To make outcasts into priests & kings. (Rev. 1:6)

Is it not amazing and exciting that God loved us even when we were still sinners, corrupted by our own evil and the evil of others?

Is it not amazing that the vilest, sinner can be declared totally righteous and become a fully accepted Son of God? (Rom. 5:10)

Is it not amazing and exciting that God not only pardons us in Jesus but also

removes from the record every trace of our wrongdoing?

Is it not amazing and exciting that we have been delivered from the curse and brought into the blessings of Abraham?

Is it not amazing and exciting that we have received a transplant of God's own Spirit and made participants in the divine nature?

Is it not amazing and exciting that in the midst of an unsaved world we can be delivered from Satan's dominion and given authority over his works against us?

Is it not amazing and exciting that we are not just commanded to love one another but *empowered* to love one another? (Romans 5:50)

Is it not amazing and exciting that we can be empowered by the Spirit to go into the world to share this supernatural message with God working with us with His supernatural power? (Acts 1:8)

Is it not amazing and exciting that we continue to be transformed as we renew our minds with these truths? (Rom. 12:2)

Is it not amazing and exciting that we can 'reckon' our old life dead on the Cross, leave behind our old life (with its bondages and generational inheritance) and receive a totally new life? What a deal!

To us these realities are not only good news – they are immensely and continually exciting! The only reason that believers could not be excited and thrilled by the gospel is that we have failed to fully explore and communicate its “unsearchable riches”. This gospel itself is indeed *the most supernatural force on the earth & the power of God unto salvation*. When communicated in love by those who themselves have been transformed by it, it is the most exciting and life transforming force on the earth.