

FIVE DAYS OF ENCOUNTER

#3. The Correction

3.31.19

Acts 8:4-24 NASB Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word. ⁵ Philip went down to the city of Samaria and *began* proclaiming Christ to them. ⁶ The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. ⁷ For *in the case of* many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out *of them* shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. ⁸ So there was much rejoicing in that city. ⁹ Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; ¹⁰ and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, "This man is what is called the Great Power of God." ¹¹ And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts. ¹² But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. ¹³ Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. ¹⁴ Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, ¹⁵ who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." ²⁰ But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹ You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. ²² Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³ For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity." ²⁴ But Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

The Story...An entire region once thought unreachable was converted by the preaching of The Gospel and demonstrations of Holy Spirit power. One of the converts named Simon would make the mistake of thinking the gifts of The Holy Spirit could be bought and controlled. The future of the move of God in Samaria was at risk. God again moved powerfully through Peter, and such carnal thinking manifested by Simon received an eternal warning. God would not allow His church to be manipulated by the flesh; His kingdom would not be fueled by soulish methods.

The Meaning of the Word...There is coming a cleansing of ministries that will be so thorough as to strike terror in the hearts of manipulators and charlatans. The church will grow up at last, and will not be swayed by what we see, but will truly be led by The Lord into a true ministry of The Spirit. The Prophetic community in particular will find itself in the middle of a major realignment and shaking.

The Burden of The Lord...The most frequent violation of the command to “not take The Name of the Lord in vain” may be occurring in the prophetic community of the Church. It is no longer an awesome, fearful thing to speak in the Name of The Lord. True prophetic ministry has often be reduced to entertainment at best and an expression of satanic deception at worst. Others claim to speak by The Spirit of The Lord, but their words are merely expressions of their own spirit. As He did in the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, God will no longer stand with self-appointed prophets. Ministries and churches that insist on their own agenda and own power source will find themselves devoid of His presence and power as God reclaims the sanctity and glory of His Name, His House, and His Word.

Understanding the Third Encounter...Acts 8 teaches us that in the midst of true supernatural ministry, there may exist a hunger to obtain power and notoriety that replaces the hunger for intimacy with Jesus. Unfortunately, some disciples crave anointing above intimacy, and the quest for spiritual gifts transcends the quest for spiritual fruit. Charismata then becomes more valued than character.

Without the correction of The Holy Spirit, a generation of new Simon the Sorcerers will operate in illegitimate spiritual authority, and will actually destroy by their “character” what has been built by their “anointing.”

Last week:

Mind has to do with our perception; how we think about the Spiritual realm. God calls us to CLEANSING.

Today:

Ministry has to do with our service: how we move in things of the Spirit. God calls us to CORRECTION.

I. The Issue

- A. Simon was genuinely converted (“Simon also believed.”) and was baptized in water.
- B. Simon was of the same spiritual stock as Balaam (Numbers 22; Deuteronomy 23; 2 Peter 2; Jude 1; Revelation 2:14).
- C. We only understand Simon as we understand his “hunger.” What drives us is the key to understanding ourselves.
 1. True wisdom goes to this heart of the matter. Solomon’s command to “Divide the baby in half” revealed the hearts of both women who claimed to be the mother of the child.

2. **1 Kings 3:16-28 NLT** Some time later two prostitutes came to the king to have an argument settled. ¹⁷ “Please, my lord,” one of them began, “this woman and I live in the same house. I gave birth to a baby while she was with me in the house. ¹⁸ Three days later this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there were only two of us in the house. ¹⁹ “But her baby died during the night when she rolled over on it. ²⁰ Then she got up in the night and took my son from beside me while I was asleep. She laid her dead child in my arms and took mine to sleep beside her. ²¹ And in the morning when I tried to nurse my son, he was dead! But when I looked more closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn’t my son at all.” ²² Then the other woman interrupted, “It certainly was your son, and the living child is mine.” “No,” the first woman said, “the living child is mine, and the dead one is yours.” And so they argued back and forth before the king. ²³ Then the king said, “Let’s get the facts straight. Both of you claim the living child is yours, and each says that the dead one belongs to the other. ²⁴ All right, bring me a sword.” So a sword was brought to the king. ²⁵ Then he said, “Cut the living child in two, and give half to one woman and half to the other!” ²⁶ Then the woman who was the real mother of the living child, and who loved him very much, cried out, “Oh no, my lord! Give her the child—please do not kill him!” But the other woman said, “All right, he will be neither yours nor mine; divide him between us!” ²⁷ Then the king said, “Do not kill the child, but give him to the woman who wants him to live, for she is his mother!” ²⁸ When all Israel heard the king’s decision, the people were in awe of the king, for they saw the wisdom God had given him for rendering justice.

D. Simon’s concern was for authority. In particular, authority that would enable him to retain the title of “The Great Power of God.”

1. He wanted a short-cut to power.
 - a) Like Saul, he was unwilling to wait for Samuel.
 - b) In Saul’s mind, a spiritual act was more important than spiritual character.
 - c) “Obedience is better than sacrifice. To listen and obey is better than the fat of rams.”
 - d) Rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft, and witchcraft is essentially spiritual or soulish power operating under illegitimate authority.
2. He harbored unresolved issues in his life.
 - a) Sanctification: “Your heart is not right.”
 - b) Hidden motives: “You are in the gall of bitterness.”

- c) Impurity always produces bondage: “You are in the bondage of iniquity.”
- E. There is no indication of hunger for Jesus in the mind of Simon. He wanted to operate in the Power of Jesus, but saw no need for living in the Presence of Jesus.
- 1. **Acts 4:13** “Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.”
 - 2. Peter discerned the nature of what drove Simon, and he rebuked him for thinking the work of The Spirit could be accomplished by “soulish” means.
 - 3. I believe in impartation, but...
 - a) Impartation must be tested and tempered. (Elijah, Moses, John, David, and even Jesus knew life in the Wilderness).
 - b) Impartation must be originated by The Spirit.
 - (1) We can desire anointing (1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1).
 - (2) We can request anointing (2 Kings 2:9).
 - (3) But the final disposition of the matter is in the will of The Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11).

II. On the Table

- A. Simon understood the concept of Spiritual power. He walked in demonic power before his conversion.
- B. Simon wanted the anointing of another Simon, but was not willing to walk the path of the other Simon.
- C. “Make it your priority to teach them how to live in intimacy with Me.”

III. Lessons from Simon

- A. **Soul and spirit abide near each other.** Only by staying in the presence of Jesus can we know the difference. Moses struck the rock and gained a miracle twice. He struck once in the power of the Spirit, and God granted life. Then he struck once out of the power of his soul, and it cost Moses more than we can imagine.

- B. **There is a curse upon soulish ministry.** As with the Fig Tree cursed by Jesus, the result may not appear immediately but death is working inexorably toward the surface.

- C. **Soulish ministry misunderstands rejection because it craves the approval of man.** Samuel had to learn that rejection of his advice by the people of Israel was really something else entirely. It was a rejection of Jehovah. Such is the life of those who speak for God. Jesus invites us to embrace the fellowship of His suffering (Philippians 3:10). He warned us to not seek the approval of men, but of God (Luke 6:26). Rejection hurts, but it is fertilizer for our spiritual side. However, people like Simon remain in bitterness and carry a mantle of rejection that alienates them from community and correction. Before long, they reject accountability, refuse correction, and live out their days in bitter criticism of God's church and His people.

IV. Christian Life Lessons

- A. Ask God for a spirit of Apollos to fall upon us.
 - 1. It appears that Simon was willing to be corrected.

 - 2. **Acts 18:24-26 NASB** Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. ²⁵ This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; ²⁶ and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

 - 3. An understanding of and submission to spiritual community must be embraced.

- B. Ask God for a repentant, humble heart to be found in us.
 - 1. No excuses.

 - 2. No pushback.

3. The rebuke was accepted.

C. Ask God to clarify and sanctify your calling.

1. There may be a season of being set aside in order to seek clarity.

2. There may be a time of waiting, even when the gifting is obvious.

3. A Ministry Fast: Be willing to withdraw for a designated period of time in order to allow God to purify our service to Him.

D. Seek spiritual fruit on at least the same level as spiritual giftings.

1. Giftings are generally spontaneous; but fruit requires waiting.

2. Lessons from the production of wine