

The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets

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So much that was clearly understood and practised in the early church has been lost or become obscured with the passage of time. This is particularly true with regard to understanding the nature and function of the ascension gifts of Christ in his church (Eph 4:11-16). I wish to focus on two of the gifts mentioned, because they are the *key ministries* to be restored at this historical juncture in God's plan of restoration. They are the *apostles* and *prophets*.

In place of apostles and prophets have come archbishops, cardinals, bishops, and executive boards. The claim that Christ is restoring apostles and prophets in his church today meets with everything from surprise to resistance from the religious establishment.

A pastor once challenged me by asking, 'Why do we need to be concerned with apostles and prophets today? We have got on very well without them so far!'

It might be true to say that the church has 'got on' without these ministries, *but can it really be said we have got on 'well' without them?*

- Would we say it is 'well' when the one church of Jesus Christ has now got an estimated 250,000 denominations and sects dividing it?
- Would we say 'well' when – to a large extent – the church's testimony is weak, and its voice increasingly irrelevant?
- Would we say 'well' when the power of the resurrected life of Christ in the supernatural is rarely seen?
- Would we say 'well' when the church ravaged by dissent continues to compromise itself on some of the most fundamental moral issues of our time rather than giving clear prophetic leadership?

Paul declared that none of the 'gifts' of the ascended Lord – including apostles and prophets – would pass away *'until' the church reaches unity of the faith and the fullness of the stature of Christ. Who would dare claim that this has been achieved?* The word **'until'** is the key to understanding *the present necessity for – and continuing restoration of – apostles and prophets in the church.* It is illogical to claim that we need the evangelists, pastors and teachers, but not the apostles and prophets, when God has distinctly given them for the purpose of attaining fullness in the church.

In order to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding, let me clearly say ***we are not claiming*** that present day apostles are the same as the original twelve. In fact, the scriptures show us *three* categories of apostles:

- *The unique apostleship* of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.
- *The twelve that Jesus chose to be his apostles*, with Matthias replacing Judas following the resurrection of Christ. These twelve are unique as the foundation stones of the new order. They are the 'Apostles of the Lamb' (Rev. 21:19).
- *The post-ascension apostles* who are gifts of the ascended Christ. Paul was one of these, though he was unique amongst that first generation of post-ascension apostles as part of the body of writers who gave us the New Testament revelation clarifying our gospel – the inclusion of Gentiles in God's church and restoration plan.

Scripture shows the church having both doctrinal and *experiential* foundations. Its doctrinal foundation is Jesus and the twelve. But *experientially*, every emerging church needs to *be in living fellowship with Christ and with a continuing apostolic ministry*. Paul said, the apostles are part of the foundation in which 'Christ *himself*' is the chief cornerstone. Not simply what he said, or taught, but with *himself* the person. A living relationship with the living Christ. Paul speaks of the apostolic ministry as laying a 'firm foundation' of the revelation of Christ in the church.^[7]

Seeking to define the ministry of apostles in detail can be dangerous because it can lead us to cast them in inflexible moulds and categories. Too frequently Paul becomes the sole measure line for them, which goes beyond what is biblically justified. Although it is true to say that Paul's apostolic commission is the one given the most detail in Scripture, the New Testament names several other post-ascension apostles as well.

There are various kinds of apostles. Although each apostle is sent with a specific commission, we are not told what his *gifting* is to accomplish it. Here lies a distinguishing mark between apostles. Some complete their task through prophetic gifting, others through teaching gifting, and others from a mix of gifting. Apostles must remain sensitive to the Spirit, and not seek to 'apostle' a situation in a field where the required gift is different to the one(s) recognised in that respective apostle. This is why – in this initial period of restoration of apostolic ministries and their relation to churches – there will be some measure of movement as the right apostles for the right groupings of people find each other. As such movement occurs, apostles must avoid foolish and immature feelings of rejection relating to the actions of elders and churches responding to other apostles. They must also avoid any feeling of superiority when people pursue relationship with them. We must recognise that people will respond to different gifts in different men. At the same time we must remember what Paul wrote to the Corinthians in respect to apostolic involvement. Where there was a tendency to divide in part between the apostles, Paul said, '**All** are yours.' (1Co 3:22) We therefore recognise there are different kinds of apostles for different tasks and situations.

It is also important to realise that just like any other servants of God in ministry, apostles are also in the process of maturing in their gifting, wisdom, and authority.

Apostles differ in these measures, which is why Paul spoke of apostles as having a 'measure' of rule (2 Cor.10:13), a 'measure' of faith (Rom.12:3) and a 'measure' of God's gift (Eph.4:7). It is foolish for apostles to compare themselves with each other, or for people to compare apostle with apostle – just as it is foolish to compare teacher with teacher, pastor with pastor, evangelist with evangelist, or prophet with prophet. All ministries are servants of God, and through the processes of the Spirit progress to maturity in their callings. It is time for the servants of God to stop being intimidated by people's preferences, prejudices and childish games, and take seriously the responsibility of being faithful stewards and servants in the house of God.

While apostles are maturing in their calling, they can also:

- **'Fall short'** (1 Cor.10:12; Gal.5:4): -- i.e., fail to complete the task to which they've been commissioned. This could happen for a variety of reasons, such as discouragement, immorality, love of money, jealousy, succumbing to wrong motivations, etc.
- **'Fall away'** (2 Pet.3:17): -- it is even possible for apostles to abandon the faith through inner conflict produced by mental or external pressure, demonic deception and delusions of grandeur, or even through the despair and disappointment of hope deferred – much as Judas Iscariot.
- **'Become disqualified'** (1Co 9:27): -- Paul became aware in his own ministry that his level of revelation and deep insight into the mysteries of God required him to set out his gospel to other ministries of depth and revelation so it could be tested and affirmed. He did not want to face the possibility – as he puts it – of having 'preached to others, I myself should be disqualified'.
- **'Fall victim to their own lack of watchfulness'**: -- When Paul urged on the Ephesian elders in the light of his departure, knowing he would not see them again, he warned that they should 'guard themselves' (Acts 20:31). In so doing, he highlighted something imperative to all ministries. Paul knew the importance of sustaining his fellowship with God and of staying in the place where God could continually minister to and through him. He gave the Ephesian elders a principle that would enable this to happen for each of them: 'Guard yourself.' Thousands of godly men have been willing to pour out their lives for the flock only to fall victim themselves because they did not guard themselves. Literally thousands of God's ministers have wearied in ministry, become jaded in life, experienced turmoil of mind, been devastated in their domestic situations, and seen their churches decline and be destroyed because of the failure to 'guard themselves.' In giving this principle, Paul placed as much priority – if not even more – on keeping it oneself as for the flock of God, which is why he said, 'Guard yourself **and** the flock over which he has made you overseers.' (Acts 20:28)

What we are is more important than what we do, and guarding ourselves maintains our own inner spiritual abiding in Christ.

Apostles are called and appointed by Christ; they are not chosen by congregations, or even by fellow ministries; (2 Cor. 5:20, Col. 1:1, Eph. 1:1) . It should also be recognised that there may be a lengthy interval between what a person is *called* to be and what they are '*anointed*' or '*appointed*' to do. Paul was called to be an apostle on the Damascus road, and received his commission to apostolic task in that initial encounter with Christ. He knew there and then that God was sending him to the Gentiles (nations) to open their eyes, turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, and enable them to receive their inheritance amongst the sanctified by faith in Christ (Acts 26:18). All this was revealed to him in the life-changing encounter he had with God on the Damascus road; however, it was a further seventeen years before he was separated to his commission (Acts 13:1-4).

It is a mistake to interpret a calling as a release to begin functioning. A deep awareness that one is called to be an apostle is not necessarily accompanied by people's recognition of such. In other words, one cannot just go out and 'apostle' situations. Jesus, the unique apostle, did not fully emerge in his ministry until he was thirty years old. He knew he was called, but there came the time when he said, 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me and has anointed me to . . .' (Lu 4:18). He knew not only what he was, but also what he was anointed to do. There may be a large number of apostles who have received a genuine call from God, but they are not all appointed or anointed to do the same thing. We need to be patient and hold the confidence of our calling in Christ until the time comes when he anoints us clearly to our appointed task; then we can start functioning in our apostleship.

- **Apostles break new territory in the world**, and establish the church as an expression of the kingdom in new cities and towns as they liberate men and women from their bonds and demonic control. They also bring order to the body of Christ. The apostles and prophets, as the primary stewards of the mysteries of Christ, continuously measure the life and testimony of God's people against those mysteries. Where they find the church has deviated from God's purpose of restoration, they powerfully, prophetically and demonstratively assert the purpose of God. They challenge any sectarian attitude or denominational spirit that threatens the unity of the body. They bring judgement to any lifestyle contrary to the purity of Christ in the life of the believer. They confront powers of darkness that seek to introduce subtle legalisms and externalisms into the body of Christ. And true apostles are willing and bold enough to confront each other – as Paul did Peter – whenever behaviour is inconsistent with revelation. (Gal 2:11-14)
- **Apostles rejoice and respond in every sovereign move of the Spirit that comes to refresh the body**. They realise that each refreshing enables the people of God to find the strength and faith to continue their pilgrimage to fullness. Peter, for example, clearly shows the purpose of the 'times of refreshing'; they are short seasons of divine renewal that lead the people of God toward the longer seasons of times of restoration (Acts 3:20,21). In the seasons of refreshing, apostles - by the wisdom of God- help the people of God see that the season of refreshing is a *transition*, and not the *terminus*.

They keep the people *moving* in blessing, and will not allow them to *settle* in that blessing.

- **Apostles have the necessary wisdom and authority of God to keep the body of Christ both *filled with truth, and walking in it*.** They therefore bring with their word a necessary element of judgement, so that the righteousness, peace, and joy of the kingdom are maintained by an ever-present principle of judgement at work. Many times, they may even bring a word to divide. People are afraid of the word *division* -- they tend to think of it in exclusively negative terms. But frankly, division is a principle God introduced in the very beginning. He *divided* the day from the night, the darkness from light, the waters above the earth from the waters below. The division of God in creation illustrates God's commitment to *clarity*. God does not allow his children to live in twilight. We are children of the day and not of the night. God abhors mixture.
- **Apostles and prophets will – by their ministry of word and spirit – keep the church pure, and progressing to fullness.** The product of their ministry will be that the glory of the house of God in this end time will be seen as greater than in the history of Israel or the church to date (Hag. 2:9).
- **Apostles will strengthen and establish the church of God when everything in our world is shaking.** They explain the reason for what is happening, and minister the principles and faith by which God's people will remain secure. God's shaking will go well beyond the church – it will extend to all nations (Dan. 2:44-45, 27; Hag. 2:6-7). It will affect our world at every level: its economy, technological advances, scientific development, moral and social positions, its intellectual and educational establishments. Everything will shake until only the unshakeable stands secure. The writer of Hebrews says, 'We are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken.' (He 12:28). The apostles and prophets are at the forefront of leading God's people in the advance of the unshakeable kingdom of God in our generation.

All God's apostles are '*sent ones*', not simply men that go. They are sent with a specific commission, and as such are empowered to act on behalf of the sender. At the same time we don't simply call someone an apostle because they *claim* to be sent. On the contrary, churches are commended for '*trying those who say they are apostles and are not*'.^[9] In order for us to be secure in a relationship with apostles, we must know which ones are true as opposed to those that are false. Here are some common hallmarks that enable us to recognise true apostolic ministry.

The Hallmarks of the Apostle and his Ministry

1. A true apostle will have had a personal encounter with the resurrected Lord.^[10]
2. He will have been personally commissioned to an apostolic task.^[11]

3. He will fulfil his apostleship through some other gifting, e.g. prophet, evangelist, teacher.^[12]
4. He will be an equipper of the saints.^[13]
5. He will be a good steward of the mysteries of God, of which he has a divine revelation.^[14]
6. He will recognise and be recognised in his apostleship, i.e. he may lead an apostolic team that emerges around him and prove to be the catalyst for other ministries. Conversely, he may be an apostle built into another apostle's sphere, as Barnabas was with Paul. A valid apostolic ministry does not necessarily have the same task that Paul did, in which one would be required to be the catalyst for many others.
7. He will be a wise master builder (architect) of the house of God. An astute user of the plumb line of the mystery of Christ, he will measure everything built against the end purpose for the house.^[15]
8. He will demonstrate an apostles' authority given by Christ.^[16]
9. He will demonstrate grace and wisdom in his relationships with people so that a sphere of apostolic ministry and influence emerges in the lives of these people. His positive relations with the people of God will provide them with a deep sense of security. This will produce a committed, productive people who happily help him in the task he is called to. It is inside this sphere of committed people – actively pursuing God's desire for his house – that he has the authority of rule. This rule will not be exercised outside his sphere or in some authoritarian manner, but will follow the example of Christ – who came to serve rather than be served.^[17]
10. He is a man pursuing a **vision** in which he is:
 - * *clear* as to what he has seen in his *commission*;
 - * *committed* to its completion;
 - * *obedient* to the will of God in its commands;
 - * *patiently persevering* in obedience to the heavenly vision despite any and all setbacks.

An apostolic commission is fulfilled in phases – it is a process. With the completion of each phase^[18] the apostle will be sensitive to God's 'sending' into the new phase. When all phases of his apostolic commission are complete he will be able to say as did the Apostle Paul, 'I have finished my course'. He can then with joy be received by the Lord for his reward.^[19]

11. He is filled with persevering faith. Regardless of enticements, setbacks, or opposition from men or demons, his faith enables him to persevere. This faith will extend itself to lay hold of all that is necessary from the supply of God's grace to fulfil his ministry, and lay hold of the people and money resource

required for the task. His faith will demonstrate the supernatural power of God so that God is seen to be working with him confirming his word with signs and wonders following.

12. The apostle will be the living example of all that he wants the people to become and do. Therefore, his personal Christ-likeness will be evident to all so that they are secure in following his example. He may unashamedly stand before the people and say, 'you yourselves know how you ought to follow us'.^[20] He is humble, and a man of prayer. His longsuffering gentleness with the weak, his firmness with those that require it, and his integrity and honesty in business matters and dealings with people should all speak well of him.
13. He is focussed into Christ and does not boast of his own status. (Rom. 3:2; 1Thes.2:6)
14. Paul refers to the apostles as being set forward *first of all* (1Co 12:28), and *last of all* (1Co 4:9). Apostles are the first among the ministries in building the church of God, because they lay a foundation of understanding concerning the mystery of Christ. Yet, in terms of people's affection and recognition, they are frequently *last of all*, and are often treated as 'the refuse' of society (in Peterson's terms, 'potato peelings from the culture's kitchen'- *The Message*, p 343). In human terms, they are the *first in responsibility*, and the *last in reward*.

Prophets

It is unfortunate that people's concept of a prophet is so frequently coloured by their view of John the Baptist, with his camelhair clothing and diet of locusts and wild honey. The image many people have of a prophet is an austere, aesthetic individual, oddly dressed and tending to live in strange places. Happily, the Bible introduces a much wider range of prophets than John the Baptist, beginning with Abel (Luk.11:50-51) and continuing through the Biblical record with such people as Abraham, Moses, Samuel and David, right on through into the New Covenant with Anna, Agabus, Silas, Judas, etc. Rather than building a mental image out of varied physical details of different prophets, it is much more productive to look at other factors in understanding a prophet's ministry.

The prophets are –

- **People of God's presence.** They know what it is to enter the spiritual world of God's throne room presence *to hear the voice of God's counsel, and see a situation from God's perspective*. They understand what it is to stand silent and attentive in the council of God^[21], which is why God always shows his ways to the prophets^[22], and encourages his people to heed them. (ref.)
- **People of perception.** Neither the eyes nor mind of a prophet are imprisoned by the visible world. The prophets were originally called *seers* (1 Sam. 9:9), and they not only see situations but hearts. They are able to apply the word of God to the visible situation by the understanding and

perception they gain of it in the invisible world. The visible and invisible worlds appear as one to them. A classic example of this is Elisha's peace as he lay on the bed after his servant had warned him the Assyrians had surrounded him in the night.^[23] He simply prayed that God would open the servants' eyes and release him from imprisonment to the material and tangible world in which we live. When the servant went out and looked, he was astonished to see the hosts of God surrounding the Assyrian army. His excited report was met with the prophet's calm response: 'there are more for us than against us'.^[24]

- **People of revelation.** Paul highlighted this understanding and depiction of the value of prophetic ministry in the church. Together with apostles, prophets have understanding and wisdom in the mystery of Christ.^[25] They join with apostles in laying the foundation of understanding and practised truth – they both establish it and *are* it.
- **People of confrontation.** Prophets – emboldened with the word of God and anointed by God's Spirit – are not afraid to confront authorities and/or situations. Nathan disturbed David's comfort zone by exposing David's sin in taking Bathsheba while having her husband Uriah killed at the military frontline (2Sa 11&12). Moses, who spent 40 years being reduced in his own mind from the articulate, skilled prince of Egypt to a mere desert shepherd, nevertheless stood before Pharaoh and – emboldened with God's word – cried out, 'let my people go'.^[26] John the Baptist confronted Herod with the sinfulness of taking his brother's wife – and ultimately paid for it with his life.^[27] Prophets deliver the Word of God – in spite of the possible or predictable consequences.
- **People of demonstration.** *Authentic prophets are the embodiment of the word they are carrying.* Before they call for people to come to alignment with God's will and purpose, they are themselves living in that will and purpose. Their lives are characterised by commitment to God's heart and rule in all things. They are passionate for righteousness and justice. Their primary concerns are God's interests. This is why God is secure in the prophets to the point that he implied He wouldn't 'do anything without first telling his prophets?'^[28]
- **People of motivation.** Passionately enthused by the word and spirit of God, prophets are able to inspire the faith of God's people and motivate them to pursue the task God sets before them. This is demonstrated in the time of Haggai during the rebuilding of the Temple, when those living in nostalgia for the first temple discouraged the people rebuilding. Haggai came and passionately cried, 'I am with you says the Lord'.^[29] This was hardly a dynamic new revelation! But it was *a powerful inspiration and motivation when spoken in the passion of an anointed prophet.*
- **People of perseverance.** The prophets are not only motivators, but are committed to see the word of God accomplish its purpose. They continue

to provoke the people with God's current word, keeping their hope alive and their faith active until the will of God is accomplished.^[30]

Prophets are passionate for the interests of God. There is nothing mediocre about these men and women. Everything about their life is passionate – what they hate they hate absolutely, what they love they love absolutely. What they do knows no half-measure. There is an edge to their sword, conviction in their tone of voice. This is what we need today, prophetic fervour not simply a prophetic flavour.

It is our ability to passionately identify with God's purpose that qualifies us as Paul said, 'you may all prophesy'.

It is the failure to sustain a prophetic passion for God's purpose of restoration that has given us a 'Christianity of the trivial', with more attention to performance than proclamation. While elders are trapped in the busy-ness of barrenness occupied with peripheral activities and administration, rather than preparing the heart to prophesy to the people, or be sensitive to their hurts and cry.

The failure to sustain prophetic passion has allowed Christianity to dissolve into a competitive scramble by the small-minded to relate a few more to their cause as opposed to working in harmony to advance the Kingdom, disciple the people and pursue God's purpose of unity in the bonds of peace.

If we are to see an effective, dynamic testimony of authentic Christianity in every city and town in our nation we must prevail in prayer for God to give us a fresh wave of passionate prophets.

God has not gifted men and women to do everything for a largely sedentary church. The purpose of prophets as of others in ministry callings is to *equip the saints for the work of their ministry*.(Eph.4:12) This is one of the primary functions of apostles and prophets. Engaged in a programme larger than expressing their own giftedness, *they enable others to move in gift*. In this fundamental way they contribute to God's purpose in regeneration, restoration and reformation.

As God is restoring apostles and prophets in the church I have heard it said in various countries, 'I believe God will raise up *our own* apostles and prophets. We don't need to be dependent on British apostles, or, American prophets.' This thinking has no place in the one holy nation of God. The Bible does not say God has set in the church British apostles, South African prophets, American evangelists, German teachers, but that God has set *in the church* apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. They are distinguished by their gifting and anointing in Christ. Any failure to change these attitudes will hold up our progress towards maturity and seeing the power of God break through in the churches.

Ministers of Christ into our World

Our world is a highly complex one made up of many spheres (worlds) of interest: world politics, economics, business, law, medicine, education, sports, and theatre,

to name just a few. Generally, to be a voice of influence in any one of these spheres requires proper positioning within its framework. For example, a highly trained and experienced member of the legal profession is both better positioned and would be given a better hearing on matters of law and justice than someone trained in agriculture. Similarly, those engaged in research in medical fields associated with problems in the food chain will find their opinions carry more weight in a food poisoning scare than someone who is a quiz show host. In other words, *to maximise one's influence in any field, one needs to specialise in it.* God understands this perfectly. In sending us into the world he wants us to penetrate each of its spheres (worlds). *We need to 'go' deeper into our chosen sphere of interest as servants of God, not come out of them in order to become a servant.*

When God commissioned the church to 'go into all the world', he meant for us to penetrate each sphere of it with a living expression of his mind and will. Restorers believe God's intention is to have apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers who are politicians, business persons, sports personalities, actors, computer engineers and so on rather than becoming a professional religious clergy, trapped in a professional religious ghetto. We must recover our understanding of these ministry callings in the context of God's purpose to fill the earth with his image and likeness. Only in this way will Christians truly salt and light our world at every level of human contact and communication.

To tell young men and women they *must* 'give up their job' to 'serve the Lord' has delayed the evangelisation of our world and robbed its institutional structures of the impact of the kingdom of God. There are some people that God wants given entirely to a specific ministry that is so demanding they would be unable to fulfil it and hold down a job at the same time. When such people then give up their job to pursue their calling it is both understandable and seen as necessary, but this is not the norm. The heart cry of the restorer is, 'Lord you have sent your church into our world to bring your kingdom to men and women, and you have given your church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Lord, raise them up as artists, inventors, scientists, medics, teachers, professors, lawyers, judges, business men and women, journalists, industrialists, actors, storekeepers, sportspersons and to provide every other role of service in our world.'

Imagine what a difference it will make when many scriptwriters, producers and directors of major theatre and film productions are Christians with concern for the wellbeing of the family as their pastoral calling or the desire to introduce unbelievers to faith in Christ as the evangelist. What changes there will be when multinational corporations, stock exchange and commodity boards have in the top echelons of executive leadership committed Christian leaders with the strategic mind of the apostle the foreseeing eye of the prophet, the compassion of God's heart seen on Christian faces on the ground in ordinary jobs. The business world will be an entirely different place. How dramatic the effect will be on the general populace when such men and women fulfil their callings in and through the church in the world.

In response to the crises we face in our educational systems, welfare organisations, prisons, and inner cities, people are not crying out for more government intrusion or state initiated programmes, or for more money to be thrown at the problems. Instead, they seek wisdom, commitment, and moral leadership in every field. Cosmetic changes, empty promises, regurgitated political policies, another 'enquiry' – all announced with articulate fanfare – only lead to more disillusionment, frustration and reaction in the general populace.

We need to awake to the hour. We are not God's people in a vacuum, but God's people to a world in crisis. The harvest is not inside four walls vibrating with hymns or choruses, but in our streets, hospitals, prisons, clubs, and work places. Christians need to embrace the implications of the call of *God that has sent us into the world (Joh.17:18)*. Apostolic wisdom, prophetic insight and passion, evangelistic zeal, pastoral concern and care, and the teacher's ability to instruct and train, are all required to play their part in seeing men and women transformed and society reformed.

It is with this in mind we have a deeper appreciation of Paul's use of the term 'body'. When Jesus came into the world he cried, **'a body you have prepared for me. I have come to do your will O God.'**^[31] God – who is invisible spirit – entered a body of flesh. Now that Christ has returned to the Father in heaven, God has prolonged his days in a new body, the church – a corporate people.^[32]

It is through this corporate body he expresses his heart, and will for mankind.

Our gifting not only benefits, blesses and matures the church, but through the gifts of his Spirit God ministers his life to all. In practice this means that the greater manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit in our experience will be in the day to day course of our lives. Jesus makes himself known in and through us in the everyday market place of life on the streets of the 21st century. His life is not confined to religious meetings as he moves through us, blesses, and heals where the mass of people is to be found daily.

How can we be more effective in this arena?

- *Every day give your mind, your emotions and your body over to God through which he can express himself.* Pray that your heart will feel what his heart is feeling, that your mind will be filled with what his mind is intending, and that your eyes, ears, lips and hands will be available to him through which to see, hear, speak and bless.
- *Step out into your day expecting God to respond to your yielded life.* Christians should get on the bus, train or into the car, or walk into the office, store, factory, a university or children's' playroom, fully expecting God to bless them and make them a blessing today.
- *Live confidently and boldly, responding with a childlike faith to the promptings of his Spirit .* Understand that whatever God is telling you to do he will be

with you in the doing of it. Whatever the consequences of any bold action you take, you can be sure God was not only with you in prompting the action but remains with you in the consequences of the action you have taken.

- *Never seek to take the applause to yourself.* People's gratitude undoubtedly follows miracles, help, and success. Always give God the direct praise and glory for what has taken place. In this way you make certain of a continued experience of union and life with God in the supernatural.

When Jesus stepped out each day it was with a conscious sense of the presence of God with him. He had taken specific time to seek the Father's mind and will in the 'secret place'. (Mat.6:4-6) It was in the secret place that Jesus would often see the Father doing things, or his spirit would hear the Father say things and instantly he knew what he was seeing and hearing of the Father was what the Father wanted him to do (Joh.5:19). As a consequence he walked the streets of the villages and cities and fully anticipating being used to bring God's life to people by the Spirit. *His heart was prepared by the Spirit in the secret place for what the Spirit wished to do through him in the public place.* We are not above him – if he needed the secret place, how much more do we (Mat.10:24-25)? Jesus directly accused the Pharisees of trying to steal praise to themselves and showed them they would never move in the supernatural because they would not be able to receive the faith required for it. Their self-interest and desire for praise and glory from each other prevented unity with the Father. (Joh.5:44)

[\[1\]](#) Eph.4:13

[\[2\]](#) Heb.3:1

[\[3\]](#) Acts 1:21-22

[\[4\]](#) Rev.21:14

[\[5\]](#) Eph.4:7-11

There are those that argue Matthias was not one of the 12 but that God's choice was Paul. But this is untenable. Paul distinguishes himself from the 12 (1 Cor. 15:5,8). God said that on the day of Pentecost Peter stood up in the midst of 11, God owning their choice of Matthias (Mat.1:26). And Matthias was one of the 12 apostles who remained based in Jerusalem following the persecution that arose at the time of Stephen's death.

[\[6\]](#) Eph.2:20

[\[7\]](#) 1 Cor.3:10

[\[8\]](#) Notably – Barnabus(Acts 14:4,14), Andronicus and Junias (Rom.16:7), and Silas (1 Thes.2:6)

[\[9\]](#) Rev.2:2

[\[10\]](#) Act 22:8

[\[11\]](#) Act 26:16-18

[\[12\]](#) Act 13:1

[\[13\]](#) Eph.4:11-12

[\[14\]](#) 2 Cor.4:

[\[15\]](#) 1 Cor.3:10

[\[16\]](#) 2 Cor.10:8

[\[17\]](#) Mat.20:25-28

[\[18\]](#) Act 14:26

[\[19\]](#) 2 Tim.4:7

[\[20\]](#) 2 Thes.3:7-9

[\[21\]](#) Jer.23:18,22; 2 Pet.1:20-21; c.f. Is.29:10; Rev.1:3,9; 4:1-2

[\[22\]](#) Amos 3:7

[\[23\]](#) 2 Kings 6:15

[\[24\]](#) 2 Kings 6:16

[\[25\]](#) Eph.3:4-5; c.f. 1 Cor.14:29-30

[\[26\]](#) Ex.5:1

[\[27\]](#) Mark 6:17-18

[\[28\]](#) Amos 3:7

[\[29\]](#) Hag.1:13-14

[\[30\]](#) Amos 9:11-15; Act 15:12-18; Ez. 8:11; Haggai and Zechariah books, and Ezra 5:1-2

[\[31\]](#) Heb.10:5

[\[32\]](#) Is.53:10