

Questions Concerning the Use of Spiritual Gifts

The basic question: how can we glorify God and exalt the Lord Jesus by serving as powerfully as those believers in the Book of Acts? If the Book of Acts is a model for the Church today -- is the ministry of Peter and John also a model of how it is (usually) to be done? That is, having been given (1) the name of the Lord Jesus and (2) supernatural gifts, are we to use these gifts (at least most of these) by simply speaking in the name of the Lord Jesus? With some of the gifts (evangelism, teaching, pastoring, etc.) we simply utilize the gifts by speaking as well as by praying for divine help. However, we do not simply pray, we speak.

There is no question that we have the gifts of healing, miracles, and exorcism (among others) in the Church today. Are those who seem to have these gifts to follow the same order as we do with preaching/teaching/tongues, etc., and -- as Peter and John?

I. Peter and John Simply Said to the Crippled Man **“Walk.”**

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer--at three in the afternoon. Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. Acts 3:1-8

II. Is it Significant that Moses was Once Told -- Not to Pray -- but to Use His Rod?

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? **Tell** the Israelites to move on. **Raise your staff** and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. Ex. 14:15,16

III. Is it Significant that Moses was told to **Speak** to the Rock? Num. 20:9-13

Earlier he had been told to strike the rock and water would come out. When Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it -- it displeased the Lord and Moses lost the privilege of entering Canaan. Since God had given water before through striking the rock was it now sufficient only to speak to it? Was striking the rock an illustration of Calvary -- not to be repeated? And now, it is sufficient only to speak in faith to receive grace? Was Moses to understand the power of God was released in speaking?

IV. Is it Significant that Life and Death are in the **Power** of the Tongue? Prov. 18:20,21

From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied. The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

- V. Is it Significant that the Lord Jesus **Rebuked** the fever in Peter's Mother-in-Law?
Luke 4:39 (Was the power of God released in simply speaking?)

Earlier in the day, when the Lord Jesus was in the synagogue, he **rebuked** a wicked spirit (same Greek word -- not translated in the NIV). Luke 4:35 It seems He followed His rebuke with words "**Be Quiet.**" However, when He rebuked the fever we are not told that he also spoke to the woman.

- VI. Is it Significant that the Lord Jesus **Rebuked** (spoke to) the Storm? Luke 8:24

The word "rebuked" is the same Greek word as in the two references above.

- VII. Is it Significant that the Lord Jesus Healed the Leper by saying "**Be Clean**"?
Matt 8:1-4

- VIII. Is it Significant that the Lord Jesus Stated One Could **Speak** to a Tree in Faith and it would Obey? Luke 17:6

- IX. Is it Significant that the Lord Jesus Stated One Could **Speak** to a Mountain in Faith?
Matt 17:20

- X. Is it Significant that One of Our Weapons in Resisting the Enemy Involves **Speaking**? Eph 6:17 (There is no question but that the power is released in speaking.)

- XI. Is it Significant that Peter Illustrates Using Our Gifts by **Speaking**? 1 Peter 4:10,11

- XII. Is it Significant that Healing In James 5:16 is Seemingly Related Primarily to **Praying**?

Conclusion:

- A. Are we acting like Simon who wanted the power of God and tried to buy it? Are we trying to buy it by good works, or in attempting to find some religious formula?
- B. Are we without the power of God, at least to the degree that we desire it, because we have not received "anointing prayer?" Is there something to the "Apostolic Anointing" that is supposed to come down through certain segments of the Church?
- C. If the illustration of Peter and John healing the cripple by speaking -- is our model today -- then how are to respond in our ministry? Should we try it by faith?
- D. Why do we not see more ministry of "speaking" as seen in that of Peter and John? Have we responded negatively to the "health and wealth" approach?
- E. Are we without the power we need today because we have grieved the Holy Spirit in personal and corporate ways and have not made it right?

Victor Matthews