

for the Lord's glory.

Monday, 7 August 2017 Acts 8:9-13

But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

Why is the conversion of Simon singled out? What is so special about Simon the Sorcerer? Don't you think that some high ranking city officials also believed? Yes, but for this phrase. "This man is the power of God that is called Great." Simon allowed the people to elevate him to equality with the LORD, God the Almighty and could have suffered the fate of Herod (Acts 12:20-23), but the Lord demonstrated His power and "he was amazed."

Simon grasped the lesson even though he had more to learn about the source of that power, but don't we all. See Acts 8:18-24

Tuesday, 8 August 2017 Acts 9:26-27

And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.

Compare this report with Simon's. There the people saw and were amazed; here they did not see and were terrified for they remembered the Saul of old. It took the testimony of someone whom they knew and trusted to verify the evidence of transformation.

My 60th high school graduation was two years ago. I didn't go, but I know there were classmates who remembered the 18-year-old John. Not a pretty picture! A weekend together was not going to convince them that I was anything else other than a proficient actor. And they knew that.

We all need our Barnabas, or a span of life consistently lived

Wednesday, 9 August 2017 Acts 9:40-42

But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

The resurrection of Tabitha (Dorcas) is another example of the richness of the power of the Holy Spirit to bring others to a saving knowledge of the LORD, God, the Almighty. She was a well known and respected member of the Christian community in Joppa; died and a significant loss, not only to the Christians but throughout the city. Can you imagine the buzz in the marketplace? "Dorcas died, but she is alive. No, how did that happen? I heard yesterday that she was working on a tunic for that widower over on Straight street. No way! Maybe we better check this out? There are such things as false rumors, you know."

Thursday, 10 August 2017 Acts 10:42-43

And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Another form of witness, the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God, frequently maligned and scoffed at. The culture is quick to deny the authority of the Bible. But we must never forget *Hebrews 4:12* "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

I need to be very conscious to always include the Word in my testimony. Yes, sometimes, I need to start with my testimony, but without the authority of the Scriptures, I am just another spinner of tales. That two-edged sword will pierce the most cynical heart when the proper time comes.

Friday, 11 August 2017 Acts 10:44-45

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who

had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.

I do not remember ever hearing a teaching on the significance of this day. The gift of the Holy Spirit poured out on the Gentiles. The last step in the sequence of Acts 1:8 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*"

What a glorious Day—Pentecost for the Gentiles. A Day of fulfilled Scripture. The Day of Fulfilled Prophecy *Genesis 12:2-3 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*"

Saturday, 12 August 2017 Acts 11:17-18

If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

Did those saints assembled in Jerusalem and hearing Peter's report, recognize the fulfillment of prophecy that day? Were their hearts filled with praise at the realization that the promise to Abram had been honored?

Do we, the grafted in ones, remember our Jewish brethren and thank them for their faithful service as the children of the Lord, the ones called to be the blessing to all families of the earth?

Lord's Day, 13 August 2017 Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Not just a dim candle but a blazing light that illuminates every footstep and brings each stone into stark prominence. All I need to do is keep my eyes open and follow the sure, smooth path that leads to the righteousness, peace, and joy of the Kingdom.

VOICES TOGETHER

Daily Meditations from the Scriptures



August 7-12, 2017

Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: 2 Thessalonians 1:3ff

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. . . .

Thank You, LORD for the increase among the [congregation] in our love for each other and for the growth in solidarity as a community dedicated to advancing the Kingdom in the here and now.

I thank You, LORD for the example of each member and the encouragement that each is in their perseverance; in their faith; in their willingness to undergo hardship and trials for Your Name's sake. Amen

Creational Theology hint for the week—One of the strong points of the faith of the Celtic Christians was their strong sense of the transcendent in their everyday lives. Here's an excerpt from a prayer used as the morning fire was rekindled from the previous days peats. "I will kindle my fire this morning/In the presence of the holy angels of heaven.../God kindle Thou in my heart within/A flame of love for my neighbor/... **We need to strive to keep the presence of the transcendent in our daily lives**

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