

MAXIMUM IMPACT IN OUR WORLD

November 15, 2009

SERMON TITLE- ACTS-traordinary: Power You Can't Buy

Acts 8:4-25

NOTES BY BILLY GROSS

We read and explored this story of Simon the sorcerer – either a master in the art of illusion or one tapped into the powers of darkness. He was quite popular among the people in Samaria who were amazed by him. Phillip, one of the Jerusalem deacons, had gone to Samaria to proclaim Jesus there. Simon witnessed Phillip's miraculous deeds among the people and decided this was TRUE power. He was drawn to it. He believed in the gospel (at least on the surface) and was baptized, as were many Samaritans who heard Phillip's preaching. The Jerusalem church sent Peter and John there to check out what God was doing. They found that these newly baptized believers had not yet received the Holy Spirit, so they laid hands on them and prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit – and the people did. Simon witnessed this and determined he wanted this power to impart the Holy Spirit to others. He offered Peter money to gain this power. Peter harshly condemned Simon's sinful heart . . . that he would try to **BUY** the things of God! Peter's intensity and anger resembled that of Jesus when He drove the sellers of offering animals out of the temple with a whip. Simon responded, not so much with personal repentance, but rather with fearful self-absorption, asking Peter and John to pray on his behalf that God's judgement of his sinful heart would not come to pass.

- Based on Simon's words and actions, it seems unlikely that he ever had a true understanding of the gospel and never truly surrendered his life to the Lord Jesus.
- Lest we be too quick to judge, may we examine *ourselves* . . . how often do we turn to God, not so much **for HIM**, but for the *things* He can do for us to make our lives better? There is a tension here, for surely God has invited us to come to Him with our needs, and He delights to give good gifts to His children, but may we guard our hearts and minds against the tendency to treat God as our "Blessing ATM".

Simon's story aside, the heart of the message was (once again) **this theme of being filled with the Holy Spirit**. I am not going to try and summarize all of Keith's points (I encourage you to get the CD or website download, esp. if you were not there to hear the message). Keith addressed many questions:

- Why didn't these new Samaritan believers receive the Holy Spirit when they believed?
- How did Peter and John know that they had NOT?
- What was the evidence after Peter and John's praying over them that they now HAD the Holy Spirit?
- Is their conversion & filling experience typical or unique?

The most important question of the message is very personal - -

- Do YOU (do I) want to be filled with the Holy Spirit of our risen Lord?
- Are we **truly** willing to give Him total control of our lives? To hand Him all the keys of our life and we keep not even one?

We CANNOT live the extraordinary life of God without His Holy Spirit!

- I remind us, as Keith has preached several times before, God calls us to “be continually filled” with His Holy Spirit.
- Are we daily crying out for His filling? Are we daily surrendering control of our lives to Him? Are we continually yearning for His purity and power in our lives?
- Are we willing to abandon the things of this world (even the seemingly benign) that come between us and the Lord, things that keep us from being full of Him?

“Lord, give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation to know you more. Reveal to us the fullness of your Spirit, and even help us to surrender to you . . . each and every day. Be glorified in us as we allow you to fill us, transform us, and shine your life through us.”