

Church Part 7 - Awe and Wonder (11-14-2021)

Introduction: The Church is meant to house & share the presence of God

Acts 2:42-43 (ESV)

(42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (43) And **awe** came upon every soul, and many **wonders** and signs were being done through the apostles.

Note: We have talked about the devotion of the saints to each other - to learning & growing in doctrine, and to investing in their personal relationships. Today we will talk about what makes that all possible!

1) The Presence of God - Unites us in Peace

Context of Acts 9 - growth, miracles, compromise, persecution, death. Enemies becoming brothers.

Acts 9:31 (ESV)

So **the church** throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria **had peace** and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

Note: Peace - Rest, Unity, Love of Peace, Harmony, a state of peace or tranquility between individuals

The Holy Spirit was given in an atmosphere of unity & peace . . .

Acts 1:13-14 (ESV)

(13) And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. (14) All these with **one accord** were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Acts 2:1 (ESV)

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were **all together** in one place.

Note: "all together" same word as "one accord" (in Acts 1:14) - **one mind, unanimous in purpose!**

The same Spirit that came by unity, now works to build up & maintain that unity . . .

Ephesians 4:1-3 (ESV)

(1) I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, (2) with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, (3) eager to maintain the **unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace.

The by-product of the presence of the Holy Spirit is the fruit of healthy relationships . . .

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)

(22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Note: God's presence produces something that we cannot maintain on our own, but we can (and must) yield to the process . . .

Galatians 5:24-26 (ESV)

(24) And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (25) If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. (26) Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Note: To enjoy the fruit, requires surrender - which is a kind of death. Just one that gives birth to new life!

Application: The Fruit of the Spirit is about character - God is shaping us individually, so He can fit us together collectively!

The unity of the church is her true character. Sadly, it's sorely lacking, & so needed for both the health of the church & our ability to have an impact in the world.

We don't just need teaching on the presence of God, we need to experience His presence. That's not just a "soaking" experience in worship & prayer (it is that!), but it's a unified pursuit that involves surrender!

2) The Presence of God - Builds up His Church**Acts 9:31 (ESV)**

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

Note: Built up - to build a house (to build, repair, or amplify)

Holy Spirit gives gifts to empower this work (See: Romans 12, Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians 12-14)

1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-7 (ESV)

(1) Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed . . . (4) Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; (5) and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; (6) and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. (7) To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Note: It's worth noting that Paul's letter to the Corinthian church was largely written to correct dis-unity!

- He is reminding & equipping the church to walk in their gifting
- Always keeping in front of them the purpose
- The gifts are giving for the building up of the body

Important: It is no mistake that as Paul spends chapters 12 & 14 addressing dis-unity & proper use of the Holy Spirit's gifts, that we have chapter 13 sandwiched right in between.

Because that is the point - being built up in love!

Let's take note of the 2 other key passages on roles & gifts . . .

Ephesians 4:11-16 (ESV)

(11) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, (12) to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, (15) . . . we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, (16) from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Romans 12:4-5 (ESV)

(4) For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, (5) so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

From Romans 12:9-18 (ESV)

(9) Let love be genuine

(10) Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

(13) Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

(16) Live in harmony with one another.

(18) If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Application: The Gifts of the Spirit are about **Equipping** - God gifts us individually, so He can build us up collectively!

Fruit & Gifts go hand-in-hand - that we may be built up together in love!

Conclusion: The Presence of God produces Awe and Wonder**Acts 9:31 (ESV)**

So **the church** throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the **fear of the Lord** and in the **comfort** of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

Note: Awe & Fear (from 2:42 & 9:31) - are the same greek word!

- The uniqueness of our God is on full display here . . . **Awe & Comfort together!**
- And that produces growth - not addition, but **multiplication!**
- That's the impact of **empowered disciples!**

Acts 2:43 (ESV)

And **awe** came upon every soul, and many **wonders** and signs were being done through the apostles.