

## DECREASE FOR INCREASE

**Zech 4:6** Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This *is* the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, **Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD** of hosts.

The men and women of the Bible walked with God and in so doing experienced the supernatural realm: The supernatural this not only “super” for mankind to experience His presence, but its “natural”, for God designed man to be indwelt by the Spirit of God. It’s exciting to build on spiritual foundations. (1Cor 3:10-16) Abraham continually looked for God’s heavenly city. As far as I know, he had more angelic visitations than any other character in the O.T. (Heb 11:10)

**Mk 16:20** And they went forth, and preached every where, **the Lord working with them**, and **confirming the word with signs following**. Amen.

Getting started is always going to be a challenge in itself. Most people would not consider leaving their family and their familiar lifestyle to preach in a foreign land. However these disciples happily left all to preach in foreign villages. They preached every where the door opened. When they saw signs, wonders and miracles, they couldn’t wait to see God’s handiwork again; for the Lord was working with them.

**Act 3:2** And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. 4And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. 5And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. 6**Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee:** In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. 7And he took him by the right hand, and lifted *him* up: and immediately his feet and anklebones received strength. 8And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

**Peter had no money** (natural support), but **he possessed the power of God** (supernatural support) which strengthened the lame man’s anklebones.

**Acts 3:12** And when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, **why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?** Act 3:13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he

was determined to let *him* go. 14But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; 15And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. 16And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, **the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.**

Peter quickly renounced his own holiness and personal ability and used this opportunity to preach Christ. Peter's faith in Christ was what initiated the miracle. In fact the miracle was so impressive that most of Acts 3 deals with what happened when Peter preached to awaken the whole city. Then in chapter 4 we read that the Sadducees and other officials imprisoned them. The next day the rulers, scribes and elders wanted to know what power or name had they used to perform the miracle. Without fear Peter used this opportunity to preach to them as well.

**Luke 10:17** "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, **even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.** 18And he said unto them, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." 19"Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." 20"**Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.**

We must humbly recognize where the power comes from.

**2 Tim 3:5** **Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.**

The controlled order by ministers in church services is not always pleasing to God. We must give God enough room for the supernatural manifestation of His power. Let's place some limits our own talents, forms, ceremonies, rituals, ordinances and usual programs in order that God can be seen as God.

New Testament ministers always looked to God for direction. (Act 13:1-2)

**READ Acts 17:22-31.**

Paul was not ignorant. He had the best education available at that time. These verses are considered by some scholars as classics in persuasive debate. The literary arrangement would not be possible for an uneducated man.

Paul strongly corrected those walking in error. So did Jesus. (Mat 25:8)

**Phil 3:4** Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath **whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:** 5Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7But ***what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.***

Paul could have used his background, education and reputation among his peers to gain position. He could have easily put his trust in the “flesh”. However, Paul chose to decrease. Such emphases are placed upon doctorates and anything else that can influence men and satisfy egos.

**1 Cor 2:4** And **my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words** of man's wisdom, **but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:** 5That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Paul purposed to preach in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**2 Cor 3:5** Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but **our sufficiency is of God;** 6**Who also hath made us able ministers** of the new testament; **not of the letter, but of the spirit:** for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Only yielded vessels are able ministers. Our sufficiency must be of God.

**1Cor 1:18** For **the preaching of the cross** is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is **the power of God.**

**1Cor 4:19** But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, **not the speech of them which are puffed up,** but the power. 20For **the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.**

**Luk 14:11** "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and **he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.**

**Jas 4:6** But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, **God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.** 7Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

**Jn 3:30** **He must increase, but I must decrease.**

The secret of John the Baptist's influence was the fact he knew his spiritual purpose and he wholehearted used his Prophetic ability to fulfill the will of God.

Christ was not just someone to preach about; Christ was John the Baptist's life. He lived and ministered as the forerunner to Christ. He decreased so much that he was eventually imprisoned and martyred receiving his heavenly reward.

**Jas 4:8** **Draw nigh to God**, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, **ye double minded**.

**Matt 15:8** "This people **draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips**; but **their heart is far from me.**" 9 "But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

The scribes and pharisees tried in vain to impress their friends and others with false doctrines and vain spiritual talk. True worship is a heart issue.

**Isa 59:1** Behold, the LORD' hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: **2But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.**

Many Christians wonder why God does not answer their prayers. The fact is God cannot answer a person's prayer who has an iniquitous heart. A fear of God will give the believer a greater sensitivity to sins and iniquities.

**Psa 119:9** Wherewithal shall a **young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.** 10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. 11 **Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.**

The Word of God possesses a cleansing agent. The believer must yield to and obey the Word of God.

**Gal 2:20** **I am crucified with Christ**: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by the faith of the Son of God**, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Crucifixion has a universal meaning. **It is death!** Paul considered himself to be dead in Christ. He could only maintain spiritual life by the continual crucifying of self. Even before His death on the cross Christ gave a challenge to those who aspired to minister or be identified with His ministry. It involved the identification to or in some cases a lifestyle of "carrying a cross". A similar death is asked of all believers. Will you leave it all behind and walk the Calvary road with Christ, knowing full well that this walk ultimately leads to a partial or total death to self. Christ's crucifixion demonstrated to all mankind God's self sacrifice. We are called to identify with His selfless death, in order that the crucified life may bring

forth a spiritual man. Even as Christ yielded was crucified in the natural; we must yield and be willing to be crucified in the spiritual.

Even a love for fathers and mothers should not be greater than our love for Christ.

**Matt 10:37** "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." 38"And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." 39"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.