

Bible Study 27 - Acts 8:14-25 – Peter rebukes Simon!

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." 24 And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me." 25 Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

1. The Apostles Peter and John are sent to Samaria: Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

a) The apostles collectively or corporately send Peter and John to Samaria. They exercised a collegiate authority in the church under Christ's headship... Even in those early days, there is a structure and protocol to follow... There is office and order in the church...

b) The apostles Peter and John are sent in response to the good news that people in Samaria had believed the gospel. They had received and responded to the good news of what God has done for people in and through Jesus Christ... They are witnesses to the Great Commission that they had received from Christ... They are seeking to confirm and consecrate these Samaritan Christians who are now part of the same body, the church...

c) The apostles Peter and John are sent to affirm apostolic authority as Christ's ambassadors in and over the church...

2. The Apostles Peter and John are conduits of the Spirit in Samaria: Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

a) The apostles authenticate that the Samaritan Christians are in the faith...

b) The apostles affirm their communion in Christ by the laying on of hands...

c) The apostles are Christ's agents or instruments in the gift of the Holy Spirit...

Therefore, we have confession, confirmation, communion, and consecration...

3. Simon foolishly seeks to purchase the gift of the Spirit from the apostles: Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

a) Simon personally witnessed the apostolic authority...

b) Simon therefore attempted to bribe or purchase this unique gift and power from the apostles... And from Simon's graven attempt to purchase ecclesiastical favour, office, and power we have the word 'simony'...

c) Simon was self-centred in contrast to the apostles. His request was an abuse of Christian privilege and betrayed his arrogance, ignorance, and hypocrisy...

4. The Apostle Peter strongly admonishes Simon: But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your

heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.”

a) Peter rebukes Simon to his face...

b) Peter reveals Simon's problem... he is not right with God but rather is still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity... He has made an outward profession but his heart remains unchanged. He is not following the Word but the flesh...

c) Peter therefore urges Simon to repent... to turn from his self-centred sin and turn to God in Christ. The apostle seeks Simon's forgiveness and restoration which can only come from a new heart and a right spirit...

5. Simon supplicates Peter to pray for him: And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

a) Simon fears the consequences of his words or action...

b) Simon forcefully craves apostolic intercession for him...

c) Simon fittingly understands the fear of the Lord... He is Ruler, Judge, Advocate, and Saviour...

6. The apostles share the gospel of Christ enroute back to Jerusalem: Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

a) The apostles Peter and John taught the fledgling church in Samaria the faith from the scriptures...

b) The apostles Peter and John travelled home via various towns and villages of Samaria in order to proclaim the gospel in obedience to Christ...

c) The apostolic faith testified to the Word Incarnate from the word in Scripture....

Questions

1. In what way does the apostolic authority and faith continue in the church today?

2. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life?

3. In what way/s does repentance accompany faith in the Christian life?

4. How might we communicate the gospel effectively in our post-Christian society?