

Acts 2:43

Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

When we read verses like today's verse in the bible, don't we sometimes wonder why things are not happening today like they did with the early church? Or why isn't God doing in the church like He did in the early church? But the real question, and answer is, why isn't the Church today, being like the early Church?

Think about this for a moment. What if Paul and Peter were sent down from heaven by God right now, just to see what the church has become and how it's doing? What do you think they would think about the church today, compared to what it was 2,000 years ago? Wouldn't they expect to see things like:

- † Acts 5:42 *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.*
- † Acts 4:32-33 *Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.*
- † Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*
- † Revelation 3:8 (NLT2) *I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close. You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me.*

But I sometimes wonder if they will find more of these things in the church instead.

- † Revelation 2:4 *Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*
- † Revelation 3:15-16 *I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.*

† **Revelation 3:1b-2 (NLT2)** *I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive—but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God.*

As I was sitting in church last Sunday, I was thinking about how Paul would preach for hours, even into the late night, and how today, the preaching/teaching is only 30 to 45 minutes, maybe an hour if you are blessed to find a church that teaches that long. But for Paul, that would be a warm-up for him.

† **Acts 20:7** *Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.*

But today, if the pastor goes five or ten minutes over, some of the people start to get antsy and the those serving start to worry, because it has now thrown the “Sunday morning, minute by minute schedule” off, and now we need to get back on schedule and get these people out of here so the next group can come in, or so we can go get something to eat because we are hungry. It would be like saying, “*Sorry Holy Spirit, we need to interrupt what You are doing because You don’t fit into our schedule, and we need to get people out so the next group can come in. Maybe we can pencil You in for something next month.*” (Yes, you can say ouch right here.)

I was talking with one of my best friends in the church, and we were talking about the order of things, and how most churches have, worship, announcement, then teaching, then closing worship (or as I call it, rolling of the credits because they do only one song). And we know that some people tend to stroll in during worship. So we discussed, what if we changed it to, announcements first, then worship, that way those who are strolling in, can be there in time to be a part of worship. Then we decided that the response would be that we couldn’t do that because some people would miss out on the announcements (which some people don’t really listen to anyway) and the things that are going on in the church. But with that attitude, we have put announcements over worshipping GOD and Jesus.

We could go on an on, but let’s look at the church we go to this Sunday and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to us those things that are not pleasing to God, those man-made things that are done in the church. Let’s ask the Holy Spirit to show us where we as His people have hindered the Holy Spirit from working in the church, and how we as a church, or even as a Church (believer around the world) are not being like Jesus intended the Church, His Bride, to be. Then let’s repent and do those first works and fall in love with Jesus once again, allowing the Holy Spirit to take charge, and not our time schedules, and man-made fluff that we have brought into the church. Because fluff is hollow, empty, worthless. It’s like cotton candy, it looks good and even

tastes good, but it's not good for us and it's just a bunch of sugarcoated air. And is that what we really want our church to be?

- † **Acts 7:51** *You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.*
- † **Acts 6:10** *And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.*
- † **John 6:60-61** *Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "**Does this offend you?**"*
- † **Galatians 5:25** *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*