

Building God's Way 2

In this message we will focus on the importance of apostolic foundations. In essence, this is to do with being radically devoted to the Word of God. *1 Corinthians 12:28; "And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues"*. Apostles play a primary role in the foundation of a church. Apostles are called to teach foundational truths. *Acts 2:42-44; "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common."* They were constantly in the teachings of the apostles. Being devoted means you are resolute. The Apostles were devoted to the ministry of the Word and they were single-minded. The main thing the believers were feeding on was the apostolic teaching. They were determined to learn and follow it. They did not drift or swerve from it. The teachings produced what they were supposed to, a strong foundation based on the person of Jesus Christ.

Acts 6:3-5; "Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. **When those who teach are devoted to the Word, it becomes easy for those following to be devoted to their teaching.** We need to free up apostolic leaders to focus on the Word and prayer.

Apostles have a burden to see Christ formed in people. *Ephesians 4:1; "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers"*. These ministry gifts are essential to the Body of Christ. If churches are established without apostolic input and foundations they can easily become weakened. Apostles are "sent ones", they are sent into regions and nations to establish the Kingdom of God. The early church apostles taught people the foundations of Christ. They brought people back to the centrality of the kingdom of God.

1 Timothy 4:1; "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons". When apostles teach Christ's doctrine, they uproot false teaching and establish foundational truths. **An apostolic people know the Word, they stay in the Word and they teach it effectively.** Apostolic teaching undoes idolatry in a region. It also builds and plants. Furthermore, it changes how the church is viewed and redefines the church. Are there any signs in your life of lack of devotion to apostolic teaching? One of the roles of apostles is to ignite and impart something to the people of God so that they become an apostolic people.

SIGNS OF LACK OF DEVOTION TO APOSTOLIC TEACHING

1. You pay little attention to the preaching in your church.
2. You have itchy ears for controversy, arguments and the mysterious.
3. You limit your learning to sessions that you attend, never reflecting like the Bereans did.
4. You wait for a seminar before searching out a matter.
5. You do not pray into what you have been taught.
6. You never discuss the word afterwards.
7. You always forget the word.
8. You feed enthusiastically on messages from other churches but have become familiar with the word prepared for you.
9. You cause division by your unique revelations and private interpretation of scripture.
10. You find teachings on foundations boring and you have not learnt how to find the basics beautiful. If the foundations are not right, the building will not be stable.
11. You have major gaps in your Christian foundations but are very knowledgeable about other things. Eg the league table
12. You chase after manifestations and miracles but not the word and prayer.

Acts 19:1-27 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all. Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them. Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high

honour. Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power. After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

Apostles bring you back to foundations. Apostolic teaching is imparted not just from the pulpit but also in the "lecture halls". Apostles are interested in taking over regions for the Kingdom of God. Paul built a strong apostolic base in Ephesus. When a church is built on apostolic foundations, the fear of the Lord is present. When we devote ourselves to apostolic teaching and begin to move as an apostolic people, cities are affected and the economy begins to change. The keys learnings from the above passage are that:

1. Paul prioritised foundations.
2. Paul taught by both preaching and discussion. (eg small groups)
3. Paul's miracles were built on the Word.
4. Paul's preaching and authority resulted in a power shift.
5. The economy was affected as a result of apostolic teaching.
6. Paul had a team with the same DNA. It was not a one man show.

When there is an apostolic mantle in the birthing of a church, you partake of that grace. Disqualification in ministry takes place primarily because of our heart condition. Apostolic teaching exposes the heart.

SIGNS OF DEVOTION TO APOSTOLIC TEACHING

1. You study so well that you can teach others

2 Timothy 2:2; "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also".

2. You are diligent in the Word

1 Timothy 4:13-16; "Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers"

3. You study, obey and use the Word

Hebrews 5:14; "But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil".

4. You can free others from deception

Acts 17:11; "Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true".

5. You embrace all of scripture instead of picking what you like (proof texting)

2 Timothy 3:16; "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness".

6. God's Word becomes your food

Matthew 4:4; "Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'".