

What We Believe Pt. 9

Pastor James Foley – Sunday, September 9, 2018

Main Theme – Considering the Sixteen Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God – “Part 9”

WORSHIP & PRAYER

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Upcoming Events (Regular)**
 - See Bulletin for Details on Ministry Meetings (SS, EE, CYC, MM, WM)
 - Potluck Supper – Taking Place TODAY Immediately After Our Service
- **Upcoming Events (Special)**
 - OCC National Collection Week – November 12–19 (More Info to Come)
 - October Missions Trip – Partnering w/ Mission E4 in Haiti (October '18)

MORNING OFFERING

At this time, I want to call forth our ushers.

-Thank you for your faithfulness in giving to the Lord/His work

-Your giving fuels the work of Christ in and through this church

May the Lord BLESS YOU as you give! May you experience His faithfulness in kind!

A SPECIAL NOTE

VIDEO – MISSION E4 VIDEO

As many of you know, a team of us will be traveling to Haiti in just a few short weeks. This video gave you a taste of what they will experience in just a few days' time! **FYI** – The team roster consists of me, Misty, Taran, Nicole, Jo Anne, Kristie and Ryan. I want to say thank you to the many people of the assembly who have prayerfully and supported these individuals (as support letters were distributed, etc.).

Thus said, we want to give you one more opportunity to SOW into the work of God in and through this team/broader work led by Mission E4. **NEXT SUNDAY—October 7**—we will collect a special **OFFERING** from this assembly. The monies given will go to assist team members who have remaining balances. The excess will go to the special projects we will be working on while in country.

KEY – Pray about what the Lord would have you give/do!

The Board of this church did NOT want to rob you of the opportunity to be a part of this trip to a greater degree. If you cannot go, **CAN YOU** pray for and give to those who can? May the Lord bless you as you give in the ways ahead, and may He bless this trip with His protection, provision, and favor!

- **CHILDREN DISMISSED FOR CHILDREN'S CHURCH**

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INTRODUCTIONS

As always, it is wonderful to see you. I look forward to these weekly moments of worship and instruction. I pray that you are ready to receive what God has for you today! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes. We have much to cover in a short amount of time. Please turn to the Book of Malachi (chapter 4).

OPENING REMARKS

For those who have not been here—and as a reminder/reaffirmation for those who have been present—we are in the midst of an EXTENDED SERIES on the fundamentals of our faith. i.e., We are identifying and discussing the 16 Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God.

NOTE 1 – Thus far, we have covered a 10 of the 16 Fundamental Truths. We have touched upon an ARRAY OF TOPICS, including the Authority of Scripture, the Trinitarian Nature of God, the Humanity and the Deity of Christ, the Fall of Man, God’s Plan of Salvation, Sanctification (i.e., the Act and the Life-Long Process), the Mission of the Church, the Leadership Structure of the Church, the Ordinances of the Church (Communion and Water Baptism), Divine Healing, and more.

NOTE 2 – This morning we will touch upon the 7th and 8th Fundamental Truths, which have to do with the BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT as a divine endowment of power for effective witness (first evidenced by speaking in other tongues).

NOTE 3 – We will only BRIEFLY explore the depths of these doctrines, as I believe they WARRANT a full 4 to 5-part series in themselves. Likely, this series will be introduced following the mission’s trip to Haiti (Lord willing). Rather than address these complementary doctrines at a MICRO-level, I would like to step way back and offer some MACRO-level considerations.

Let’s Delve In.

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 1

At the beginning of this message, I had you turn to Malachi 4. FULL DISCLOSURE: we are NOT going to consider any of the texts found within Malachi 4. Rather, I want you to note that it is the LAST chapter of the Book of Malachi and—more importantly for today’s discussion—the FINAL chapter of the Old Testament record. Malachi 4 concludes 39 Old Testament Books.

Q. How long does it take to turn from Malachi 4 to the opening of the Book of Matthew?

KEY – Let’s try it a few times!

-Those with PAPER Bibles – turn the page when I say GO

-Those with DIGITAL Bibles – please swipe right when I say GO

READY – SET – GO

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 2

As you have witnessed, it takes only a matter of MOMENTS (if that) to move from the end of the Book of Malachi to the opening of Matthew. In one sense, this is GREAT (as we can conclude our journey through the OT and enter into the NT in an unbroken, swift manner). Yet, in another sense, we can FAIL to consider the INTERVAL OF TIME between Malachi 4 and Matthew 1.

Q. Do you realize that momentary journey for you reflects a 400-year interval of time?

KEY – i.e., The MOMENT it took you to move from Malachi to Matthew reflects a period of time nearly TWO TIMES LONGER than the very existence of our nation! We do well to remember that what we read in moments took people—entire nations—YEARS TO EXPERIENCE!

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 3

FYI – This 400-year period of time was HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT in biblical history (though NONE of the events of that period are recorded in the pages of Scripture).

NOTE – It would be EASY TO ASSUME that—since Scripture offers NO record—it was an uneventful four-century block of time. But this is simply NOT the case! In fact, I could teach an entire course on the happenings of what is commonly called the INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD (i.e., interval of time between the events of Old Testament and New Testament eras).

Of course, time will NOT permit such a study at this point. However, let me NOTE the following:

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 4

1) The Intertestamental Period was a Time of Radical Change (Globally & for National Israel)

NOTE – Consider the following statement from James Stalker's, *The Life of Jesus Christ*:

When, having finished the last chapter of the Old Testament, we turn over the leaf and see the first chapter of the New, we are very apt to think that in Matthew we are still among the same people and the same state of things as we left in Malachi. But no idea could be more erroneous. Four centuries elapsed between Malachi and Matthew, and wrought as total a change in Palestine as a period of the same length has almost ever wrought in any country. The very language of the people had been changed, and customs, ideas, parties, and institutions had come into existence which would almost have prevented Malachi, if he had risen from the dead, from recognizing his own country.

2) The Intertestamental Period was a Four-Century-Long Season of Prophetic Silence

NOTE – I am NOT saying that God was inactive during this time. Quite the contrary (according to history and tradition). What I AM saying is that MANY HUNDREDS of years of prophetic activity—recorded from Isaiah to Malachi—came to an abrupt END, and would only come back into operation with the ministry of John the Baptist and the dawning of the NT age.

A nation that knew CENTURIES of prophetic activity came to experience a SEASON of SILENCE!

FYI – This 400-year long period of prophetic silence is EVIDENCED by the LACK of biblical texts between Malachi 4 and Matthew 1.

CHANGING GEARS PT. 1

KEY – Consider what it was like to be a believer in this period of time:

-Imagine what it was like to live in a season of remarkable, unprecedented CHANGE...

-Imagine what it was like to live in a season of remarkable, unprecedented prophetic SILENCE...

KEY – IMAGINE what it was like to live in a time when you HEARD the stories/tales of God's works and power in times past, though it was a power/level of operation BEYOND EVERYTHING you have EVER seen or known. Put yourself into such a scenario and FEEL what they might have felt.

CHANGING GEARS PT. 2

NOTE – I think that a person living in such an age would be PRONE to TWO POTENTIAL ERRORS:

1) The ERROR OF BELIEVING that God's activity and power were RELEGATED TO TIMES PAST (v. a conviction that He is operating in the present and into the future). i.e., To say things like, "I've heard of the stories of Moses, Elijah and Elisha, but that level of power was for then...NOT NOW." The most TRAGIC type of believer is the one who believes that their BEST DAYS (i.e., God's best works) are BEHIND them!

2) The ERROR OF UNDERSTANDING God's activity and power through the lens of PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. It would be APPROPRIATE for a person of this long-past age to note they had never seen a prophet or the outpouring of God's power. It would be INAPPROPRIATE for them to say they would never and could never see such an outpouring because they never had! A person must never limit God to the realm of their own experiences. God is BIGGER than us. Moreover, the foundation for our faith is NOT personal experience, but Scripture (FT #1).

APPLICATIONS PT. 1

NOTE – In many respects, I see great PARALLELS between the Intertestamental Period and our own age. I think that there are more COMMONALITIES than you might realize. Consider the following:

1) Like Them, We Live in a Period of Radical Change

Like them, WE are living in a period of CHANGING culture, customs, parties and ideas. In a figurative sense—and in a literal sense to some degree—the very language/fabric of our nation is changing. EVERYTHING seems to be in a state of transition and flux (+/-). The author I quoted earlier noted that by the time of Matthew, a resurrected Malachi would scarcely have been able to recognize his people and country. How many of OUR parents and grandparents—if resurrected from death—would NOT recognize this NATION anymore? Would they recognize this WORLD or would it be quite foreign to them?

2) Like the Ancients, We SEEM to Live in an Age of Dormancy/Spiritual Silence

We live in a culture quite UNFAMILIAR with the power of God. Despite our claims, much of the modern church—even we Pentecostals—sound more like the Ephesians of Acts 19 than we would care to admit (i.e., a people who really didn't know the Spirit of God or His power). Of course, WE HAVE HEARD of past revivals, outpourings, healings and mighty moves of God. Maybe our grandparents told us the stories of times past, but many of us have NEVER really EXPERIENCED it for ourselves. It is a facet of the Christian experience we have simply never known!

APPLICATIONS PT. 2

KEY – Like the ancients, WE might be PRONE to TWO POTENTIAL ERRORS:

1) The ERROR OF BELIEVING that God’s activity and power are RELEGATED TO TIMES PAST (v. a conviction that He is operating in the present and into the future). We ERR when we say things like, “I’ve heard of the outpourings of the past (e.g., Pentecost, throughout the whole of Acts, the Great Awakenings, the Pentecostal Movement, etc.), but that was for then...NOT NOW.” The most TRAGIC type of church/church member is the one who has more passion for the memories of the past than belief in the present and hope for the future!

2) The ERROR OF UNDERSTANDING God’s activity and power through the lens of PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. It would be APPROPRIATE for us to note that we’ve never seen the outpouring of God’s power (e.g., healing of the sick, casting out a demon, infilling of the Holy Spirit, raising the dead, etc.). It would be INAPPROPRIATE for us to say we will never and can never see such an outpouring because we never have! We must never limit God to the realm of our own experiences. God is BIGGER than us. Moreover, the foundation for our faith is NOT personal experience, but Scripture (FT #1).

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Q. Why am I saying this? Why is this discussion part of a series on the 16 Fundamental Truths?

A. Because the 7th and 8th Fundamental Truths are highly connected to the POWER and ONGOING OPERATION of the Holy Spirit in and through God’s people. We believe that God’s POWER is available for those who are given to the task of reaching the lost and making disciples, as it was in the days of the Early Church! The spiritual outpouring that we read of in Acts 2 and beyond is STILL available today and will remain in effect until Christ Returns!

NOTE – We embrace and take seriously texts like...

Mark 16:15–18 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)

15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these SIGNS will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”

Acts 1:8 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)

8 . . . you will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my WITNESSES in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

DEEPER CONSIDERATIONS PT. 1

We must realize that there is a SUPERNATURAL COMPONENT to Christianity.

KEY – I will be the first to cede that there is an INTELLECTUAL COMPONENT to our faith/practice:

i.e., Christians should and must possess a passion for the Word, the teachings contained therein, and proper biblical theology. We do well to remember that the faith-claims of Christianity are things to be studied, analyzed and understood. We must consider the place of TRUTH in our faith.

- Our Bibles should be well-read and well-word
- We should know what we believe and why we believe it
- We should memorize segments of the Word (ability to recite)
- We should be faithful to personal and corporate Bible study
- We should learn to utilize study resources (concordance)
- We should strive to increase theological understanding

We should be a people that (ind. & coll.) place a priority on the Word/acc. Teaching
 We should be a people that (ind. & coll.) operate as agents of & witnesses to divine truth
 We should be a people that (ind. & coll.) remember/heed texts like the following examples:

Joshua 1:8

8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

2 Timothy 2:15

15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

2 Timothy 3:16–17

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

DEEPER CONSIDERATIONS PT. 2

KEY – I will be the first to cede that there is a PRACTICAL COMPONENT to our Christian faith:

i.e., Christians should and must possess a passion for practical acts of selfless love and sacrifice. We do well to remember that Christianity is NOT just something to be studied; it is something to be applied. We must consider the place of LOVE in the outworking of our faith.

- We should be a people of selfless and sacrificial action
- We should be a people willing to roll up our sleeves to serve
- We should be a people to write that card of comfort & encourage.
- We should be a people excited to make a meal for/visit one in need
- We should be the ones who are happy to give of our time/\$ in aide
- We should be the types of people who will take that missions trip

We should be a people that (ind. & coll.) place a priority on prac. biblical application
 We should be a people that (ind. & coll.) operate as agents of & witnesses to Christ's love
 We should be a people that (ind. & coll.) remember/heed texts like the following examples:

John 13:35

35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

1 John 4:7

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

James 1:27

27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

DEEPER CONSIDERATIONS PT. 3

KEY – But it is high-time that someone says there is a SUPERNATURAL COMPONENT to our faith.

i.e., Christians should and must possess a passion for the moving/supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Christianity is NOT just something to be studied and even applied. It is something to be EXPERIENCED. We must consider the place of POWER in the outworking of our faith and in the advancement of God's kingdom!

- We should be a people who have an interest in signs and wonders
- We should be a people who seek after/advocate the Baptism in the HS
- We should be a people who talk of and study past moves of God's Spirit
- We should be a people who seek a current outpouring of that same HS
- We should celebrate and engage in deeper levels of worship & prayer
- We should seek after the gifts of the Holy Spirit (operating in love)
- We should be open to God empowering us as He did in the past

We should be a people that (ind. & coll.) place a priority God's power/outpouring

We should be a people that (ind. & coll.) operate as agents of/witnesses to Christ's power

We should be a people that (ind. & coll.) remember/heed texts like the following examples:

Mark 16:15–18 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)

15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these SIGNS will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

Acts 1:8 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)

8 . . . you will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my WITNESSES in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 2:17–18, 39

17 "In the last days, God says,

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

your young men will see visions,

your old men will dream dreams.

18 Even on my servants, both men and women,

I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

1 Corinthians 2:1b–5

1 . . . When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

SUMMATIONS & CONCLUDING REMARKS

Q. What should we do in an age of change and apparent spiritual silence?

Q. What should we do in a time when God's greatest works seem to be past?

Habakkuk 3:2a

2 Lord, I have heard of your fame;
I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord.
Repeat them in our day,
in our time make them known . . .

- 1) New openness to such realities
- 2) Deepened study of such realities
- 3) Fresh pursuit of such experiences

NOTE – WE will go deeper on this topic throughout the fall. WE will wade deeply into the waters of the Word, but YOU will have to be willing to apply what you hear, study and come to know...

James 1:22

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.