

Apostolic Practices

by George Kulp

The sermon emphasizes the importance of returning to Apostolic practices through faith, prayer, and the active work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church today.

Scripture: Matthew 11:28

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Apostolic Living"

Description

George Kulp preaches about the importance of experiencing and sharing the tangible works of God, emphasizing the need for Christians to reproduce the life and works of Christ to prove the authenticity of their faith. He urges believers to continually seek God's power through prayer, faith, and staying connected to the Holy Spirit, rather than relying on human methods or organizations. Kulp highlights the significance of being courageous witnesses, speaking boldly, and demonstrating fervent charity, while staying separated unto God's plans and practicing apostolic principles found in the Book of Acts.

Transcript

Acts 4:20 -- "Things seen and heard."

We are not indulging in theories; we have not followed cunningly devised fables; we have no pretty word pictures, baseless as the fabric of a vision; but as the old-fashioned Methodists used to sing,

"What we have felt and seen

With confidence we tell;

And publish to the sons of men,

The signs infallible."

The weary, disheartened, discouraged prophet sat alone. The temporal power was against him. Men and women opposed him. His life was sought for, as the partridge upon the mountain. When John heard that Jesus was doing many mighty works, he called to him two of his disciples and sent them to Him with this inquiry, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" And Jesus said, "Go and tell John the things which ye do see and hear; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them." It was a direct answer to them. It bore more than the words could have borne to the heart of the discouraged man,

-- the Christ had really come.

A Christian is one who reproduces the life of Christ, and that only is Christianity which produces the work of Christ. You do not alter a thing, or the nature of it, because you put a label on it. Christianity must prove itself. It must prove by its works that it is of God. The Church itself must prove its right to exist, and it does it only as it manifests the spirit of Christ, and reproduces His works. Men are asking that the Church today do as it did in the days of the Apostles. We need what they had, we want what they had; that when the critic and the opposer shall find fault with the work we are doing, they will not be able to do it successfully, because the man stands in our midst who has been blessed, aye, and lifted up, a new creature in Christ Jesus. I have a very firm conviction that any preacher, any church, any denomination that comes to the end of the year and then makes a report like this, "We have held our own," causes hell to have a jubilee. The orders are, "Forward, March." We are never to camp twice in the same place, get so far along each day that you can never see the ashes of your last camp fire. I believe what Gerald Massey wrote:

"It is weary waiting day by day,

And still the tide flows onward;

We build like coral grave on grave,

And raise a path that's sunward.

We are beaten back in many a fray,

But newer strength we borrow;

And where our vanguard camps today

Our rear shall march tomorrow."

We have no business standing still. We need, we must have, trophies every day to prove that we belong to Christ. The people are crying out, "Oh, for the days of the Fathers." Hear God's Word, "Say not that the former days were better than these, for thou inquirest not wisely concerning this." Today as ever in the past, faith is the victory. That is true, or God is not. Today we ought to be better able to take the journey that Abraham took. Nineteen centuries this side of Calvary, we ought to be better able to take our Isaacs by the hand, march three days away from our loved ones, from our position, from friends, not knowing where we are going, only knowing that we are obeying God; and when we come to the foot of the mount dismiss everything else, everybody else, and take our Isaac, build our own altar, raise the knife and obey God. Why? Because God gave His only Son, and the promise to us is, "If God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" His example counts. Your test is Africa. You may never see Africa. Your test is India. You may never see India. God asked for Isaac; and, when Abraham was willing to give what God asked for, he got his Isaac back. It was a test of his faith. As well as Elijah did, we ought to be able to do. By faith we are to go to some Tabor, bury our face in our hands, look out over the sea, ask God for rain, and then look out for it seven times, and the very fact that we are looking, shows that we are believing God. When you do not see anything else but a cloud as big as a man's hand, get up and hurry off home for fear you will be caught in the rain. Faith is the victory today. We get up into the upper room, shut ourselves in with God, and shut everything else out, and stay, and stay, and stay, until God manifests Himself and things begin to shake, and our enemies have to acknowledge that God is with us of a truth. You may be lashed, your back furrowed, your

friends, so-called, turn their backs on you, and still you can have the victory. We are living in prosperous times, spiritually, if we choose to make them so; and all the devils in hell or out of it, cannot interfere and rob you of your individual prosperity, because Jesus said, "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." Praise His name! You can have the victory when everything around you is going to pieces. You can look around you, see a rocking earth, the moon turned to blood, and the heavens rolling together as a scroll, and know that you are secure, because your feet are on the Rock. God's Word says, "He that doeth these things shall never be moved." You have no right to show your back to the enemy. God has provided armor for everywhere but for the back. He knew that you did not have to turn your back to the devil, -- you are foreordained to be a conqueror.

The church is crying, "Oh, for Pentecostal power! Oh, for Apostolic scenes!" Back to God's Word! Back to the promise made to Joel and through him to us, and verified in the day of Pentecost! Back to believing God and cutting loose from the world! Back to the old mourners' bench! And there will be added unto the church every day, such as shall be saved. God still answers the prayer of the penitent sinner. I heard Dr. Godbey say that down South the colored people sing:

"When I was a mourner just like you,

I prayed, and I prayed, till I got through."

Thank God, there is such a thing today as praying through. God is faithful, Jesus is pleading, the Holy Ghost is on the scene all the time. and we can have everything that there is for us in the grace of God.

I like the second chapter of Acts. There I can find out what the promises are upon which they relied, to get down the glory and the fire. When I was put of God in the ministry, I wanted to know all I could about how to win souls. I always had a passion for souls. I bought books that would tell what other ministers did who won souls. I had in my library, Peck, Newell and Hervey, and wherever I saw anything that would help me I would get it. But one day I said, "I am going to read the Acts of the Apostles and see what these men did to win. What did they do on the day of Pentecost?" I read it on my knees, I prayed, I found out, and to this day I never go to a meeting but what I absolutely expect to find God true and that He will bless His Word, and His preacher, and give results. I was much helped in my early ministry by a minister named N. B. Durell, of the Philadelphia Conference. He was the pastor, at the time, of the Fitzwater St. M. E. Church, in Philadelphia. I was preaching for him one night, and in the midst of the sermon I stopped and said, "I wish you people would pray," and then I went on. After the sermon Brother Durell said to me, "Brother George, always remember, that whether you see it or not. the Holy Ghost is always faithful and is working." That has been a blessing to me ever since, and I have remembered it. Indeed, I have. God blessed it, and I have told it to other young men and it has blessed them..

Read what those men did: "And when they prayed" -- when they prayed; when they prayed, and held on. No matter what people did, they could not stop them from praying. If they put them in prison, they prayed; if they lashed them, they prayed; if they separated them from their friends, they still prayed. Everywhere they went they prayed. The devil cannot make anything so hard you cannot pray through. I have been surprised at the actions of preachers at camp meetings. When the altar call is made, first one goes out, then another goes out, or they stand around the fringe and visit while the battle for souls is going on, and the heavens are bending, and hell opposing. When a Colonel brought up his regiment and asked General Heintzelman where he should go in, the General said, "Go in anywhere; there is good fighting all along the line." There is a chance to win souls all along the line. Get ii) and work with God, and for God. If you

cannot do anything else, PRAY. Pray! It is always in order to pray. "When they prayed the place was shaken." Hear it. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall one preach except he be sent?" The preaching of the Gospel and the call to preach are joined together with the salvation of souls.

They prayed and prayed until the place was shaken. Persecution did not drive them home, nor make them seek an easy place. Persecution drove them to prayer. I like to read about Hezekiah. When they sent him a letter, he spread it before the Lord. What did you do with the letter you received? Did it drive you to prayer? Hezekiah was one of God's wise men. He went to God with the letter and he prayed. He did not SAY prayers, he prayed, and God did answer. I go to my telephone and take down the receiver and say, "Please give me 4275 W," and I wait. Again I Say, "4275 W." No reply. I say, "Central, please get them for me if you can. It is important." Central calls them again by a loud ring. No reply. I hang up the receiver. Did I telephone? Not a bit of it! You never telephone unless you get the party at the other end, and you never pray unless you get the party at the other end.

"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Some folks pray only when they get into trouble. If you would pray more, you would keep out of trouble. Get the thought of God from the Word; not from some book, but from the Word. It is the thought of God, and all you need. It is the one infallible Book of faith and practice. Shaken? Yes, jails and jailers. Did you ever pray until the place was so full of the presence of God that you were awe-struck? When in banishment, they prayed. Why, God bless you, there was a man one time swallowed by a whale, and he prayed, and prayed, until the place where he stayed was shaken, and he got out. God answered prayer. There is a wonderful power in prayer, faithful, believing prayer. We expect battles. I do not think much of mere home guards. The real soldier hunts the firing line; he expects to fight.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost. They relied on the promises, they put in their checks and got them cashed. That is very simple, is it not? I like to go to God and say, "Now, Lord, this is where you said it. This is your Word." Moses did that. He said, "Thou sayest." Bless God. Say, my brother, God does not disappoint me any these days; I take Him at His Word.

They were all filled. They got something. I never seek hilarious times, I am not seeking a big noise. There is no power in noise, and often after so much noise there is an awful sense of barrenness; but I am asking God for results that will honor the Holy Ghost, and make heaven glad. Some time ago I was in a meeting in Kansas and a Methodist preacher came to the altar. Before he came he said, "I once had the Holy Ghost, but I have lost the experience." He got what he came for, and the church would not have him and asked for his removal at the next conference. They moved him, and God made him a better place, and then in the next year God took him to an appointment in heaven where they all believe in the Holy Ghost. Results like that are better than noise. You may have results if you pay the price This was promised in the Book of Joel, and when the Holy Ghost came, Peter said, "This is that," and preachers and laymen received "that" -- the Holy Ghost. He is for you and as many as the Lord our God shall call. When there is failure today the church adds more machinery, another organization, more societies. There is no substitute for the Holy Ghost. Education will not do; diplomas will not do; money will not do. Tarry -- until.

Mrs. Van Cott was in a meeting, one time, and there was not the move on the meeting that she wanted to see. So after breakfast she went upstairs to her room. But before going she said to her hostess, "Do not

call me for lunch, nor for dinner; do not call me at all; if you want to retire during the night, do not call me." She went to her knees and prayed, "Oh, God, I am here until this hardness is dispelled, until this opposition breaks." It had not broken at dinner time, nor at supper time, and she kept on praying; but she finally came down with a face shining, for God had given her the assurance that victory would come . and it did. The secret of victory is apostolic practice, prayer, faith, staying on your knees until -- Kneology, rather than so much theology.

When we are abandoned unto God's plans, He will take care of us. The Apostles were not only abandoned unto God, and filled with the Holy Ghost -- they were witnesses. They spake the Word of God; they had messages from God. I never like anyone to come to me and ask, "Will you preach?" When they say, "You will preach at such a time," that is all right. I say, Amen! We are going to have all over this country a lot of people who will have Billy Sunday's methods, who will not have his messages.

The God who never made two blades of grass alike never made two men alike; but God will give each man HIS message, and He will do it every time. The Apostles had a message, and it was God's Word. They were courageous witnesses and they spake boldly -- there was no uncertain sound. There are three characters in the Word of God that I especially like. One is Elijah. He came right out of the wilderness, out from the forests of Gilead, and walked right into the presence of the King, and, looking him right in the face, he said, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

I like that kind of a man. I like John the Baptist. He stood before Herod and said, "You are living with another man's wife." I like Paul. They said he was a little fellow. His enemies said his speech was contemptible and his presence weak, but he can be chained to a soldier on that side, and a soldier on this side, and never tremble, but the people he talked to did the trembling. Such a man never apologizes for the truth; he lets God take care of it, and He always does. They had great power in witnessing and great grace.

They had favor with the people. One reason why holiness is so unpopular in some places is because of the unwise methods of some preachers. These men of the apostolic age had favor with the people. Now you say, "Brother Kulp, you are contradicting your own words." I know they were lashed; I know they were stoned; but I know they had a hearing, and some folks got saved. We need more preachers who are courteous, who, while they preach a whole Gospel, they do it in the spirit of Jesus.

Again, these men had fervent charity. The poor among them did not lack for anything. They parted with possessions, put it in one common fund, and took care of the poor in the church. No, I do not say that was for all time. It was for the occasion when they had come up to Jerusalem on a special occasion. They had fervent charity, because they had the Holy Ghost. When one gets the Holy Ghost he will be generous with his own money. It is so easy to say what the other man ought to do with his money, but this means the personal use of your own money.

In my home my wife is my bookkeeper, and every dollar that comes in, no matter where it comes from, goes down in the book, and there is a column for the tithe and then the freewill offerings come from the balance. God first, Hallelujah! I am practicing what I preach, and am having a good time preaching the Word.

Separation. They were in the upper room. When you go with God you are cutting loose from everything else and everybody else. It is God first all the time. God answers when you are separated. Stay in the

upper room until you hear from heaven. I think that now some folks are saying, "Brother Kulp, all those things you are talking of are from the Book of Acts." Have you ever thought that the BOOK of Acts has no ending? There are two books in the Bible that have no end. One is the Book of Acts, and the other is the Book of James. The reason Why? I will tell you. God intended that the Book of James should continue in the practice of the Church. If you do get sick, practice the Book of James. John Wesley said that for the first three centuries the only materia medica the Church had was the Book of James. But when the Church and State were united under Constantine, and the Church was rich and courted by the world, then they departed from Apostolic practice, and precepts, and the power of God left them; and all the wealth of the church, and all the fine churches erected, have never brought back the power the Fathers possessed. The Book of Acts never closed because God expected them to go on. Today, to meet the emergency, we get together and adopt resolutions; but God in the Word tells us that it is Acts on the part of the Church that will meet the occasion -- acts such as are recorded in the fifth Gospel. We need apostolic courage today. Brother Hems, an old Bible School boy, was preaching a straight Gospel in a Western town. He had offended some of the would-be bosses in the town and twenty-seven of them marched up the aisle one night and the leader said to him, "There are four trains on the Union Pacific through this town every day, and we do not care which you take, but you must leave." And that boy, now with God in heaven, shouted out, "Meeting here tomorrow night, at seven o'clock." Did God own him? I dedicated a holiness church in that town the very next year. Praise God, the more God's people are afflicted, the more they grow and are multiplied. O beloved, when you have the Holy Ghost, the only intense desire you have is to be just where He wants you. If you are in the midst of a big revival, and He tells you to pack up and go to the desert, you are willing to go. And, going, you find that He has made no mistake; there is a man who wants to know, and you have the privilege of winning him, and then you are caught up by the Holy Ghost, and put down at your next appointment all ready for work. Thank God, He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Amen!

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