

# Church of Christ

## ...Heart to Heart...

It's amazing how many people look for something exciting or heart warming for their "spiritual experience." Personal stories of unusual happenings and testimonies seem to take center stage in many lives. These are used as proving grounds that God is with them. Here lies the danger: *The experience is what verifies the Scripture.* That's wrong and backward. Here is reality: ***The Scripture is what verifies the experience!***

In the days of Jesus, the Jews demanded a sign from Him. Jesus states, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign..." (Matt. 12:39) The only sign they would be given was His death and resurrection. That's where Jesus was trying to fix man's attention, not on personal experiences.

Jesus speaks of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16). The rich man knew if someone went back from the dead, his brothers would listen and wouldn't end up in the place of torment. That would be a wonderful, exciting experience! Someone coming back from the dead to talk about Hades. How did Jesus reply? They had Moses and the Prophets, listen to them (Luke 16:31). Jesus was pointing them to the Scriptures, showing that Scriptures were much more powerful than anything else!

What were all the miracles, signs and wonders for? They were for the purpose of getting people to believe the word spoken (Heb. 2:1-4)! All the great happenings weren't for testimony of personal experiences but to point out to people that what was being preached and taught was true and from God! People get caught up in 'testimonies' and seem to be thirsting for fantastic, unexplainable events they think are from God. What it creates is questioning in their own minds their relationship with the Lord because they haven't had such experiences. The word of God begins to be reduced by the experience. The experience becomes the reality within the heart while God's word takes second place.

Peter spoke boldly that day, in the face thousands of Jews, religious, devout Jews. He could have told them about his personal walking on water, or how he encountered demons and cast them out of people or the unbelievable catch of fish after fishing all night. What did he do? Pointed the people to the death and resurrected Christ, their Messiah! Jesus is Lord and He is the **only** way one could find fellowship with God (Acts 2).

The same message, the gospel of Jesus Christ is God's power to save and keep one saved today (Rom. 1:16-17). There are no substitutes! Only God's word can produce genuine, saving faith. God designed it that way. To go after happenings, personal experiences and exciting stories will lead one into a world of self-deceit and spiritual blindness. I encourage us, let the word lead us, excite us and move us deeper into knowing God and His Lord. Think about it!!!

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