

A Certain Man Named Simon.

Acts 8:9-13.

Sunday morning, February 14, 2010.

I. But there was a certain man named Simon...

- A. This little word “but” is a word of contrast.
- B. Luke means to set this person, Simon, over against the multitudes of the Samaritans who, “with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip.” Vs. 6.
- C. Luke means to show us that wherever the gospel is operative in this world it brings together the genuine children of God and the hypocrites.
 1. When Israel first came into the promised land and they conquered the city of Jericho, they had Achan in their midst.
 2. When the church in Jerusalem was formed there were Ananias and Sapphira in their midst. Acts 5:1-11.
 3. When the Lord chose His twelve disciples there was Judas in their midst.
 4. When the Apostle Paul chose his companions there was Demas who for many years was his companion before falling away “having loved this present world.” 2 Timothy 4:10.
 5. And here Simon is said to have believed; he was baptized, and he continues with Philip; he becomes Philip’s companion in the ministry of the gospel.
 6. It illustrates the truth the Lord taught in His kingdom parables in Matthew 13.
 - The tares among the wheat.
 - The various soils the seed of the gospel is sown into.
 - The dragnet that gathers all kinds of fish.

Application:

Seeing that such is the nature of the kingdom of God, what kind of Christian are you? Are you capable of judging that for yourself, or would it be better to take your soul to the Lord and pray as David did in Psalm 139: 23,24, “Search me O God and know my heart; try me and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

II. ...Claiming that he was someone great.

What motivated Simon as he believed and was baptized; what did Simon want to get out of life? Why did he continue with Philip?

- A. Three things stand out in our text:
 1. Simon claimed that he was someone great.
 2. All the people gave heed to Simon, from the least to the greatest.
 3. People had come to believe that Simon was the great power of God. (Perhaps the “Restorer-Prophet,” Moses had promised would come.)
- B. Personal greatness and the acclaim of people around him is what motivated Simon.
 1. In this context Simon is not afraid to usurp the place of God Himself. The acclamation, “This man is the great power of God” is the Samaritan version of Messianic acclaim. Simon does nothing to set the record straight. He thrives on this kind of attention and acclaim. This to him is living!

2. When the Lord invaded the lives of the Samaritans with the message of the kingdom of God through the preaching of Philip, and the Samaritans “with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip,” then Simon lost his grip on the people.
3. What could poor Simon do, for he had to have personal greatness with the people. That was what he lived for. So Simon exchanges the magic arts for the environment of the kingdom of God. He acknowledges that he has been outdone by the powers of the kingdom of God, and he decides to join it for the purpose of re-establishing himself as someone great in the eyes of the people in this new environment.
 - That was why Simon did cling to Philip and continued with him.
 - That is why he offers the apostles money so he might be able to lay hands on people for them to receive the Holy Spirit. Vs. 18,19.

Application:

What motivates you with regards to the environment of the kingdom of God. What are you looking to get out of it? Biblically speaking what is the only acceptable motive? “The purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.” 1 Tim. 1:5.

How do we get a hold of such love?

“...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength (to love God or neighbor), in due time Christ died for the ungodly (so that He might give us the Holy Spirit.)” Romans 5:5,6.

- In His incarnation the Lord Jesus emptied Himself from the enjoyments of heaven’s glories and privileges, and He made us fallen rebels the objects of His love.
- In regeneration the sinner empties himself of all self-love and sacrifices it to the cross of Christ, and with the Spirit’s help he makes God and neighbor the proper objects of the love of his renewed heart.
- In Simon’s heart the love of being someone great and having the pre-eminence among his countrymen reigned supreme; as such his heart had not been changed as yet. What about your heart; which loves do reign supreme? What do you have to have at all cost?

III. ...to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest.

A. Here we see the blindness of the fallen human condition.

Even the greatest and the brightest among the Samaritans were carried away with the deceptions of the Prince of darkness working through this man, Simon.

B. Here we see that left to ourselves we are no match for the Evil One at all.

Willingly we buy into his deceptions and are led astray toward our destruction.

C. Here too we see the power of the intervention of God as by His Spirit He breaks down the works of the devil.

He will do that in you and me as well if we ask Him.

IV. Philip’s faith and courage.

The defenses of the evil One in Samaria were formidable. Philip’s strength was totally inadequate for the job; yet Philip does not turn away in unbelief, placing them beyond the reach of the gospel. Neither should we give up in unbelief