

## Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August Simon Baddeley

Good morning on this beautiful day. It's already hot and forecast to get hotter! Welcome to this Father's House devotional, it's great to have you. I want to speak this morning from Galatians chapter 3 and draw out a few things from what Paul was writing to them. It says in the first 5 verses 'O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth? Before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified. This only I have learnt from you; did you receive the Spirit from the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish, having begun in the Spirit are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vain? Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?'

I was reading this the other day and I felt there was a key in here that the Lord wanted to unlock to us for a lifestyle of miracles; because I believe this is something the Lord wants to release through us and through His Church. It is a neglected spiritual gift that is talked about in 1 Corinthians 12, that sometimes we think of as only for a certain few. Maybe it is, my experience of the gifts of the spirit is that actually the Lord wants to release them to all of us, for us all to see miracles around us.

So, getting back to Galatians, Paul is quite strong with the Galatians, calling them foolish, saying "who has bewitched you?" He's challenging them to return to the Lord. They had begun by walking by the spirit, they had begun by following the Lord, but they had strayed and he is quite strong in his argument, saying "who has bewitched you?" and it kind of implies an evil charm has come over them, such that they are being deceived and walking away from Jesus Christ; who he says to them is clearly portrayed as crucified. We know Jesus Christ died and He rose again and they are straying away from that, they are straying back to a life of legalism and one caught up in the law. He is reminding them of miracles worked among them and these miracles were not because of their walking under the law and this is exactly what I want to talk about.

The miracles he talks about here are in verse 5 and I'm reading from the New American Standard here 'So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the law or by hearing with faith?' And though this is an argument towards the Galatians on bringing them out of legalism and living a life under the works of the law, this is also a key to us seeing miracles in our lives. Because when we read that verse he's talking about how the Lord works miracles amongst them; how does He do that? It's not by works of the law and Paul's comparison is by hearing with faith and that is the key to us living a life of miracles; hearing with faith.

So how do we listen with faith, how do we hear with faith? That is the key; that is the question I'm asking this morning, although I think there are two questions here. Firstly how do we listen with faith and secondly what do we listen to? I will start with the second one, what are we listening to?

Our ears are a gateway into our bodies, like our eyes, like our mouths and we need to guard our ears. We need to guard that which we are listening to. Paul's argument, particularly to the Galatians is that they have listened to false teachers who had cast doubt on the crucifixion, false teachers who had basically said you need to be doing all these works of the Lord to get saved. So they had listened to the wrong influence and I think it's very important that in this present age we are careful with what we listen to. In this season of lockdown where we may be listening and watching many things online and there are lots of teachings out there, with lots of people prophesying, we need to always measure what we hear, and from a Christian teaching point of view

that has to be the Word. That has to be our first standard. In fact the Word, the Bible, is known as the Canon of scripture and that word canon means 'read or measuring line'.

It is like our plumb line, so we always measure what we're hearing against the Word of God and if it measures up then we can take a step forward from there. So we need to be careful what we listen to and guard that which we are hearing. Just in our everyday life, in our culture we are surrounded by people all the time and people gossip, people slander, people backbite, we need to guard ourselves against such things. Sometimes we can't get out of those situations when people are speaking like that, but we can ask the Lord to help us. We can ask the Lord to give us grace and we can ask Him to interject in to conversations to say "what you're saying is wrong". We can guard ourselves, we can put an end to conversations that are ungodly. So we need to protect ourselves and what we listen to and be wise in what we listen to. We also need to be discerning, because in Acts we have the story of Paul and the servant girl who had the spirit. In the beginning it seems that Paul and Silas came across this servant girl who was prophesying that these men will show you the way to everlasting life, which was true, they were, they were telling the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet in Paul's spirit he was disturbed. He discerned that the spirit was telling the truth was not a spirit from God. So we also need to be discerning about what we listen to. We need to listen not just with our ears but with our spirits and our hearts. Discernment has, I think, had a bit of a bad rap because often people say you're just being suspicious and it's something I've spoken about a lot over the last few years as it's something the Lord wants to revive and restore to His Church, actually that we would know what that gift of spiritual discernment is. So we don't want to get it confused with suspicion, which is why we need to have our hearts healed and give ourselves to those things which is powerful and makes life nicer for others (when we have our hearts healed). We need to guard ourselves from what we hear and be wise to what we're listening to and be discerning to what we listen to.

The second point that Paul makes is that we need to listen with faith, how do we do that? I believe that faith is like a posturing of the heart, in Hebrews 11 v 1 it says 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen' and again, the writer of the Hebrews, in chapter 4 verse 2 talks about the Israelites going through the desert and into the promised land, how they didn't enter the Promised Land because they didn't mix the message with faith. Now that tells me something – that when we listen we can apply faith to what we're hearing. Now we're a part of a nation that has welcomed unbelief, welcomed cynicism, but I believe we're seeing some of those things broken, broken around us. But we need to guard ourselves from unbelief and cynicism as they are the enemies of faith. It's difficult to explain how we apply faith; it's believing, simply believing. Believe God at His word, take Him at His word, because His word is true, His word is sure and we need to increasingly let God's word, God's promises conform situations, not situations conform God's promises and by that I mean I may have a promise from God... think about Abraham, he was promised a child and he could have said well we're too old, therefore our circumstances are greater than the promise that we'll have a child. No, he held on in faith that the Lord would give him a child. He let the promise speak in to his situation. I want to encourage you to do that. Take a hold of the promises of God and let them speak in to your situation. Believe the word of God, believe God's promises to you. So these are the keys to the lifestyle of miracles that I think the Lord wants to release to us. It is hearing with faith, listening to what God wants to say to us and that will come through anointed preaching, through conversations with people - sometimes phrases can come alive through prophecy, through reading the Word and God just highlights a phrase on a page to you. These are the ways in which we start to listen and hear the Lord and there are obviously other ways as well. As we listen we need to apply faith and the enemy would try and rob us of this through unbelief and cynicism and we need to take hold of what He is saying and believe.

During today believe for the miracles that the Lord wants to release around you, because He wants to release miracles into people's lives, into my life today and into your life today. He wants to release miracles, He wants to release breakthrough. It's not about how hard we try, it is about us listening to Him and applying faith to what we hear; that the Lord wants to bring a breakthrough, the Lord wants to shift people's situations and reveal Himself, He really does want to do that.

I think part of our challenge is that we've been through a time where we haven't seen a lot of fruit, so it's difficult to understand what fruitfulness looks like. I've had a word recently where I've felt the Lord say don't try and measure the new wineskin with the old. So don't use an imperial measure to gauge a metric one, don't use a yard to measure a metre. Similarly our lack of fruit in the last season, in the sense of salvation and freedom, let's not use that as a measure of what God is about to do, as He is about to move in this nation and release miracles through you and through me. So my encouragement to you this morning is to listen with faith, hear by faith. Develop a lifestyle of listening to the Holy Spirit hosting His presence and listening with faith, because He wants to release miracles through you and me today.

So Father thank you for Your word. Thank you that as we listen with faith it will be a key to a lifestyle of miracles. Father I pray that You will open up doors in front of us today. Give us ears to hear Lord, and forgive us where we have allowed cynicism and unbelief to overshadow us Lord and we ask that You would cause faith to rise up in us. Give us eyes to see all that You're doing and all that You're saying; in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.