**Simon of Samaria Learns a Valuable Lesson**

Simon had a pretty good thing going. By being able to do some amazing things, he had convinced the citizens of the city of Samaria that he was the Great Power of God and of course, Simon enjoyed all the perks that came with the title. But then a guy named Philip came to town and turned Simon’s world upside-down.

Philip was teaching that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah that the Jews had been watching for, that He had died on a Roman cross for the sins of the world and that God had raised Him from the dead after three days. Simon might have been skeptical, but this Philip could perform real miracles that no one could do unless God was with him! Besides, this same Jesus had made quite a stir over in the Samaritan town of Sychar a while back, and Philip’s message made perfect sense. Simon was painfully aware of the sin in his life and he desperately needed the redemption that the blood of Jesus offered, so he was baptized into Christ along with a lot of other folks.

Simon soon learned that Philip was able to perform miracles because the apostles of Jesus had laid their hands on him. Simon and his fellow Samaritans didn’t receive miraculous gifts simply because they had become Christians. They had to wait for Peter and John to visit from Jerusalem to impart those gifts. As amazing as the miracles were, Simon was particularly intrigued by the ability to impart the gifts to others. Old habits die hard and he just couldn’t help himself. As he watched the apostles praying over people and laying their hands on them, he offered Peter and John money for the ability to do the same thing.

Peter’s response was pretty stern: “You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity” (Acts 8:21-23). Simon immediately felt the sting of the rebuke and was ashamed that he had so quickly disappointed the One to whom he had just submitted his life. He quickly entreated the apostles to pray to God on his behalf.

**The apostles had their work to do.** They were guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit and the Spirit confirmed the message with miraculous signs (John 16:13; Mark 16:20). As the revelation was being delivered, the churches were strengthened by the spiritual gifts the apostles were able to impart to many of their members. Those gifts continued as long as partial revelations and prophecies were in progress, but when the faith was delivered, the revelations and accompanying miracles ceased (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). The apostles had completed the task Jesus had given them to do and, when the last apostle died, there was no one left to impart miraculous gifts.

**We have our work to do.** The faith was once for all delivered to the saints in the first century (Jude 1:3) and inspired men of God wrote that body of teaching by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Those writings have been preserved for us so that we can understand the will of God when we read them (Ephesians 3:3-4). The gospel has already been revealed and miraculously confirmed. Some look to perpetuate the idea of modern miraculous powers, but we “have no part or portion in this matter.” It is our task in our day and time to earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered. The apostles did their job, now it is time for us to do ours.

**John McKee**

**West Murray church of Christ**