



Sunday April 14, 2019
Faith
Part-9 : Power of Collective Faith

Agreement In Faith

Matthew 18:18-19

18 "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

19 "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.

In verse 19 the word 'agree' in Greek is *sumphōneō* which means to be harmonious, to be in accord, to symphonize. Jesus wants us to be in harmony like a orchestra.

Verse 19 begins with "again I say to you..." which essentially means, in the light of what I have stated (in verse 18), here is another way to do the same thing.

The Lord Jesus is teaching us to agree in prayer. It is implicit, that this is an agreement in faith, since He taught us to ask in prayer, believing (Matthew 21:22).

When two or more agree in faith, are harmonious, are in one accord, or symphonize in faith - Jesus said - we can have anything we ask. We can bind and loose on earth, according to what is allowed/disallowed by heaven (literal translation).

In every sense, especially spiritually - there is power when we are together.

Ecclesiastes 4:9

Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor.

Can we as a local church community come together in agreement of faith, in collective faith - for more souls to be saved in our city; for more signs wonders and miracles to happen through us both in our services as well as through us as individuals as we go about daily life; to see our church grow to many thousands until we are impacting one million souls each week in our city; for the land for our church building and for funds to come in; for godly government over our nation, and more.

Collective Faith In Action

We will look at a few examples of agreement in faith, or collective faith in the book of Acts.



Prayer For Signs, Wonders And Miracles

Acts 4:23-24,29-31

23 And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.

24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them,

..

29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word,

30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

They raised their voice "with one accord"...in harmony, as a symphony. Each one would have used their own words - but God heard it as one prayer. They asked for boldness to speak the Word, and they asked for God to do signs, wonders and healings in the name of Jesus.

Their prayer was answered - we see amazing things happening:

- ✓ they spoke the Word with boldness (Acts 4:31)
- ✓ with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Acts 4:33)
- ✓ deception by a couple Ananias and Sapphira was exposed (Acts 5:1-11)
- ✓ through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people (Acts 5:12)
- ✓ sick on the streets were healed as Peter's shadow fell on them (Acts 5:15)
- ✓ the sick and oppressed came in great numbers from other cities and were healed and delivered (Acts 5:16)
- ✓ at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought the apostles out of prison (Acts 5:19)
- ✓ and on and on....

Peter Released From Prison

King Herod had James the brother of John killed. He then had Peter put in prison.

Acts 12:5

Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.



We can confidently assume that the church was praying for Peter's safety and deliverance.

In response to their prayer, Peter was supernaturally brought out of prison by an angel. Peter then went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark.

Acts 12:12

So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.

The answer came in an unexpected way - that even the praying disciples were amazed. Nonetheless - they prayed with one accord and with collective faith and saw results.

Paul Supernaturally Healed After Being Stoned At Lystra

Acts 14:19-22

19 Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.

20 However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch,

22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

Paul was stoned by a mob and dragged out of the city. A re-enactment of what happened to Stephen - the first martyr of the church, which Paul was supervising. And now Paul the apostle was himself being stoned. This must have been so bad, the mob actually thought Paul was dead. They left him for dead!

Verse 20 does not tell us very much about what the disciples did when they gathered around Paul who had been stoned and dragged out of the city. We can only imagine what must have happened. The disciples must have been in one accord, in agreement with faith, in collective faith, and boldly prayed for Paul's healing. Instantly God's power must have come upon Paul and made him whole - so completely whole - that he could rise up and without any help get back to the city and then travel out the next day and continue with his preaching. This was a powerful miracle healing. In the natural - it would have taken months to recover - if recovery was even a possibility after receiving such a stoning!



A Solid Front Of Faith

Colossians 2:4-5

4 Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

5 For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

The church in Colossae, like many other new churches were threatened by deceptions and heresies that were being spread. The apostle Paul commends them that they maintained good order and steadfast faith.

The words order and steadfastness are both military words. "Order" refers to orderly condition with lines unbroken and discipline intact. According to Thayer's Greek Definition, the word for "steadfastness" means firmness and metaphorically in a military sense, a solid front, an impregnable wall of defense,.

Colossians 2:5 Amplified Bible, Classic Edition (AMPC)

For though I am away from you in body, yet I am with you in spirit, delighted at the sight of your [standing shoulder to shoulder in such] orderly array and the firmness and the solid front and steadfastness of your faith in Christ [that leaning of the entire human personality on Him in absolute trust and confidence in His power, wisdom, and goodness].

Here was a local church who together were in orderly array and put up a solid front of faith, an impregnable wall of defense, against any intrusion of the enemy through deceptions, lies, and any other means.

How about us as a local church community? Is our collective faith a solid front against any demonic intrusion into our church family?

What if we decide to come together in agreement in faith, with collective faith and put up a solid front of faith...

....against all sickness and disease - that there will be not one sick person in our community.

....against lack and want - that people will have all their needs met.

....against strife and disturbances in our homes and families.

....against worldliness affecting our children.

What if we put up a solid front of faith and advance boldly

....to impact our city with the power of God.

....to receive the land for our building project and see this project through to completion.



Ever Increasing Collective Faith

Our faith in God can increase and become stronger. We can nurture our faith so that it becomes stronger.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,

Paul commends the Thessalonians that their faith as a church community was growing exceedingly and abundantly.

Lets believe God for bigger and greater things as a church community.

Destroyers Of Collective Faith

Anything that breeds disharmony and disagreements, that keeps us from being in one accord - will destroy our agreement in faith and the collective faith we could exercise to see powerful results. We must do what nurtures collective faith and guard against things that destroy collective faith.

Here are just a few:

- ✓ Murmuring and complaining
- ✓ Competition and strife - spiritual competition always leads to strife which always opens the door to every evil work (James 3:16). Even Jesus own team of twelve disciples seemed to have problems at one point with the mother of James and John wanting to secure important spots for her sons (Matthew 20:20-28).
- ✓ Self, pride, and jealousy

Ministering As Teams With Collective Faith

Another important application of collective faith, or the agreement of faith is when we minister as teams. Two or more believers ministering together form a team.

When Jesus sent His twelve apostles out, He sent them out in teams of two. He did the same with the seventy disciples. He sent them out in teams of two. These people ministering as teams saw the mighty works of God.



Mark 6:7,12-13

7 And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.

12 So they went out and preached that people should repent.

13 And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.

Luke 10:1,17

1 After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.

17 Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

As a local church community, we need to also learn to minister with collective faith as teams, whenever the opportunity or the need arises.

For example, you may be at your Life Group and someone may come with a need. Then the rest of the believers, gather together with collective faith, with agreement in faith, and minister to the individual.

Sometimes, at the end of a service, we may call our ministry team to come forward and form small teams of two or three people, and invite those needing ministry to go to these teams. Once again, with collective faith, with agreement in faith, you minister as one, to the individual who comes for prayer and ministry.

Nurturing And Protecting Authentic Team Ministry

When ministering as a team, remember, we are not in competition with each other. One person can pray or minister - and the others on the team stand in perfect agreement. Don't allow any spirit of competition, strife or spiritual pride (feeling of superiority) come in. Back up the individual who is ministering 100%.

Include even young believers and allow them to participate whenever possible. As part of our culture as a local church, we want to provide opportunity for everyone to participate in ministry - because we know that every believer is a minister. At the same time, so that things are done properly and in order, we do have training and equipping that we take believer through, so we can all learn how to minister.

We must avoid the spiritual superiority complex, that we see in some Christian circles. Here is an example of what we must avoid:

Let's think of a typical scenario - say there is a group of eight Spirit-filled, Bible believing, believers. There comes in someone who needs to be ministered for healing. Is it right for two believers to take this person needing healing aside leaving the remaining six believers out, under the pretext that the other six may not have enough faith (or be in



unbelief), and hence only these two will minister in seclusion to the one needing healing? Is this practice correct? Is there a Biblical basis to support what these two are doing?

In the New Testament we find several examples where Jesus ministered in faith, even when his own disciples did not believe [*NOTE: we are not talking about the general crowd, but specifically about His own disciples not being in faith*]. Consider a few examples:

- ✓ Jesus and His twelve disciples in the boat (Matthew 8:23-27) - Jesus was caught in the middle of a storm with twelve unbelieving, fearful disciples. Yet, He calmed the storm and kept the boat afloat. The fear and unbelief of the twelve, could not sink the faith of one.
- ✓ Jesus and the lunatic boy (Matthew 17:14-21) - Jesus delivered the boy, even though nine of his disciples and the boy's father seemed to be in unbelief at that time. Jesus did not tell his nine disciples to leave because of their unbelief.
- ✓ Many other times in Jesus' ministry we see Jesus moving out in faith, when His own disciples were not in faith. Yet Jesus ministered and showed them what was possible. (e.g. feeding of the multitude, healing of the blind man, raising of Lazarus, etc.)
- ✓ Peter walked by faith on the water to go to Jesus - even though the rest of the disciples were fearful thinking it was a ghost (Matthew 14:25-29).

Sometime, people use the incident of Jesus at Jairus' house when He raised Jairus' daughter, as the pretext why they isolate themselves from other **believers** when they want to pray and minister in seclusion. We must keep in mind that the Lord Jesus had Peter, James and John the brother of James as His 'inner circle'. This meant that these men were closest to Jesus, perhaps His core team amongst the Twelve apostles. There is no indication that Jesus chose them because of their superior faith or spiritual stature. These three men were also privileged to be with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8) as well as in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:37). Yet in the Garden, these three men fell asleep, when Jesus needed them most. About the incident at Jairus' house, reading the accounts in the three Gospels (Matthew 9:23-26; Mark 5:37-43; Luke 8:51-54) we observe, that Jesus told the other nine apostles to stay back with the crowd, and not follow Him, while they were quite a way from Jairus home (Mark 5:37). So when Jesus arrived at Jairus home, He was there with just the three apostles of His inner circle - Peter, James and John. So there was no issue of Him telling His other disciples to stay away because of their unbelief. We took time to explain this, because, we do not want us to fall into the spiritual superiority trap and get into the wrong idea that you need keep other believers out, in order to see miraculous results. Instead, let be a Church where we truly believe that the least in the Kingdom is greater



that the greatest of Old Testament prophets and will be used powerfully. Let us have everyone participate as we minister as teams in collective faith.

Testimony

Isaac was diagnosed with a huge cancerous tumor in his brain a few month ago. First admitted at Jain Hospital, where they did the first Surgery (test to check the tumor). Which turned out to be cancerous. He had a second surgery at another hospital to remove the tumor, but within a few days the tumor grew back causing a lot of pain and other symptoms and he had to undergo a third surgery. Even after the third surgery, certain portion of the tumor could not be removed and hence he had to undergo 33 radiation sessions to his brain. Finally the cancer still lingered and the doctors had given up hope. However one doctor said he was too young to give up on him and tried a new medicine from London on him. The side effect of the medicine was he would have fits often.

It was at this point his father in desperation his father contacted our APC office to bring him for prayer. When he came to us for prayer on Saturday Feb 16, he could not stand / sit for long due to weakness and boils in his body due to the medicine and very slurred speech.

Three of us prayed together for him in collective faith, with agreement in faith.

Within a few days one of us went and visited him. Isaac's countenance was completely normal / healthy, he remembered names and even started going for a walk with his wife in the evenings. When he went for his final health check up on April 02, the reports for all cancer cells were negative. The doctors words "we have never seen anyone who has gone through 3 surgeries, 33 radiations and new medication being tired on him being able to walk to the hospital, feed himself, take a bath himself and looking so healthy". His father personally informed us about his amazing recovery.

MINISTRY TIME | SALVATION CALL



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

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This is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their life on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) or the full length Sunday sermon. You can also review the Sunday Sermon notes. All these are available in the "All Peoples Church Bangalore" mobile App or online at apcwo.org/sermons. Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture passages: *Matthew 18:18-20; Acts 4:23-24,29-31; Colossians 2:5*

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Please discuss a few of these together, giving time for people to share their insights. We encourage each one individually to make notes of their personal learning during the Group discussion.

#1, In the small group (life group) you belong to, think of some "projects" that you can extend agreement in faith, or collective faith for, as a group? Make a decision to go after one or more of these in collective faith. One of you could write down and track your faith journey.

#2, Discuss about the church in Colossae putting up a solid front of faith. (A) Identify areas that you as a small group, put up a solid front of faith, for each other. (B) How would you go about raising up your collective faith as a "solid front", an impregnable wall of defense, for your group?

#3, As a group, how can you equip yourselves so that you can minister together in collective faith, as a team - to bring healing, deliverance and minister to the needs of people you might run into, supernaturally.



FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other in the light of what was learnt today. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and pray together for:

1, families to be protected and strengthened

2, a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us as a church and through us to bless many others in our city and nation. Nothing but a mighty work of God's Spirit can change our city and nation.

3, for the BUILD TO IMPACT project - for God's hand to guide us through the land search and acquisition process, and for finances to be more than enough to get this project done.

Close by thanking God together.