

## WITH SIGNS FOLLOWING



Jim Cymbala January 10, 2015

It takes more than academic rigor to win the world for Christ. Correct doctrine alone isn't enough. Proclamation and teaching aren't enough. God must be invited to "confirm the word with signs following" (see Hebrews 2:4). In other words, the gospel must be preached with the involvement of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.

The apostles prayed for God to do supernatural things. They wanted people to know their belief was more than positional or theoretical. There was power in this faith. "O God, stretch out your hand—work with us in this." They wanted a faith that was obviously alive, a faith based not just on the cross but also on the empty tomb. The cross, as poignant as it is, is understandable from a human perspective: an innocent man was murdered by crooked politicians and religious leaders. But the empty tomb—what can you say? Only a supernatural God could accomplish that.

In too many churches today, people don't see manifestations of God's power in answer to fervent praying. Instead, they hear arguments about theological issues that few people care about. On Christian radio and television we are often merely talking to ourselves.

What we are dealing with today is an Old Testament "vow religion" comprised of endless repetitions and commands to do the right things. Modern preachers, like Moses, come down from the mount calling for commitment. Everyone says yes but then promptly breaks the vow within two days. There is little dependence on God's power to make an ongoing difference. There is little calling upon God to revolutionize us in a supernatural way.

Jesus is saying today, as He said to the church at Sardis, "You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. . . . But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief. . . . He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 3:1-3, 6).

I am not advocating melodrama or theatrics that work up emotion. But I am in favor, as were the apostles, of asking God to stretch out His hand and manifest Himself.

Jim Cymbala began Brooklyn Tabernacle with less than twenty members in a small, rundown building in a difficult part of the city. A native of Brooklyn and longtime friend of both David and Gary Wilkerson, Cymbala is a frequent speaker at the Expect Church Leadership Conferences sponsored by World Challenge throughout the world.

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