

# Signs and Wonders

Acts 5:12-16  
*Halifax: 30 October 2011*

## **Introduction**

As we have made our way through the book of the Acts of the Apostles,

- I have mentioned to you that there are many things in this book that we ought to yearn to see in our day...
  - For example, we have seen how the believers cared for one another—
    - even selling their houses and lands when necessary to provide for each other's needs.
    - We have seen how hungry the believers were for the apostles' doctrine, for prayer, for fellowship, for the Lord's Supper.
    - We have seen how bold they were in testifying of Jesus even in a hostile environment.
      - They are a tremendous example for us to follow!
  
- But I have also pointed out that there are things that we are not to seek among ourselves—not because they are wrong, but because they no longer pertain to us...
  - Recently, we saw that when the church prayed for boldness, the place was shaken where they were gathered to show that God had answered their prayer.
    - By this God showed that He is pleased to answer prayers for boldness.
    - This ought to encourage us that God will also answer us today when we pray for boldness,
      - but we should not expect Him to shake the ground each time we pray for this.
      - We have the testimony of the earthquake He sent the first time and that should be sufficient for us.
  
  - We saw a similar example of things that we should not expect to see repeated when the Holy Spirit was poured out for the first time—at Pentecost.
    - He accompanied that outpouring with visible and audible signs—to show that it had happened...
      - There was the appearance of tongues of fire and there was the sound of a mighty rushing wind to show that the Spirit had been given.
  
    - Also, as soon as the Spirit was poured out, the disciples were given the ability to speak in foreign languages that they did not know.
      - It was a marvellous thing.

- The Jews who had come to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost were astonished because they heard the disciples speak in the native languages of the countries from which they came.
- Sadly, some in our day try to imitate this speaking in tongues,
  - even when there are no foreigners present—
  - They end up making noises rather than speaking foreign languages.
    - It is a silly waste of time and makes them look foolish.
    - We should not expect God to do what He did the first time.

Today, we come to a passage in Acts in which we are told about the signs and wonders that were done by the Apostles during their ministry that were quite similar to the ones that Jesus did during His ministry.

- We are going to look at this today, and at the great effect that these signs and wonders had on the witness of the Church!
  - It was a marvellous thing!
- But there is a lot of confusion in the church today about signs and wonders.
  - There those who believe that if the church was what it ought to be, we would see signs and wonders like this today.
    - And even worse, there are those who try to drum up signs and wonders and end up doing cheesy imitations that are an embarrassment to the cause of Christ.
    - I think I told you about the man I heard about recently who was in Halifax—
      - claiming to have an anointing to make hair grow back on bald people.
      - While in Halifax, he claimed to have turned steel pins and plates that had been used in surgery back into bone again.
  - There are prophecies given that are never fulfilled and all sorts of antics...
    - But I want you all to know that the miracles done by the prophets and apostles that we read about in God's Word were not at all like these cheesy imitations.
      - They were true signs and wonders.
      - We are going to look at these and we are going to look at what we ought to expect and seek in our day!

**First of all, then, I want you to see that:**

**I. Many signs and wonders were done by the Apostles.**

- Verse 12 states this plainly:
  - **Acts 5:12: And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people.**

A. Examples are given

1. First, there is an example from our last sermon in Acts,
  - with Ananias and Sapphira.
    - This was a punitive sign—an act of judgement for telling a lie.
    - They wanted people to think that like Barnabas, they had given away all the proceeds from the sale of their property.
  - Both of them were struck dead by the Lord for telling this lie.
    - This was a sign and a wonder that was given to show how displeased God is with our lying boasts!
      - It put fear into the hearts of all both inside and outside the church and it ought to fear in us too.
2. Secondly, there are the signs and wonders that are mentioned in our text...
  - They are very much like the signs and wonders that Jesus did as He travelled about in Galilee.
    - Verse 16 tells us that sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits were brought from all around,
      - and that they were all healed!
      - There is no record of the apostles trying to healing someone and not being able to do so.
        - They knew by prophecy when a person was to be healed and they healed them.
    - People were so impressed with what was going on that they even laid their sick ones in Peter's path so that his shadow would fall on them.
      - Apparently, God even used this to heal many, though our text does not expressly state if this was successful.
        - It simply says in v. 15 that
          - **Acts 5:15: they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them.**
          - This is very much as was with Jesus when some merely touched His garments and were healed.
            - Whatever the case, wonderful healings were effected by the apostles—and lots of them—
              - as well as the casting out of demons.
              - It seems that when Jesus came, there was an unusual amount of demonic activity among the covenant people.

- This was all in God's providence so that it could be shown clearly that the Son of God came to overthrow the works of the Devil.

TRANS> And that brings us to an important question...

## B. Why were all these signs and wonders done?

### 1. Jesus Himself told us that demons were cast out to show that the kingdom of God had come.

- In Luke 11:20, Jesus says:
  - **Luke 11:20: But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.**
- The overthrow of Satan was much greater than the casting out of individual demons during His ministry...
  - It was a taking back of the whole world that had been taken by Satan through the fall so that the gospel would break out to all the nations...
    - and so that in time, the whole world would be restored to the Lord.
    - The individual casting out of demons was merely a sign of this greater work of reclaiming the world for God!
      - The entire work of Jesus is summarised in Scripture as the **crushing of the serpent's head (Gen 3:15)** and as **destroying the works of the devil (1 John 3:8)**.
    - By casting out demons during his ministry and by having the apostles do the same, Jesus showed that He was the promised Messiah who had come to free the world from bondage to Satan!

### 2. The healing of the sick was similar to this.

- Matthew shows us this in Matthew 8:16-17:
  - **Matthew 8:16-17: When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses."**
- With these words, Matthew shows us that Jesus came to bear the curse for us so that we might be freed from it!
  - He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses so that we might at last be free of the curse that came upon us because of our sin!
  - The individual healings that Jesus did were signs that pointed to Him as the one who would at last deliver all of His elect from the curse!
    - Again, it was a sign—not the fulfillment, but a sign to show us what was to come!

- Matthew quotes from Isaiah 53 in connection with the healings that Jesus did to show that Jesus would do all that was necessary to bring us forgiveness and to set us free from the curse.
- The Apostles ongoing work of healing and casting out demons continued to serve as visible testimony to the Messiah's ultimate work!
- Now that Jesus has gone the cross and borne the curse,
  - you can be sure that He will heal all of our diseases just as He has promised—
    - Yes, we will even be delivered from death itself.

TRANS> But the signs also serve another purpose that is everywhere stated in scripture.

3. The signs were given to authenticate those who gave us the Word of God as God's true messengers!
  - a. When Moses was first sent to Egypt, He was given signs and wonders to perform for this purpose.
    - We read about that in Exodus 4.
      - The chapter opens with Moses' objection to God's sending him to Egypt.
        - Here he is, called to go to the strongest nation on earth and demand that Israel be released to worship the LORD!
        - So Moses says:
          - **"But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'"**
    - And then the LORD gives him two signs
      - The rod that turns into a serpent
        - and his hand that becomes leprous when he puts it in his cloak and then is restored.
      - And then the LORD tells Moses that if they will not believe the signs, He will give him more signs...
        - that the water will be turned to blood...
    - As the story unfolds, the great truth to be proven is that God is the LORD.
      - It is to be proven to Egypt and to Israel by signs and wonders...
        - All the plagues are done in order that they might know!
        - They are signs that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is LORD.
        - They are signs that redemption is to be found only in Him!

- And the result is that finally, after Moses parts the Red Sea and Israel crosses safely to the other side, Israel knows and believes.
  - Exodus 14:31 says:
    - **Exodus 14:31 Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.**
    - They believed because of the signs that were done.
  
- b. Even Jesus exhorted those who saw His signs to know from these that **He** was speaking the truth.
  - In John 10:37-38, He says:
    - **John 10:37-38: "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."**
    - In other words, by these signs, God the Father Himself was testifying that Jesus was His Son.
  
  - Recently we saw how Peter spoke at Pentecost about this when he described Jesus as:
    - **Acts 2:22: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—**
    - Just as Moses was given signs and wonders to show that he had been sent by God,
      - so also was Jesus.
  
- c. Signs and wonders were given to the Apostles for the very same purpose—to verify them as the true messengers of God.
  - We are told this very plainly in Hebrews 2:3-4. It says:
    - **Heb 2:3-4: how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?**
  
  - Do you see?
    - The signs and wonders were given for the purpose of proving that the Apostles were prophets—speaking the very word of God to us!
      - If we reject their message, we do so to our own destruction.
      - God proves that they are His messengers speaking His message through signs and wonders.

TRANS> So we conclude that there are these two purposes for signs and wonders...

- They serve as little pictures that show us the great redemptive work that Jesus came to do...
  - And they prove that God's prophets and apostles were truly sent by Him.
- Now we will turn to our next question about the signs and wonders that were done by the Apostles.

## II. What was the effect of these signs and wonders?

### A. We are told that multitudes believed!

#### 1. Look at what it says...

##### a. In verse 14, it tells us that they kept on coming!

- **Acts 5:14: And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women,**
- You see that they were added to the Lord!
  - They came to believe and when they believed, they were added to the Lord and to His church.
  - You see in verse 12 how it says that all were together with the apostles.
    - It says:
      - **Acts 5:12: And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch.**
      - **One accord!**
      - This is that word we have seen several times already!
        - *homo-thumadon!*
        - They had one holy passion for Jesus Christ.
        - They joined publicly with those who were His disciples.

- They did not remain aloof, but they came forward publicly to be Jesus' disciples.
  - They brought their sick to be healed because they believed.
  - They did this even though there was persecution!
  - They did this even though it meant that they would be expected to live as the rest of Jesus' disciples were living at this time.
  - They came and the united with the unified church that at this time like no other time was animated with one holy passion!

##### b. And look at verse 16...

- It tells us that now people were starting to come from areas outside of Jerusalem—from all Judea!

- The Apostles have not yet gone out to them, but their witness is starting to spread to them.
- Jesus had said that they would testify of Him, first in Jerusalem, and then in Judea.
  - His word was being fulfilled.
- Before, Luke had given us the number of 5000 men,
  - but now he no longer even attempts to count them!
  - There are multitudes coming!

2. Just think what this means!

- Multitudes are coming to learn of Jesus our dear Saviour!
  - They are coming and finding out what He did for them!
  - They are finding out that He came as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world!
    - They are finding forgiveness and eternal life in Him!
- What a gracious God we serve!
  - What great things He has done for us!
  - Here are multitudes—each one an eternal soul—obtaining eternal life in His kingdom and the full remission of sins!
    - Multitudes are coming to Him this very day!
      - Statisticians tell us that 6000 come to Christ every day who did not grow up in a Christian home.
      - Praise be to our gracious God!
        - God forbid that any of you in this room should go another day without this salvation.
        - Our God is in the business of saving souls!

TRANS> But sadly, we see that not all did come to believe.

B. There are many others who see the signs and wonders, but hold back.

- Verse 13 describes them...
  - **Acts 5:13: Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly.**
- 1. These were those ordinary Jews who went up to the temple to worship and could not help but notice the Apostles and the other followers of Jesus there.
  - a. They probably considered them to be a party within Judaism—
    - a party or sect that thought Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah.
    - a sect that the High Priests thought was heretical.



- b. But they could see that God was at work in these people.
  - As it says,
    - they esteemed them highly!
    - They were impressed with them.
  - They could see that real miracles were being done by the apostles.
    - It was very hard to deny that—even the Jewish authorities could not deny that.
  - And they could see the high level of commitment that they had...
    - They were united with one holy passion...
      - And they were indeed passionate about that passion!
    - They were bold and fearless.
    - They lived godly lives.
    - They loved one another and cared for one another.
    - They were given to the word and prayer.

TRANS> This ordinary Jewish worshippers could see all of that...

- 2. But it says that they dared not join them!
  - a. They were afraid to do so!
    - The very things they admired were the things that kept them back!
    - They weren't ready to make such a radical commitment...
      - They felt that they had enough religion.
      - They were content to continue to worship God in their own way—just as they always had.
      - They were not ready to lay down their lives for others—to sell property to support the poor.
    - And yes, they were impressed with their boldness to come out preaching like they did when their Master had been crucified by the authorities...
      - But they were not interested in facing that danger themselves...
        - After all, they had families to look after and maybe the leaders were right anyway—shouldn't they be respected and obeyed?
        - These followers of the prophet from Nazareth were bold, but maybe they were wrong...
    - But perhaps most of all—these onlookers were afraid of God!
      - Word had gotten out about what happened to Ananias and Sapphira!
        - It was serious business to be a part of this sect!

- These onlookers were not ready for that!
  - They were happy to just be a middle of the road Jew.
  - Not one of these radical disciples of Jesus...
    - But they certainly would not speak against them.

TRANS> You can see how the very things that they admired were the same things that kept them away.

b. My brothers and sisters, this is the way it is when we have to do that which is holy!

- We are attracted and we want to come and see—
  - Yet, at the same time, we are terrified and want to run away!
  - We are like Moses when he saw the burning bush...
    - We want to come near to God and to holy things, but at the same time we want to keep a safe distance.
- There are many who are in this sorry state of seeing but never approaching out of fear—they dare not get too close...
  - They go to a nominal church and live a nominal Christian life.
    - They see a church that has a higher commitment, but this is not for them.
    - They respect those people, but they are happy enough to stick with the status quo—with what they grew up with.
      - What would their family think?
      - What would their friends say?
      - What changes would they have to make if they were join such a church?
  - Perhaps some of them even attend a more serious church, but they never commit—they dare not join.
    - They will not deny the truth, but neither will they confess it.
    - They will speak highly of the believers, but they will not become one of them.
  - Perhaps they feel that if they at least admire, they will somehow escape the judgement of God.
    - It is a deception that will undo them if they go on with it!
      - If this is you, you need to repent and be baptised!
      - You must come forth and confess that Jesus is Lord and start following Him as the only Saviour.

TRANS> But many of them did not come to confess Christ in truth.

3. You see from this that signs are not enough.
  - a. Today, many people claim that if only they had signs and wonders today—
    - something they could see that would prove that it was all true...
    - then they would be committed...
    - then they would believe.
  - b. But you see from this group of admirers in the early church had lots of signs and wonders...
    - 1) And still they would not believe.
      - They would not believe because they did not want to believe.
      - They were afraid to come near to God so they held back from Him.
      - The evidence was there, but a heart for God was not there.
    - 2) The problem is never really a lack of evidence.
      - Every person in the world has the evidence of creation to testify of God.
        - Big bangs and evolution and all that are just silly evasions.
        - I many really—who really believes that things formed themselves?
      - Every human being knows the Creator...
        - Creation testifies to His eternal power and divine nature.
          - It cannot be denied without being absurd.
          - Really—try to account for a human being—try to account for beauty—try to account for morals—try to account for a leaf or even a single cell...
        - Everybody knows his Creator...
          - It is just that we are corrupt and don't want to serve Him.
          - We want to avoid Him because we don't want to admit what we know to be true—
            - that we are sinners who cannot save ourselves.
        - Yes, everybody knows that too!
          - We know that we are not worthy of our Creator.
            - We know that He is justly angry with us and that we are under His wrath and judgement.
            - We know that He is Holy and we are terrified to even think about it too much.
              - So we stay away from radical conversion.
              - We stay away from radical commitment.
              - We will dabble in comfortable religion—but not Jesus.

- c. We stay away, that is, until God's grace breaks into our lives to rescue us!
- 1) That's what happened to those many men and women in Acts 5 who did believe...
    - God's grace got hold of them and changed them!
    - They really believed!
    - They joined themselves to the apostles.
    - They left their comfortable Judaism and became followers of Jesus!
  
  - 2) You can't do any thing else when the grace of God overtakes you!
    - Then you see that God is even holier than you had ever admitted...
      - Far more holy!
      - You are cut to heart like the ones who believed on the day of Pentecost—
        - You say, "What must I do to be saved?"
        - You must find a remedy.
          - Now instead of daring not to join those who believe, you dare not stay away!
          - You realise that the danger is much greater in staying away than in coming and facing persecution and all the rest that comes from following Jesus.
    - And you see just who Jesus is!
      - You see that He is full of grace and salvation!
      - You see that He is the One who came to bear the curse for sinners!
      - You see that there is no other name by which we must be saved.
        - Who but the holy Son of God crucified can save a sinner like you?
          - Forget family, forget friends, forget security, forget comforts—
            - you have no choice but to come to Jesus!
  
  - 3) That's what happens when the grace of God overtakes you.
    - The problem is not a lack of evidence!
      - The problem is a corrupt heart and grace changes your heart.
      - You need a change of heart—and then you will come gladly instead of standing off at a distance!
        - Don't pretend that it is a lack of evidence if you have not come.
        - Don't make excuses
          - These admirers had sign and wonders right before their face and they still did not come and neither will you unless God changes your heart.

TRANS> So you see the effect that the signs and wonders had—

- On those whose hearts were made honest—
  - it brought them to believe.
- On those whose hearts were deceived—
  - it brought them to empty admiration and nothing more!

### **III. But what about signs and wonders today?**

A. Should we seek signs and wonders in the church today?

1. No, instead we should give thanks for the complete revelation we have today!
  - a. There were three main periods when God did signs and wonders among His people...
    - There was the time of Moses, the time of Elijah and Elisha, and the time of Jesus and His Apostles.
    - We have already seen why God gave signs and wonders...two reasons...
      - they were part of the actual revelation itself—signs pointing to the complete deliverance that Jesus would bring...
      - they were given to authenticate the prophets and Apostles as those who were sent by God and whose words were to be fully trusted.
  - b. Until God’s revelation concerning Jesus was complete,
    - These signs and wonders were necessary.
      - But now that we have the fully revelation of God, we no longer need them.
      - I don’t mean to say that God will never work miracles.
        - We have seen Him do that—we have seen Him save souls, we have seen Him heal people...
          - But He doesn’t do it as signs and wonders the way He did in the time of the prophets.
        - We don’t need them anymore...
          - We don’t need them to testify to us of what Jesus will do because that has now been fully revealed...
          - And we don’t need them to verify prophets because we don’t need prophets today—God’s revelation of Jesus is complete.
    - c. What we need to do now is cherish this precious, God-verified revelation.
      - 1) Just think—we have it better than Peter!
        - He did not yet have complete revelation about the conversion of the Gentiles. He did not yet understand what God would do.

- Nor did he have the book of revelation or any of Paul's epistles.
  - The book of Hebrews was not yet given, nor the epistle to the Romans.
  - Even Peter's own Epistle was yet to be written.
- 2) My brothers and sisters, we have it better than they had it when revelation was still being given.
- We have Philippians 2 where the humiliation and coming glory of Christ is revealed!
  - We have the promise of Revelation 21 where the new heavens and the new earth are fully described to us.
  - We have the glory of Jesus as our high priest revealed in the book of Hebrews.
  - Peter and John were still worshipping at the temple when the events in Acts 5 occurred...
- 3) The fact that signs and wonders have ceased should not depress us at all!
- That which is perfect has come—the complete revelation of God is here for us...
  - That which is in part—the signs and wonders that belonged to the period when revelation was still being given—is done away!
2. And do not suppose that signs and wonders are needed today for unbelievers.
- a. The Lord may work a few miracles among them if He wishes,
- but as we saw before,
    - even though unbelievers may *say* that they would believe if only they had signs and wonders,
    - they are deceived.
  - They would be no different than those from Jerusalem who are described in our text...
    - They saw the signs, they saw the church, and they even admired all this,
    - but still, they did not believe.
    - People don't need more evidence—they need new hearts.
- b. We have the complete Word of God...
- It is fully sufficient to lead honest men—men made honest by the renewing of the Holy Spirit—to Jesus.
  - If they are honest, they admit their need to be reconciled to God...

- If they are made honest by the Spirit of God, they will find no comfort in Buddhism, Hinduism, Mormonism, or nominal Christianity!
  - They will only find rest in Jesus Christ who is revealed in Holy Scripture.
- c. We need to ask God to make His word increase—
- The church must take the word to the nations, bathed in prayer...
    - That is what will cause men to believe.
    - Not signs and wonders, but the gospel proclaimed to the nations in the power of the Holy Spirit.
  - Our great problem today is that we do not preach the pure Word.
    - We try to alter it to make it more attractive to the masses.
      - It may indeed become more attractive to those whose hearts are not renewed, but it does not lead them to Christ!

TRANS> And that leads me to speak to you about something the church had in Acts 5 that we stand in desperate need of today... something we need to pursue!

B. We need to pursue holiness—true unity with Jesus Christ!

1. They were all in one accord with the Apostles—homothumadon!
  - They had one holy passion.
    - They were not each one going in their own way.
    - They were fully committed to Christ and to His will as it was being revealed to them.
2. If we are to be faithful witnesses for Jesus Christ, we must be holy like them.
  - You remember what we saw about them and their effect on unbelievers...
    - Their holiness caused men to be attracted to them—but at the same repelled them.
    - The very things that were admired about them kept all but those who truly believed away.
      - If we follow the Bible, there will be things about us that will keep people from joining—even people who admire us.
  - Jesus could have been very popular if only He had made a few very simple changes—like following some of the traditions that the Pharisees were so keen on...
    - He would have had a much larger following—not only of sheep, but also of goats!

- Remember when the 5000 wanted to make Him king after He miraculously fed them?
  - If He had handled that one right, just think how popular He would have been!
    - That is a real temptation for us!
      - There is always a pressure to lower the standard so that we will be more popular!
      - But all we will do is invite all those admirers in who don't really believe.
        - We will become that nominal church that has the lampstand of the gospel taken away!
        - And then our children will grow up in unbelief because the gospel will be gone!

3. Let me be specific about this!

- a. We endeavour to follow Biblical worship—and there are a lot of people who choose not to join primarily for this reason.
  - Many of them may be unbelievers who just want a little religion.
  - They want entertainment and songs that do not have some of the offensive parts that are found in the Psalms.
    - Let them have what they want, but not from us!
- b. We endeavour to follow the Biblical model of the family.
  - We insist that men are to be the head of the home, loving their wives as Christ loved the church, and that their wives are to submit to them.
  - We hold Christian fathers responsible to train up their children in the Lord and to lead their household in family worship each day.
    - There is a pressure on you men if you become a part of this church.
  - We have people leave because they do not want to do this.
    - They want substitute teachers for their children—teachers that God has not appointed.
    - Some of them admire us and tell us that we are doing it right, but they do not want to join.
- c. We endeavour to follow Biblical church discipline.
  - This puts fear in those who do not want to be held to live a godly life.
    - It keeps them from joining.
    - This is fine.
      - A mark of a believer is that that he wants to be held accountable.
- d. We endeavour to follow Biblical doctrine.



- Many are offended by this because they want to deny the unpopular truths such as the doctrine of hell
    - or the doctrine that God is sovereign in all things,
    - or that Christ is the only way,
    - or that men are desperate sinners who need atonement and that God is an angry God who needs to be propitiated.
  - Many complain that doctrine divides, so they would rather set it aside.
    - It is much better to follow the apostles—even here in Acts 5 we see that doctrine did divide...
      - It divided them from the nominal Jews and it divided them from the Chief Priests.
- e. We endeavour to follow Biblical ethics.
- We condemn fornication, homosexuality, Sabbath breaking, abortion.
    - Not because we hate those who do these things, but because these things are sinful.
  - Many do not love God's law because it is not written in their hearts by the Holy Spirit...
    - And so they are offended by these teachings.
    - They have carnal hearts that are at enmity with God and cannot submit to the law of God.
    - So be it—we cannot accommodate them.
- f. We endeavour to follow Biblical church government...
- Biblical church government sets up a distinction between those who teach and those who hear.
  - Many want a church where there is pooling of opinions rather than recognised teachers and elders who are set apart.
    - Moses ran up against this with Korah and Dathan in his day.
    - The New Testament continually calls for submission to those who are set apart as rulers in the church.
  - But then there are others who want a hierarchy of leaders that they can trust in without having to follow Christ...
    - They want priests and popes instead of faith in Jesus.
- g. We hold to Biblical miracles, believing the Bible to be the Word of God.
- We hold to six day creation, to the virgin birth of Christ, to the literal resurrection, that Jonah was swallowed by a fish for three days, that Jesus turned water into wine, etc.
  - Many intellectuals are offended by these things.

- They may admire the devotion of a church that believes these things, but with a sneer.
- It would embarrass them to be part of such a group.
  - Paul told us that:
    - **1 Cor 1:26: not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.**
    - Let it be so.
- h. We hold to the calling to love one another as Christ loved us...
  - Oh that we would do this better than we do—by God’s grace...
    - If we lay down our lives for each other, who would not admire it?
  - Yet, inasmuch as do this, it will keep many people from joining us.
    - They do not want to live in a community that has such ideals.
      - They don’t want to be expected to forgive, to deal with bitterness, to love parents who have wronged them, to love their enemies and do good to them, to help those who are in need.
    - So be it.
- i. So be it for all of these things that keep people away!
  - If they stay away because we are cold and unwelcoming then shame on us!
    - But if they stay away because we are following Christ,
      - then we are only spared from the trouble that unregenerate men cause in the church.
      - There will still be hypocrites who will come, but if we follow God’s word, many goats will avoid us just as they did in Acts 5.
  - Of course I do not mean to say that all who stay away are unregenerate just because they reject us.
    - We have things that are lacking that true believers may find somewhere else...like love...we need more of it...
    - But inasmuch as are rejected for following God’s Word,
      - Jesus tells us to rejoice because it means that we belong to Him. He was rejected for the same reason.

**Conclusion:** So what is the conclusion of the whole matter?

- It is that we need to be like the early church in Acts 5...
  - Not in the doing of signs and wonders which were part of God’s revelation,
    - but in holding forth the word of God which is the revelation that God has put into our hands today!

- And in living a holy life as they did so that we are admired, yet,
  - at the same time, **terrifying** to those who look on.
- There is such a tendency today to alter things that ought never to be altered so that people will be comfortable with us!
  - I tell you, if preaching and following God's word makes them uncomfortable, let them be uncomfortable until they repent!
- But my brothers and sisters, how far short we come of the standard!
  - How far we are from the believers in Acts 5!
  - How glad we ought to be for our dear Saviour in whom alone we have our righteousness...
  - How we ought to yearn for Him to work in us to make us holy so that we will be an attractive terror to unbelievers until they come to Jesus.
    - He is the One we follow!
    - He is the One who gives us life!
    - He is the One who saves.
      - Let the church be about Him, not about our modifications!
      - It is not our church to modify as we wish, but His church to bring glory and honour to God!