

Unbelievable, Part 3 – Unstoppable

Real Christianity is not normal as far as the secular world goes; it is also not normal as far as the religious world goes. Real Christianity believes God for the supernatural. Real Christianity refuses to compromise the principles of Scripture for personal convenience or societal acceptance. Real Christianity is so sold out to God that it goes beyond what the average person would even dare to live like. And so, real Christianity is sorely criticized and soundly condemned by lukewarm church members who have become more comfortable with the status quo than they are with a real revival on their hands. (“*That’s just not necessary!*”)

But those who would oppose it are fighting an uphill battle. Real Christianity has met all of these opponents before, and still it thrives. In ancient times, it was fed to the lions and forced into the catacombs, burned at the stake and buried under stones. Throughout the centuries it has been vilified and crucified, martyred and murdered. In modern times, it has been ridiculed and resisted, prosecuted and persecuted, misrepresented and misused. But still it thrives ... because real Christians are not afraid of men, only of existing without the power of God flowing through their souls.

Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

Our forefathers in Atlantic Canada came out of dead religion to embrace the living reality of the Holy Ghost. They understood that Jesus Christ and His apostles preached a radical lifestyle and so they embraced it regardless of any rejection they encountered. They instinctively knew that the most dangerous opponent of radical, biblical Christianity would not be a liberal media, a corrupt court, a humanistic government, or a secular society. Instead, they correctly recognized Pentecostalism’s most dangerous opponent to be the “Christianized complacency” many of them had so recently come from ... and they feared for the future should that religious rigor mortis ever return. We would do well to heed the cautionary, prophetic voices they raised a century ago ...

Prophecy at Azusa Street Revival: In the latter days there will be ...

- an overemphasis on power rather than on righteousness;
- a great emphasis on praise to a God they no longer pray to – it will become easier to celebrate than to agonize;
- a strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit and gifts rather than on the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

It is just over a century since the miraculous outpouring that changed the face of modern Christianity forever, and the world’s half-billion Spirit-filled believers have much to be thankful for. Once confined to humble quarters “on the wrong side of the tracks,” Pentecostal churches today are beautifully designed, comfortably furnished and tastefully decorated. Our preaching is intellectually engaging, powerfully presented and theologically sound; our singing is skillfully executed, wonderfully anointed and enthusiastically received. When you stop to think about it, you have to admit that the modern Pentecostal movement has made a lot of progress in a hundred years.

Even more significant is the fact that the baptism of the Holy Spirit – once rejected by every mainline denomination – is now widely accepted, highly regarded and fervently desired even by those whose own forebears mocked and disdained it. Sincere seekers everywhere are finding that they need a Spirit-led relationship that allows interaction with God instead of a tradition-fed religion that merely gives them information about Him. And in response to this unabashed hunger, God is fulfilling His Word and pouring out His Spirit in unprecedented ways.

Habakkuk 1:5 Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.

Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

Acts 2:17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

But if you can hear what the Spirit is saying to the church in the last of the last days, you will recognize with our forebears the dangers inherent in our success. It is possible to operate in Pentecostal *style* without embracing a Pentecostal *lifestyle*. It is possible to inherit the *blessings* of our elders without shouldering the *burden* they carried for a lost world. It is possible to believe Apostolic *doctrine* without embracing Apostolic *dedication*. It is possible to practice *praising* God but neglect *praying* to Him. It is possible, perhaps even probable – but it is not inevitable!

(FROM LAST WEEK) Martin Luther said that on his calendar there were only two days – TODAY and THAT DAY.

THERE ARE TWO DIVERGING STREAMS OF PROPHECY IN SCRIPTURE THAT SPEAK OF “THAT DAY” ...

Zechariah 12:3 And in **that day** will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for **that day** shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so **that day** come upon you unawares.

Isaiah 25:9 And it shall be said in **that day**, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Zechariah 12:8 In **that day** shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

Isaiah 12:4 And in **that day** shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

Zechariah 13:1 In **that day** there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

Isaiah 19:19 In **that day** shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD.

Zechariah 14:9 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in **that day** shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

Isaiah 10:27 And it shall come to pass in **that day**, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.

Luke 6:21-23 Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in **that day**, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

2 Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against **that day**.

2 Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at **that day**: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

I AM AN INCURABLE OPTIMIST WHEN IT COMES TO THE CHURCH!

2 Kings 7:1-3 Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria. Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? ... *(The improbable made the impossible possible!)*

THE CHURCH IS NOT PERFECT, BUT IT IS UNSTOPPABLE!

Just as a hospital collects the sick under one roof and labels them as such, the church collects sinners. Many of the people outside the hospital are every bit as sick as the ones inside, but their illnesses are either undiagnosed or disguised. It's similar with sinners outside the church. So Christian churches are not, as a rule, model communities of good behavior. They are, rather, places where human misbehavior is brought out in the open, faced, and dealt with.

MARRELL CORNWELL STORY: After more than a year of Home Bible Study, couple said "We know why you're here – to 'save' us! But you're wasting your time, because we can't be saved!" "Just let me teach you one last Bible study (no chart)" ... **2 Corinthians 5:17** - Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

The New Testament always refers to Jesus "sitting" at the right hand of God (the place of power) ... except one time ... Jesus "stood up" for Stephen because he gave God his very life ... he was **UNSTOPPABLE!**

Hebrews 10:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

Acts 7:55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

OPTIONAL ILLUSTRATION: A SOLDIER IN THE ARMY OF GOD

I am a soldier in the army of my God! The Lord Jesus Christ is my Commanding Officer! The Holy Bible is my code of conduct! Faith, prayer and the word are my weapons of warfare! I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity and tested by fire! I am a volunteer in this army, and I am enlisted for eternity! I will either retire in this army at the rapture or die in this Army; but I will not get out, sell out, be talked out or pushed out! I am faithful, reliable, capable and dependable!

If my God needs me, I am there! If He needs me in Sunday School, to teach children, work with youth, help adults or just sit and learn, He can use me, because I am there! I am a soldier! I am not a baby! I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up, pumped up, picked up or pepped up!

I am a soldier! No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me or lure me! I am a soldier! I am not a wimp! I am in place, saluting my King, obeying His orders, praising His name and building His kingdom!

No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards, candy or give me handouts! I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for or catered to! I am committed! I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around! I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside! I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit! When Jesus called me into this army, I had nothing! If I end up with nothing, I will still come out even! I will win! My God will supply all my needs!

I am more than a conqueror! I will always triumph! I can do all things through Christ! Devils cannot defeat me! People cannot disillusion me! Weather cannot weary me! Sickness cannot stop me! Battles cannot beat me! Money cannot buy me! Governments cannot silence me and HELL CANNOT HANDLE ME!

I am a soldier! Even death cannot destroy me! For when my commander calls me from this battlefield, He will promote me to a captain and then bring me back to rule this world with Him!

*I'm a soldier in the army
And I'm marching, claiming victory
I will not give up, I will not turn around
I'm a soldier, marching heaven bound.*