

Apostolic Attitude- Pt.1

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More and more, as I study and research the apostolic, I am becoming convinced that it is not what you do as much as it is *who you are*. It is a mindset, a heart condition, one that exists long before one assumes the title, or is ordained to the office of Apostle. There are those who would tell you that it is something that one attains, something that is bestowed upon one after years of faithful service on the mission field, or after having planted a number of churches, or after having had one's name established among an elite group of individuals, and become renowned in religious circles. But I am coming to find out that although those things are important, the apostolic is not something to be earned with religious works. It is not something that we can measure by tallying up how many apostolic brownie points we have earned with God, and therefore can claim to be called to the office. No, whether one chooses to call oneself an Apostle or not, I believe that it is something that one just can't help. You're just *born that way*. Therefore, if you really want to see whether or not you fit the category, you'd have to search your own heart. What is it that excites you? What are you passionate about? What makes you happy, angry, sad? To me, those are the basic elements that comprise the apostolic. Those are the attributes that Almighty God imbues one with before the foundation of the world, and allows the vagaries of life to hone in us as He processes us for service in His Kingdom.

Acts 17:16-17

16: Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

17: Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

Look, if you will, at the Apostle Paul, standing in the center of a city that is renowned to be the cultural capital of the world. Listen to the apostolic heart as it pounds with a jealousy for the glory of God. This is Athens. This is the capital of Greece, the nation that has influenced most of the known world with its art, its science, its philosophy. These are some of the most brilliant, most intellectually superior people in the world. They are the epitome of man's achievements at that time. And it makes Paul *mad*. Everywhere he looks, he sees man patting himself on the back. Everywhere, humans have

raised up monuments to themselves. Why, they even have had the nerve to create their own gods. There is something about the apostolic mindset that hates idolatry, hates to see anything glorified except God. There are preachers today who claim to be apostolic, and yet have no qualms about compromising with the spirit of the age, have no problem with lifting up the gods of this world right in the church. But not so Paul. The apostolic does not agree with that which is wrong, nor will it laugh at what is not funny. Are we the same way? What do we go after outside of our church lives? Who are we when we remove our religious masks? “I’m an Apostle,” we claim, yet we watch everything that the world watches, read what they read, laugh at their jokes, and follow the lives and works of their celebrities. And nothing stirs on the inside, no inner voice crying out “*thou shalt have no other gods before me...*” no conviction that “*...no flesh shall glory in His presence...*” But here in Acts 17, it tells us that Paul’s spirit was stirred in him...” when he saw the whole of Athens, like today’s society, completely immersed in worship, yet worshiping everything except God. What does the Bible mean, that “his spirit was stirred...?” The word is *paraxuno*, which means “to sharpen alongside, to exasperate, to easily provoke.” In other words Paul was HOT! There ought to be something that rises up in you, some warrior spirit that activates when you see the world *and the church* going about its fleshly, sensual, and intellectual antics. Not angry at *people*, so much, but at, in Paul’s words, “the god of this world,” who “hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

But here’s the kicker: once Paul gets through having his apostolic fit, he proceeds to go, not to the marketplace, not to the halls of academia, not to the government offices, or to the media outlets, but straight to the church. Uh oh. Oh, he dealt with the sinners on Mars Hill afterward, but in order to address this issue of idolatry, he first went to the church. Why? Because Paul knew that if ever one wants to find the source of false worship, one needs to look to the place where there ought to be true worship. The Israelites taught us that when, although they had forgotten how to really worship of God for years, once they had gotten into a tight spot with the Philistines, they went back and got the Ark of the Covenant, “that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.” (See 1 Sam. 4:3). Notice here that the Israelites said, “it” and not “He.” And if there’s one thing that will set off a true Apostle is when he sees a whole lot of “it,” and very little “He.” We seem to have a lot of that going on today. But, just as it was in Israel’s time, it does not work. Israel thought that if they could “just have

church”, they could defeat their enemies. It’s not enough to have “a form of Godliness.” What good is it to have the Ark of God without the Presence of God? So Paul went first to the church-people, the religious ones, the ones who ought to have known better. “For judgment must begin at the house of God...”

(To Be Continued...)