

## Expecting More

*Acts 2:14-47*

### **I. Scripture reading: Acts 2:14-47**

**II. Expecting More:** We're swiftly closing in on the end of 2009 and, with it, the beginning of 2010. This last year has been an important one for us as a church family, for the nation, and for the world. Many great and wonderful blessings have come our way, but many tragedies, hardships and difficulties have as well. Through it all, we have held tightly to Jesus and to our Father through His Spirit, and so we can say that we are truly blessed. I'd like to look ahead to the coming year with great expectations about what our Master has in store for us. We must begin the new year with the attitude that William Carey (missionary) expressed in these words: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." There are three key areas upon which we must focus our faith and efforts if we are to grow mightily as a congregation of disciples: our praying, thinking and doing.

### **III. Praying [Matthew 6:10; Ephesians 3:20-21]**

We are a praying church, and we have a reputation for being as much. Indeed, many people across the country and even the globe rely upon us to lift their needs up to the Father on their behalf. We have so many here who are faithful and loving in their persistent praying for the needs of others. I am personally humbled and inspired by some. How can we grow in our praying, then? Well, for one, I know that many individual disciples here must learn from Jesus how to grow more consistently, more persistently, with more faith and greater expectation that God will do what is good and right. As a whole, we must grow in our corporate focus in prayer in the work of our church. We must all be entirely committed to praying in specific terms about God's work in and through us. We must pray for one another in terms of our discipleship even as we pray for bodies to be healed and employment to be provided, etc. More of us must commit to gathering for prayer about these things. We are strong in our praying, but we can and will become stronger. How do I know? We are disciples and our Rabbi is fully capable and utterly competent to teach us. He will complete the work that He has started!

### **IV. Thinking [Acts 4:32; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Hebrews 3:1; Colossians 3:2; 1 Peter 1:13]**

Our prayers will be more focused on and specific about discipleship and kingdom needs when our thinking is more focused on and specific about them. First of all, we must be united in our thinking and understanding about our purpose, our aims and our mission. We must all agree that we are here to make disciples of Jesus Christ. We must agree in our thinking if we are to be united in our praying and doing. Our thinking must collectively be "on things above" and on Jesus Christ himself. We must become kingdom and discipleship-minded individuals so that we can become more and more kingdom and discipleship-minded as a church family. One of my most important functions as a shepherd of this flock is to present the proper focus for us all. I am committed to keeping us focused on God (our Father), Jesus (our Master), the Spirit (our Source), discipleship (our mission) and the kingdom of God (our destiny).

### **V. Doing [Matthew 28:18-20]**

Praying and thinking are incomplete without doing. Obedience to the Word of our Master is the fruit/evidence/proof of our trust, love and allegiance. We cannot be used of God to reconcile people to Himself and shape them into Christ's likeness without purposeful, dedicated and tenacious obedience. We have seen much progress in our training of disciplers this year, and I am very expectant that, if the Lord tarries and so wills, 2010 will be a tremendous year for developing disciplers within our ranks. The work of discipling people is hard, involved, demanding and personally costly, but it is why we are here and it is the most worthwhile work we have to do. Discipling, you see, is an investment in the eternal things God has given us: His Word, His Kingdom and His image-bearing creation (people).

**VI. Conclusion: A new year... together** No one among us can predict what 2010 holds, but matter what is coming, we'll face it with deep love, bold faith and great expectations together, because we are a church of Jesus Christ and are a part of the true family of God. Amen!