

## “Supernatural Faith.”

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First Christian Reformed Church, Lynden

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### Texts for the Sermon: Acts 1:12-14, 21-26

I want to reflect with you a bit on the supernatural. What is supernatural? When you think of something as supernatural, what do you think of?

Ghosts, angels, demons, UFOs, things out there in the universe, something that defies the laws of science or nature.

Actually, we should limit the word supernatural to God alone. Everything else belongs to creation. While angels and demons are spiritual and spirits, they are not supernatural like God.

But usually when we think of something as supernatural we are referring to those phenomena that operate in a manner inconsistent with or outside of what can be observed, measured or explained in natural or scientific ways.

This is the difference between believing we live in a closed universe of observable nature, or in an open universe, where there are realities that are beyond what we can see and observe, things that transcend the laws of nature.

The *Christian faith* is a supernatural faith. It is based on supernatural realities.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God became a true man, born of a virgin. He lived a perfect life doing many miracles and acts of divine providence. He died a death of atonement on a cross, was buried and rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. If you reject the supernatural you reject everything Christianity stands for.

I remember watching a video interview of a pastor by a skeptic. He asked the pastor if he actually believed that business about Jonah being swallowed by a whale. He was trying to ridicule the pastor's faith in such things. The pastor answered, "I am a Christian, yes I believe everything in the Bible is true." No shame, no embarrassment, no feeling like a fool.

To be a *Christian* is to be supernatural and believe in the supernatural. Christian living is supernatural. It is the result of a miracle of God's grace in securing our salvation through Jesus.

The supernatural Holy Spirit dwells in them, they have spiritual and therefore supernatural life and power in them, at work in them, flowing through them.

You cannot be a Christian by natural means, by natural wisdom or natural strength. You cannot have faith, you cannot forgive seven times seventy, you cannot endure suffering patiently, love unconditional, have joy in the midst of trials, without supernatural strength and wisdom.

The *Christian Church* is supernatural, made up of living stones built into a spiritual house (I Peter 2:5). To be the church we must be supernatural, we must have the Holy Spirit, we must have faith in God and trust and depend on God. Apart from Him we can do nothing.

What is going on here right now is not normal, it is not natural, it is supernatural. God Himself has stepped into our world, He has called us out of the world into the fellowship of the body of Jesus Christ, He has empowered us, He has given us His supernatural Word.

He has given us this *supernatural gift of prayer* to communicate with the supernatural.

When we pray God works, prayer unleashes the mighty power of God in our lives and in our world. Prayer taps into the power of the Holy Spirit, into the same power that created the universe, into the same power that raised Jesus from the dead.

Prayer is the power of God against Satan, sin, unbelief and faithlessness, against a hard heart, prayer is the power against every obstacle. Prayer lightens burdens, opens doors, sets us free, brings us peace and quiets raging storms.

What a privilege this gift of prayer is, to be actual instruments in the hands of the Holy Spirit to participate in what the God of the universe is purposing to do in our history. We are entering into sacred territory, we are standing on holy ground.

Glory to God we can come anytime, anywhere, with any need or concern, no matter how great or small. You can acknowledge God in any and every situation.

Our prayer Scripture for this year from Colossians 1:9-12 is a call to live supernaturally, to strive after the supernatural.

**Colossians 1:9-12** We have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father.

It is a call to know the supernatural God and the will of God.

It is a call to seek supernatural, spiritual wisdom and understanding.

It is a call to seek to live supernaturally, to live for and please God.

It is a call to seek supernatural endurance and patience.

It is a call to seek supernatural joy.

We need supernatural wisdom and strength daily to be supernatural Christians and a supernatural church. The Christian life is a supernatural life, and it is completely dependent on God's Word and prayer. It is meant to be lived on its knees, constantly tapping into the wisdom and power and strength of Jesus through His Holy Spirit.

One important reason for remembering this is because we do not wrestle with flesh and blood, but with supernatural enemies:

**Ephesians 6:12-13** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

This is why we are here this evening.

We need supernatural wisdom to know God's will for us in the elections of elders and deacons. We need supernatural strength from God to please Him and do His will and obey His Spirit. We need supernatural patience as we wait on God and seek Him.

The Christian life is supernatural and the means for living the Christian life are supernatural, Word, Spirit, Church, prayer.

**Prayer is action, taking action.**

God has ordained in Scripture that certain men be set apart as elders and deacons for the good order of the church and for the spiritual leading and caring of the souls of the flock. God means for us to seek leaders through prayerful dependence.

Scripture teaches the method for deciding is twofold (see Acts 1:21-26). **First**, by prayerfully seeking His will. Prayer is at the heart of every passage that deals with the choosing of leaders.

And **second**, by exercising godly discernment in choosing only men who know Jesus, who have a relationship with Christ and are living a life that reflects it and are living a life dependent on Him. Leaders who know Christ and follow Christ will inspire faith and trust in their followers.

Nothing is more important to the life and health and future of this church than the choosing of godly leadership. A flock must have faithful shepherds.

That's why I have called us to prayer tonight. This is the most important decision facing us as a church this year. Please continue in steadfast and earnest prayer all this week.