

**Incredible Influence**  
**June 24, 2018**  
**Lynn Haven UMC**

**Introduction**

The apostles were performing many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers were meeting regularly at the Temple in the area known as Solomon's Colonnade. But no one else dared to join them, even though all the people had high regard for them. Yet more and more people believed and were brought to the Lord—crowds of both men and women. As a result of the apostles' work, sick people were brought out into the streets on beds and mats so that Peter's shadow might fall across some of them as he went by. Crowds came from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and they were all healed. (Acts 5:12-16 NLT)

As we delve further into the world of the Incredibles in our current sermon series, we find that one thing they all had that we don't call upon in any incredible way today is their capacity to influence others. Bob and Helen Parr and their superhero children all possess the ability to impact the world around them by making use of something they were each uniquely gifted with: their superpowers. It's pretty remarkable to be able to stretch your arms out over 100 feet in length or lift an entire building with one arm! We would probably be swayed in some big ways by that sort of spectacle! We may even be persuaded to shell out \$100+ in movie tickets and snacks so our family could experience this Incredibles 2 blockbuster summer movie phenomenon. So what does any of this have to do with the kind of influence we can have over those around us? This week we will talk about the example set by the influencers of the Early Church and what we can do today that will plant seeds for Kingdom growth.

**Digging Deeper**

**Incredible influence results from...**

**Signs and WONDERS (v12).**

- Have you ever lifted your hands to the heavens and cried out, "God please just give me a sign"? Why do you think we sometimes seek a token or physical manifestation of God's will before we make an important decision? If we are seeking a sign (whatever it may be) we must be spiritually prepared to recognize it when God delivers. Hearts filled with hope and expectation are oftentimes more open to be able to hear what the Holy Spirit is trying to tell us. If we look for God in all things, guess what? In all things He can be found. So what signs and wonders are we missing because our heads are stuck in our smart phones or television sets instead of lifted in prayer? Praying for a sign and then not taking the time to step back and hear from God is like ordering a meal and leaving before it comes. You will find yourself still feeling hungry and unfulfilled.

**Community FAVOR (v13).**

- How are people moved to change? It is often said that people will not always remember what you say, but they will remember how you make them feel. So if we are living right, and by all accounts we are "good Christian people", why doesn't everyone around us want to get some of what we have? Why aren't they all flocking to our church every Sunday morning so they can be just like us? How do we effectively lead people to Christ?

- As verse 13 of Acts 5 indicates, the apostles were held in “high regard” for the many miraculous things they were doing. But it also says that no one “dared to join them”. Why do you think that is? What was holding those people back? If you saw people being healed left and right wouldn’t you want to figure out how to get some of what those apostles had?

#### **Divine GLORY (v13, 15).**

- Verse 15 of Acts 5 talks about the way people brought their sick to be in Peter’s presence in the hopes of even just his shadow falling over them. Of course this speaks to the glory of the Holy Spirit working through Peter to reveal Jesus at work in him. Can you imagine simply spending a few brief seconds in someone’s shadow and receive healing? Peter was reflecting the light of Christ with his life and actions. In the same way, when we live in Christ and He lives in us, His glory is made known through us. In what ways are your actions influencing people for Christ? Will His glory be known through you?

#### **Healing MINISTRIES (v16).**

- Acts 5 verse 14 tells us that even though they wouldn’t join the apostles, the people were influenced by what they were doing and came to believe in the Lord as a result. That’s because crowds of sick people “were all healed” (v16). So what can we do about healing needs today? You don’t have to go to medical school (unless you really want to!). The world is filled with people who are in desperate need of emotional, spiritual and physical healing. Fortunately, God has uniquely gifted each of us to be able to minister in Jesus’s name to bring healing of some kind. Luke 10:21 (NIV) tells us that Jesus was filled with joy when His disciples healed in His name. He praised God because “You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.” Perhaps if we can figure out how to revert our hearts and minds back to the simplicity of a child, like little Jack-Jack in the Incredibles, we might find ourselves becoming more keenly aware of what our unique healing super powers are.

#### **Conclusion**

Will we the people of the Lynn Haven UMC live and stay so close to Christ, that we will cast an enormous “shadow” that allows us to have an “incredible influence” on our community and world? Let us stand together as people of one heart and one mind to use our God given “super powers” so that more and more will come to believe and be brought near to the Lord.