

## Lessons of the Early New Testament Church (Acts 4-5)

Part 1 Acts 4:31-33 9.17.17

Just as God wants unity in the family, God wants unity in the church.

### Acts 4:31-33 (NIV)

<sup>31</sup> After they had prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. <sup>32</sup> And all the believers were one heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. <sup>33</sup> With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and **much grace was upon them all.**

I believe God was so gracious to the early New Testament church because God was pleased with their lives, and **anyone who saw how they LIVED and LOVED** were drawn to them.

### Four ways we can be like this early New Testament church:

#### **#1 The early church thrived because it was unified in PRAYER. (31)**

- The foundation and strength of a great church is prayer.
- **Yet, today, unfortunately, we pray as a last resort, but the early church prayed for POWER.**
- If you want God to do the supernatural in your life, you must pray consistently and confidently. (see **Hebrews 4:16**)
- We can try to do life by ourselves, but there is no substitute for trusting in God through **UNIFIED** prayer.

#### **#2 The early church thrived because it experienced a FRESH flowing of the presence of the Holy Spirit. (31)**

- Because Peter and John had just endured a time of intense persecution and all the early Christians were in constant persecution, I believe they were tired in body as well as spirit. The believers needed a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit to help them, empower them and equip them to carry on the ministry of Christ.
- We must be **CONTINUALLY** filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Any church that does not allow the presence of the Spirit is lifeless and **POWERLESS** to stand against the attack of devil and the influences of an ungodly age.
- If you want God's supernatural power in your life, you have to seek Him daily! (see **Hebrews 11:6**)

#### **#3 The early church thrived because they shared their faith with BOLDNESS. (31)**

- Notice, the Holy Spirit taught them not only *what* to speak (the word of God), but *how* to speak (with boldness).

- Sadly, two things keep us from sharing our faith.
- The first thing that keeps us from sharing our faith is **FEAR** of man.
- The second thing that keeps us from sharing our faith is **APATHY**.
- Sadly, we are either too busy, too selfish or too oblivious that we tend to **FORGET** the Great Commission (see **Matthew 28:18-20**).
- Missionary Hudson Taylor said, *The great commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.*
- **If we want to impact our world for Christ, we can't stay silent anymore.**

#### **#4 The early church thrived because it was UNIFIED. (32-33)**

- When Peter preached at Pentecost and 3000 get saved, now all these people from different parts of the world, with different beliefs, backgrounds and color and are now united as one body and **nobody wanted to go home.**
- So the early church met their need.
- If we truly want to be a great church, showing a dying world that Jesus is Lord and that He is alive and the only Way, Truth and Life—then it is absolutely essential that we show ourselves as **united** and **devoted** to each other.
- **In order to be unified we have to value PEOPLE over possessions.**
- **God doesn't want us not to own possessions, He just doesn't want our possessions to OWN us.**
- If we do not **SHARE** both the material and spiritual riches God has blessed us with, we are not good stewards.
- Not only were they one in heart, but they were also one in mind.
- All the believers were one because they believed the same thing and made a conscious decision to **SHARE** the same unified message, **Christ crucified and risen from the dead!** (see **Acts 4:8-12** and **1 Corinthians 15:3-8**)
- **For the apostles, there was burning inside to share what God had done.**
- **Acts 5:42** says, *"Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they [the apostles] never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ."*
- You and I have a **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY** to share this message.

If we want CCC to thrive, then we need everyone on board, pulling together, sharing the load.

- We must decide that we are going to **give more than our spare change** to make a difference.
- We must decide that we are going to **give more than our spare time** to be supportive, involved, and active participants in the task God has called us to.
- God blessed this early church because they went out of their way to be unified.
- **The Holy Spirit's job is to bring us into unity—and it is our responsibility to MAINTAIN that unity.**

*We can do so much more together!*