

Qualities of a Healthy Church and God's Children

Acts 6:7 ⁷ And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

❖ Recap

- **Last week we looked at the first verses of chapter 6**
 - We saw that there was a conflict in the church
 - We looked into how the conflict was solved
 - We noticed the importance of prayer and the Word
- **We once again saw that God was blessing the church**
 - And many souls were being added to its number daily
- **That is all in way of recap**
 - Because we are going to look backwards and forwards in the book this morning
 - We are going to look at a number of the Qualities that we see
 - Over and over again throughout the book...

❖ Intro

- **The Book of Acts is a Picture into the working of the early church**
- **Their church is a model for us as a church today**
 - Both individually
 - And Together as a church
- **Therefore the book is extremely helpful for us as a church**
 - It is also very convicting
 - It is a book that rebukes us as we read
- **Often we say to ourselves or to the Lord**
 - Lord, if you could just show me how to walk closer with you
 - If you could just tell me what I need to do for you
 - How can I be more effective as a Christian...
- **The whole time, He is speaking through His word.**
 - God speaks to us through His Word

❖ Outline:

- Evidence of the Holy Spirit
- Sharing the Gospel
- Generous With Their Possessions
- Praying Frequently
- Devoted to the Word of God
- Exhaustive?
 - Not Exhaustive... Simply a reiteration and exhortation to move us along the right path

❖ Evidence of the Holy Spirit

- Acts 1:4-5 ⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."
- Acts 2:3-4 ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.
- **They did everything through the power of the Holy Spirit**

- They healed, cast out demons
- They prayed in the Spirit
- They walked in the Spirit
- Their teaching and preaching was led by the Holy Spirit
- When they preached the Holy Spirit moved in the hearts of the people
 - To grant repentance and give people faith
- **They Saw the Holy Spirit as Jesus living with them**
 - **Jesus said it himself in John 14-16**
 - He made plenty of distinctions b/w Him and the Holy Spirit
 - Saying He would have to leave to the helper will come.
 - And He speaks of the Holy Spirit's ministry in helping them and
 - and teaching them and convicting the world
 - **But He also tells them, He will leave but He will come to them**
 - He and the Father would make their home within them
- **They were very sensitive to the moving of the Holy Spirit in their lives**
 - They followed Him as He led them...
 - And they were able to do so, because they knew Him
 - And they submitted themselves to Him
- **God had fulfilled His promise in Ezekiel to give His Spirit**
 - **Ezekiel 36:24-28** ²⁴ I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. ²⁸ You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses.
- **We Must Be a People Characterized by Evidences of the Holy Spirit**
 - **Signs:**
 - For the Disciples, we see a great emphasis on the great signs done through the Holy Spirit
 - They were many:
 - ◆ There were healings
 - ◆ There were demons being cast out
 - ◆ There were times of speaking in different tongues of different men
 - **Walk: Their Walk was just as important... Maybe even more so...**
 - They lived moral lives
 - They cared for the poor and needy
 - They were careful with their words
 - They cared for the people of the church
- **We need to be sensitive to the Moving of the Holy Spirit**
 - When we talk
 - When we think
 - When we see needy people
 - When we see lost people
- **When the Apostles wanted to appoint leaders for the task of dividing up distribution to the widows**
 - Acts 6: One of the attributes or qualities they were looking for
 - Filled with the Spirit...
- **Let's ask ourselves an honest question...**
 - If we needed a few people to step up into certain roles...

- And we said, we are looking for someone who is filled with the Holy Spirit...
- Their life is characterized by an obvious overflow of the Spirit
- Do we qualify?
- **Does Not Matter Who You Are**
 - This is what is great...
 - You do not have to be a life long Bible Scholar...
 - Or Christian of 20 years.... These guys were young Christians...
 - You do not have to have any pedigree...
 - **You just have to be walking filled with the Holy Spirit...**
 - You receive Him at your Salvation...
 - And you walk with Him...
 - Being careful not to quench Him... To snuff out His voice
 - Being careful not to grieve Him with your sins...
- **Are you Walking in the Spirit?**
 - **Look at what Paul says about the Spirit...**
 - After listing the workings of the flesh
 - He tells us what the fruit (singular) of the Spirit is...
 - And He lists nine separate qualities
 - But the sense is that they are to all be present in the person walking in the Spirit
 - Galatians 5:22-23 ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
 - Paul continues and says:
 - Galatians 5:25 ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.
- **What if there is little evidence of the Spirit in your Life...**
 - First, let me say this... We are not looking for perfection
 - But, We should also never be content with where we are.
 - We should always be looking to grow
 - Always being humble enough to know there is room to walk closer to God
 - **If there is little evidence, you have either**
 - 1) Quenched
 - 2) Grieved
 - 3) Absent
- **1) Quenched**
 - **1 Thess 5:19 "Do not quench the Spirit"**
 - Paul is telling them... Do not extinguish the fire of the Spirit
 - ◆ Do not put it out.... When the Spirit is moving and working in you or others
 - ◆ Do not ignore it, do not attempt to stop it
 - **I believe this occurs when the Spirit leads you to do something**
 - ◆ And you ignore it... this has happened to me
 - ◆ The Spirit says... Go speak to such and such person about me...
 - ◆ And I say... I am too busy
 - ◆ I have quenched His Spirit
 - **We say all the time...**
 - ◆ Spirit lead me... Do with me as you will
 - ◆ And He leads us... and we say: Oh, no... I did not mean it that way...
 - ◆ I did not mean that you lead me out of what is comfortable for me...
- **2) Grieve**
 - After Paul tells the Ephesians to work hard, stay away from sin, and be careful about what you say

- He tells them:
 - Ephesians 4:30-32 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
- **Sin grieves the Spirit of God...**
 - In the same way that a parent would grieve over a rebellious child
 - One that has run away from Home
 - Living in the world and doing things that are harmful to them
- **It grieves God for us to Sin**
 - It grieves His Spirit when we dwell in our sin

➤ 3) Absent

- **Meaning you do not possess the Spirit**
 - ◆ For some in here... you may be looking for the evidence of the Spirit...
 - ◆ And it is hard to find...
 - ◆ Because you have yet to have Him given to you
- **And as long as you notice that, it is ok... Just do not ignore it**
 - ◆ Because then you can begin to pray that God would save you
 - ◆ And give you His Spirit...
- **Jesus told Nicodemus He must be born again**
 - John 3:5-6 ⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
- **Peter tells the crowd that wondered what they must do to be saved**
 - To repent and be baptized and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
 - Acts 2:38 ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- **Paul explains to us that the Holy Spirit is like a down payment toward heaven**
 - The Spirit is proof of our being one of God's Children
 - Ephesians 1:13-14 ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

➤ Therefore:

- **1) If you do not have the Spirit this morning...**
 - Turn to God... Draw Near to God
 - James 4:7-8 ⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
- **2) If you are a believer, knowing you have the Spirit**
 - ◆ Maybe you wonder how to know:
 - *He is the one who convicts us of sin, teaches us the Word, brings the Word of God to our remembrance, When we are tempted He is there to lead us away, He guides us and lives out Jesus in us. He exalts Jesus in us and through us.*
 - Be sensitive to His moving
 - Pray to Him purposefully...
 - Seek to know and understand Him better
 - Be obedient to Him... no matter the cost... and see how great the results are

❖ Sharing the Gospel

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➤ We Must Be Purposeful to Share the Gospel

▪ ***It has been said: Those who fail to plan, plan to fail.***

- If you do not have some sort of plan as to how you will share the gospel with others
- Then you will never do it
- Or it will be very sporadic

➤ The disciples did not wait for someone to bring it up

- They brought it up
- We are always looking for that opening
- For someone to seem interested so it will not be awkward
- And when they do not, we just say, well it was not the will of God today

➤ The Disciples of Jesus took the gospel

- Not just the apostles... That is very clear in the book of Acts
- First we see them at the day of Pentecost preaching to thousands
- We see them in the temple
- We read of them going from house to house
- We hear about Stephen in the next part of ch 6 out among the people giving the gospel
- We read about Philip walking the roads and telling people about Jesus
- We see the church send believers out into other parts of the world to tell them about Jesus

➤ If the Preaching of the Gospel is Fundamental to the Function of the church

- Shouldn't it be fundamental in the everyday life of those that make up the church?
- That makes sense doesn't it?
- **Scriptures tell us:**
 - **Mark 16:15** ¹⁵ And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. ¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.
 - **Psalm 96:2-4** Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. ³ Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! ⁴ For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.
 - **1 Peter 3:15** but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

➤ My Suggestion to You

- That you become purposeful with the Gospel
- **There are a number of things you can do, but you will do nothing without a plan**
 - 1) You should always have a list of at least 5 people you are trying to reach
 - 2) Pray for these people
 - 3) Build relationships with these people
 - 4) Invite them to church events or to Church to hear the gospel
 - 5) Share the gospel with them
 - 6) Bring someone to share the gospel with them
- **Also:**
 - **Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading you to certain people you randomly encounter**
 - ◆ Because it is not random
 - ◆ Listen to the Spirit, He is God...
 - ◆ He knows what He is doing, He knows what is best for you
 - ◆ So listen to Him

- **How does it feel:**
 - ◆ When you are trying to get your kids to do something that is good for them
 - ◆ But they will not...
 - ◆ It is obvious they do not trust you enough to do it
- **We are showing God we do not trust His wisdom**
 - ◆ When we are not obedient to Him

➤ **Sharing the Gospel:**

- So, let me give you a way to share the Gospel.
- If anyone is interested in getting a copy to study so they will be prepared, please speak to me
- **There are a number of ways, and a number of verses you can use to share the gospel**
 - Just make sure you explain it rightly
 - **And every person is different.**
 - ◆ When you are prepared you may find the Holy Spirit leading you in different ways
 - ◆ Each and every time
 - ◆ And drawing to your mind different verses and stories throughout the Bible
 - ◆ To draw that person to Jesus
- **Remember You have the Help of the Holy Spirit**
 - **Gospel Summary**

❖ **Generous With Their Possessions**

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❖ **Praying Frequently**

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❖ **Devoted to the Word of God**

- M
- M

❖ **Invitation**