

“How the First Century church Grew”

Acts 9:31

Introduction

- I. It is extremely encouraging to read of the growth that the church experienced in the first century (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7).
- II. What were the reasons that the church grew so rapidly and largely?
- III. What can we do to help the church grow during our lifetimes?

Discussion

- I. What were the reasons that the church grew so rapidly and largely?
 - A. Persecution and dispersion led to brethren being “scattered” (Acts 8:1-4).
 - B. Relative rest and peace (Acts 9:31).
 1. We should certainly strive to be peaceful people because our Lord is the “Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).
 2. Jesus provided a way for their to be peace amongst Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:13-15; 1 John 1:6-7; John 13:34-35).
 3. That which the first century church was to preach and teach is known as “the gospel of peace” (Acts 10:36).
 4. Obedience to “the gospel of peace” brings ultimate peace with God (Acts 2:38, 41, 47; [cf. Isa. 59:1-2 and 1 John 1:5-6]; Rom. 5:1, 9-10; Col. 1:20-22).
 5. The world should see us as loving, peaceful brethren.
 - C. Edification (building up one another).
 1. Encouragement from fellow brethren is so vital to the growth of the church (Eph. 4:11-12, 16, 29; Rom. 14:19).
 2. There are ways that we can edify one another.
 - a. Attend all Bible classes and worship services (Heb. 10:25).
 - b. Make sure that teachers and preachers are prepared to give sound doctrine (James 3:1; 2 Tim. 4:1-2; Eph. 4:15; Acts 20:27).
 - D. “Walking in the fear of the Lord”
 1. This is primary for children of God (Eccl. 12:13).
 2. This will demonstrate a difference between the church and the world (Prov. 1:7; 16:6).
 3. The first century church was encouraged to serve God this way (Heb. 12:28; Phil. 2:12-13).
 - E. “Comfort of the Holy Ghost”
 1. Today, there are no miraculous abilities given to men by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 13:8ff).
 2. We receive comfort from the Holy Spirit through the Word of God (2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- II. What can we do to help the church grow in our lifetimes?
 - A. Implement the methods of the first century church.
 - B. Sin is still sin and the world needs the Gospel (Rom. 1:16; cf. Acts 8:4; cf. 2 Cor. 4:13).
 - C. Plant the seed and keep watering (1 Cor. 3:6).
 - D. Bring others to Christ (John 1:41-42)

Conclusion

- I. The church grew in the first century.
- II. The church can still grow in the twenty first century.

