

Restoring New Testament Evangelism

Lesson compiled by Ken McDaniel.

Introduction:

- Rapid growth of early church.
 - Acts 2:38
 - Acts 2:47
 - Acts 4:4
 - Acts 5:14
 - Acts 5:14
 - Acts 6:1
 - Acts 6:7
 - Acts 9:31
 - Acts 11:21
 - Acts 14:1
 - Acts 16:4-5
 - Acts 17:4
 - Acts 18:8
- Why did they experience such phenomenal growth?
- Is it possible for us to grow as they did?
- Are we pleased with our growth? Do you think God is pleased with our growth?
- If we could do the same things they did, if we could duplicate exactly what they did, could we grow in a similar way?
- What are some of the things we cannot duplicate?
- What are some of the things they did that we could do?
- If we duplicate what they did, could we restore New Testament evangelism?
- This is the focus of this lesson - to examine the early church and put into practice all that is possible for us today. If we do, we should be able to help many more people to be saved and see the Lord's church grow.

Great Grace Was Upon Them All

One of the characteristics of the early church was that great grace was upon them.

Great, megas: great, exceeding, abundant, large. Used in reference to mass and weight, of number and quantity, of span such as age. But here it is used in regard to intensity or degree.

Grace, charis: used in a wide variety of senses, basically, grace, favor, kindness. Here it relates the idea of God's pleasure with them resulting in goodwill, loving-kindness, acts of favor (blessings) being bestowed upon them.

Acts 4:33 – His grace was upon them. He not only viewed them with grace, but His grace was directed toward them. It rested on them. They were recipients of His intense grace.

Luke 2:40 – Similar phrase used to speak of God's favor upon Christ.

James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5 – It is something God actively bestows upon people.

2 Peter 3:18 – We can, and are expected, to grow in it.

Acts 11:23 – God's grace does rest upon congregations today and it is detectable.

Titus 2:11 – It brings salvation; Ephesians 1:6-7, 2:5.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 – It results in devotion and activity.

Colossians 3:16 – It motivates praise and thanksgiving.

God Was with Them

Another characteristic is that God was with them.

Acts 11:19-21 – The hand of the Lord was with them...

Hand – a symbol of God's active and personal involvement in human affairs (Ex. 16:3, 1 Samuel 5:6, Ezra 7:27-28)

Luke 1:66 – Similar to passage concerning John the Baptist.

Mark 16:19-20 – Worked with the apostles.

Matthew 28:18-20 – Promised to be with His disciples always.

Is it possible for the hand of the Lord to be with us today?

How might He help us?

What things might He do in our evangelistic work?

We need God with us. Without Him we can nothing – nothing of true value.

Psalm 127:1 – “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain...”

They Devoted Themselves to the Lord

Acts 2:42 – They devoted themselves to all things spiritual.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 – They gave themselves to the Lord.

Acts 11:23 – They purposed to cleave to Him.

Galatians 2:20 – When one becomes a Christian, he undergoes a radical change in his thinking. He dies to himself and gives his life to the Lord (see also Romans 6:3-4, Matthew 16:24-27, Philippians 3:8, Colossians 3:1-3, Matthew 6:33).

Acts 5:40-41 – Rejoiced to suffer for Christ.

They Were United

Acts 4:32 – They were of one heart and one soul.

Acts 2:44-46 – They were all together and had all things in common.

Acts 5:12 – They were all with one accord (a compounding of two words meaning to be together, all in one place, with the element of passion).

John 17:11 – Jesus wants us to be one as He and the Father are one.

John 17:20-23 – It is through this unity that the world is convinced that Jesus is truly the Son of God.

Ephesians 4:1-3 – We must take this command extremely seriously. We must do all to achieve and maintain unity among us.

Romans 12:3-5 – We must guard our attitudes (see also 1 Corinthians 12:12ff)

They Worked Daily

Acts 5:42 – Daily... they did not cease teaching.

Acts 8:4 – They went everywhere preaching the word.

Acts 20:18-20 – “taught publicly and from house to house.”

Titus 2:14 – God designed that we be zealous for good works.

Mark 16:15 – Go into all the world...

Revelation 14:13 – Rest when we die.

They Prayed Earnestly

Acts 4:23ff – Joined together in prayer for evangelistic efforts. (see Acts 1:14, 12:5,12, 21:5 for group prayer).

Matthew 9:37-38 – Pray for laborers.

Ephesians 6:18-20 – Paul requested prayer for his evangelistic work.

Colossians 4:2-4 – Pray for open door.

Philippians 4:6 – We are to bring everything to God in prayer.

James 5:16-18 – He will hear. Prayer is effective.

They Were Knowledgeable/Prepared

Acts 8:4 – The early Christians were prepared and able to go preaching the word.

1 Peter 3:15 – Likewise we are to be able to give an answer.

2 Peter 3:18 – We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord.

Bold and Courageous

Acts 4:13 – Saw the boldness of Peter and John (see vv. 5-12).

Acts 4:20 – Cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard (discuss impact of conviction).

Acts 5:29 – Obey God rather than man.

Acts 20:22-24 – Paul likewise moved forward knowing dangers awaited him.

Ezekiel 3:17 – We have been given a responsibility. God has message that He wants all the world to hear, and like God’s prophets of old, we are watchmen.

Ephesians 4:15 – We must speak the truth in love.

2 Timothy 2:7-8 – God has given us a spirit power. We must preach!

They Were Respected

Acts 2:47 – They were genuine, and the people perceived it (see also Acts 5:13).

One of the most devastating blows to Christianity has been the hypocritical lives of those claiming to be Christians.

We are to be holy as our God is holy.

We are to put His kingdom first.

We are to love the truth and teach it only.

The outsiders of the first century saw that this was the real thing, and they held them in high respect.

Conclusion:

It is entirely possible to restore New Testament evangelism.

God has given us the early church as an example to follow.

If we will walk faithfully with God, prepare ourselves as they did, reach out and courageously share, teach, and preach the word of God, we should see a people leaving lives of sin and being washed in the blood of Christ.

God can and will use us. Will we give ourselves in His service?