

The Necessities of Evangelism

INTRODUCTION.

- A. In the beginning of the church, the growth of the church was staggering.
 - 1. On the day the church was established, 3000 lost souls were converted to Christ. (Acts 2:41)
 - 2. Some days following the establishment of the church, the number of lost souls converted was 5000. (Acts 4:4)
 - 3. According to Acts 5:14, "multitudes of both men and women" were added to the church. (Acts 5:14)
 - 4. In Acts 6:1 we read that the "number of the disciples was multiplied."
 - 5. Nearly 30 years after the church of Christ began, the gospel had spread to all the known world. (Colossians 1:6,23)
- B. Why did the first century grow so rapidly? Let us first answer question this by showing what the first century church did not use to help their growth. The church grew...
 - 1. without mailing out bulletins to its members.
 - 2. without mailing out bulletins to the lost.
 - 3. without mailing out Bible correspondence courses.
 - 4. without publishing articles in the local newspaper.
 - 5. without relying solely upon gospel meetings to reach the lost.
- C. The question then must be asked, "What was the secret to church growth in the first century?" Consider the five following reasons:
 - 1. The members of the church were totally committed to the truth.
 - 2. The members of the church lived the truth in their lives.
 - 3. The members of the church shared the truth with the lost in a one on one fashion.
 - 4. The members of the church went everywhere preaching the Word. (cf. Acts 8:4)
 - 5. The members of the church possessed the same purpose as held by Jesus: To

seek and save the lost. (cf. Luke 19:10)

- D. If we want the church to grow as it did in the first century, then we must be willing to work as the Christians did in the first century.
- E. The first step towards church growth is to understand the necessity of saving souls. It is the purpose of this lesson to show the necessities required in order to save souls. Let us first begin by showing the statements regarding the importance of saving souls.
- F. Before we begin, let us consider some statements on saving souls.
 - 1. *“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.”* (Proverbs 11:30, NKJV)
 - 2. *“Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.”* (Daniel 12:3, NKJV)
 - 3. *“When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in this iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. “Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.”* (Ezekiel 3:18-19, NKJV)
 - 4. *“Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”* (James 5:19-20, NKJV)

I. NECESSITIES TO SAVING SOULS: GENUINE LOVE.

- A. There are two qualities needed by every Christian in order to begin to save souls.
 - 1. Genuine Love for the Lost. Jesus had compassion on those who were “as sheep not having a shepherd.” (Mark 6:34) We too must have compassion and love for the lost. True love for the lost will move us to want to help save them from eternal destruction.
 - 2. Genuine Love for the Members. We must have genuine love for each other. (Ephesians 4:1-3, 31-32) Jesus said, *“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”* (John 13:35, NKJV)
- B. If we have genuine love for both the lost and for our members, then souls will be saved and the church will grow.

II. NECESSITIES TO SAVING SOULS: EVANGELISTIC EFFORT.

- A. After we have the necessary love and compassion for the lost, we must be driven to evangelistic effort. That is to say, we must get busy teaching the lost.
 - 1. There is a job to be done and we must do it. We must do as Jesus told His disciples, *“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!”* (John 4:35, NKJV)
 - 2. There are lost souls whom we must try to turn to Jesus Christ. This turning or converting will not take place if we do not put forth an evangelistic effort.
 - 3. The apostle Paul said that he planted and Apollos watered. (I Corinthians 3:6) We must do our part to save souls.
- B. Without this evangelistic effort, the church would not have grown during the first century. Thankfully, Christians worked and souls were saved.
- C. There are at least two New Testament passages which teach that God expects Christians to grow to a point where they can teach the lost.
 - 1. Paul wrote to Timothy, *“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”* (II Timothy 2:2, NKJV)
 - 2. The Hebrew writer rebuked the recipients of the letter, saying, *“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.”* (Hebrews 5:12, NKJV)
- D. Evangelistic effort helps the local church to grow and excel in the work of the Lord. Without evangelistic effort, the local church will eventually die or at best become a fruitless plant.
 - 1. A local church will grow through one of three different methods.
 - a. Direct conversion of the lost.
 - b. Conversion of the children of existing members.
 - c. Other Christians moving in and joining the work of that local congregation.
 - 2. A local church will wither because of one of three different problems.
 - a. Members stop converting of the lost.
 - b. Members move away or move their membership to another church.
 - c. Members fall away from the Lord.

3. Of the growth methods and the problems that cause withering, the most crucial is that of converting the lost.
 - a. If the local church is active in trying to convert the lost, no matter who moves away or falls away, there will always be a growing and working church.
 - b. However, if the local church is not active in trying to convert the lost, then the church will eventually wither as people move away or fall away from the Lord.

III. NECESSITIES TO SAVING SOULS: PERSONAL GROWTH.

- A. As Christians, we are commanded to grow. Peter wrote, "*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*" (I Peter 2:2) Growth is a command.
- B. We must grow in faith and add to that faith. (II Peter 1:5-8)
 1. We must add to our faith virtue. (Virtue is excellence of character and courage.)
 2. We must add to our virtue knowledge. (Knowledge is the ability to discern through the right understanding which is gained through the Word of God.)
 3. We must add to our knowledge self-control. (Self-control is the ability to control one's life including the passions and appetites of that life.)
 4. We must add to our self-control perseverance. (Perseverance is the ability to endure patiently the various misfortunes, troubles, trials, and difficulties faced by children of God.)
 5. We must add to our perseverance godliness. (Godliness is the attitude and the way of life lived by those who have true reverence and piety towards God and His Word.)
 6. We must add to our godliness brotherly kindness. (Brotherly kindness is that affection and care shown to those of like precious faith.)
 7. We must add to our brotherly kindness love. (This love is a godly love which is not based upon emotions. This love is to be had for all mankind, both sinner and saved.)
 8. If we add all of the above to our faith, then we "will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (II Peter 1:8)
- C. We must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (II Peter 3:18)
 1. We must grow in the grace of Jesus or the favor of Jesus. How is this done?

By having enough faith in Jesus to turn to His Word and follow it.

2. We must grow in the knowledge of Jesus. When we grow in the knowledge of Jesus, we learn . . .
 - a. His purpose for coming to this earth - to seek and save the lost. (Luke 19:10)
 - b. That His desire for all man is that they repent and not perish. (II Peter 3:9)
 - c. That He paid the price so that man could be saved. (I Corinthians 7:22-23; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:14)
 - d. His teachings. (Matthew 28:18-20) Knowing Jesus' teachings will help us to equip those who would come to the Lord.
 - e. About His death, burial, and resurrection. Because of Jesus' resurrection, we have hope of being resurrected. (I Corinthians 15:12-20)
3. By growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus, we are always reminded of what the Lord desires us to do. We are reminded of our duty to seek and to save the lost.
4. With this knowledge in our minds and our lives, we will have the proper understanding of how and why we are to be teaching the lost.

IV. NECESSITIES TO SAVING SOULS: CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

- A. While church growth begins with individual growth, there are a few responsibilities which the local congregation must embrace and strive to fulfill. (Ephesians 4:11-16)
- B. The members of the local church must be equipped for the work of the ministry. (Ephesians 4:12)
 1. God has given the church everything it needs to equip its members for the work for the ministry. (vs 11)
 2. The local church must make certain that the members are provided with the necessary teaching and edification.
- C. The members of the local church must come to the "unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God." (Ephesians 4:13)
 1. This unity and knowledge can only be obtained through intense study of God's Holy Word.
 2. As we study and grow, we will become perfect or complete, coming "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (cf. II Timothy 3:16,17)

3. As this happens, the members will become better equipped to teach the lost.
- D. The members of the local church must recognize their responsibility to encourage every part or member to do its (his) share. (Ephesians 4:16)
1. When everyone does their part, there will be “growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” (vs 16)
 2. Too often Christians become spectators. They would much rather sit back, watch, and complain, instead of taking an active part in the “game.”
 3. The members of the local churches during the first century upheld their “parts.”
 - a. They prayed to God.
 - b. They sacrificed of their time, their possessions, and their lives in the name of Christ.
 - c. They remained steadfast to Christ and His Word.
 - d. They loved each other.
 - e. They defended the truth against error. They took a stand on what the Word of God says is Truth.
 - f. They spread the Gospel of Christ by taking it to a lost and sinful world.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Church growth is vital because it comes through the process of saving souls and self-growth.
- B. If a local church is teaching, growing, and remaining strong, then the church is functioning as Christ intended.
- C. If a local church is not growing due to its own faults, then the congregation as a whole, as well as each member individually, must address the problem and make the necessary changes.
- D. The lost of the world need us to take the gospel to them and to convert them to the Lord and Savior. Let us all work together towards that end.

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