

THEY TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN!

Who Were These Guys? – Part Three

Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

Acts 4:13

WHAT WAS THEIR *CHURCH LIFE* LIKE?

A. Vibrant, Exciting, and full of Vitality:

Love, Sharing, Mutual Commitment to each other

And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:44-47

And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.

Acts 4:32-35

“Fear” and “Comfort”

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the (1) fear of the Lord and in the (2) comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Acts 9:31

Sensitivity to the Lord’s moving in their midst:

Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him, saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.”

The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord; for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord.

Acts 11:1-3, 18, 22-24

Summary

The church began in power, moved in power, and moved just as long as she had power. When she no longer had power, she dug for safety.

But her blessings were like manna. When they tried to keep it overnight, it bred worms and stank. So we have monasticism, scholasticism, institutionalism— all indicative of one thing: absence of spiritual power. In church history every return to the New Testament has been marked by a new advance somewhere, fresh proclamation of the gospel and an upsurge in missionary zeal.

J.B. Phillips

B. Mission, yes! Organization, no!

Tangible, unparalleled growth:

1. 11 men – (Acts 1:13)
2. 120 – (Acts 1:15)
3. 3,000 souls – (Acts 2:41)
4. Lord was adding to their number daily – (Acts 2:47)
5. 5,000 men – (Acts 4:4)
6. Multitudes of men and women were constantly added – (Acts 5:14)
7. Disciples were increasing in number – (Acts 6:1)
8. Great number of priests becoming obedient to the faith – (Acts 6:7)
9. Continued to increase – (Acts 9:31)

The powerful, enthusiastic witness of the early Church:

1. Jerusalem
2. Judea and Samaria – (Acts 8:1)
3. Judea, Galilee, and Samaria – (Acts 9:31)
4. Cornelius, a God-fearing Gentile – (Acts 10:48)
5. Antioch, a church of Jewish and Gentile origin – (Acts 11:19-21)
6. Gospel taken to the Gentiles – (Acts 13:46-49)
7. Church with Gentile leadership – (Acts 14:23)

C. Fellowship and Unity:

1. Then they returned to Jerusalem – (Acts 1:12)
2. These all with one mind – (Acts 1:14)
3. They were all together in one place – (Acts 2:1)
4. All those who believed were together – (Acts 2:43)
5. Day by day continuing with one mind – (Acts 2:46)
6. They lifted up their voice to God with one accord – (Acts 4:24)
7. Those who believed were of one heart and soul – (Acts 4:32)
8. They were all with one accord in Solomon's portico – (Acts 5:12)

D. The joy of non-titled ministry:

1. Administration – (Acts 6:1-6)
2. Prophecy – (Acts 11:27-28)
3. Leadership – (Acts 13:1)
4. Evangelism – (Acts 8:4-5)
5. Discipleship and Training – (Acts 11:25-26)
6. Feeding the poor and needy – (Acts 6:1)
7. Providing clothes to those in need – (Acts 9:36)
8. Visiting – (Acts 9:10)
9. Intercessory prayer – (Acts 12:5)
10. Worship and fasting – (Acts 13:2)

Summary

The church that is willing to die to worldly standards will know the power of Christ's resurrection. It may be envied for its depth of loving relationships, or for its spontaneous joy. It may be hated and persecuted for its revolutionary lifestyle, exposing the hollow values and destructive selfishness of the society it seeks to serve: but it certainly cannot be ignored.

J.B. Phillips