

GOD'S CHANGING CHURCH

Acts 6:1-7

INTRODUCTION: Someone has said "The only permanent thing in life is change." So, in its 2,000-year history how much has the church of Jesus Christ changed? The word "church" as used in the Bible is never used in reference to a building or location, or a particular denomination, or to a particular location. The word "church" means literally "the called-out ones." Matthew 18:20. The early church grew explosively: Acts 2:41; Acts 2:47; Acts 4:4; Acts 6:7; Acts 28:28-31. What was it about the early church that caused it to grow so fast? Acts 2:41-42; Acts 4:4; Acts 6:7.

I. WHAT DREW PEOPLE TO THE EARLY CHURCH?

As we have said the early church grew by leaps and bounds. But with that early growth of not just Jews but also of gentiles in the church an event happened that if not handled well could have stopped that growth. After the gentiles were added to the church the need of the widows of the gentiles were being ignored while the Hebrew widows were being well cared for by the church. The early church made a decision that saved the growth of the church and the progress of the Christian faith: Acts 6:1-2. The apostles knew that if they stopped preaching the Word of God to take care of the problem in the church the church would stop growing: Acts 6:3-7. It was the spread of God's Word that made the church grow!

II. WE MUST EMPHASIZE THE PRIORITY OF GOD'S WORD!

Acts 6:7: As the Word of God increased so did the church! As people heard the Word of God, the Word of God does its job of winning people to Christ: Isaiah 55:11. There are lots of good things we can do with our time and resources but we must keep the teaching of God's Word as of first importance! Acts 6:2; Acts 6:7. We like the early apostles must not get side tracked by the mistake of prioritizing anything above the preaching of God's Word. The preaching of the Word of God is fundamental to the true worship of God.

III. WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE THE PREACHING OF GOD'S WORD!

When the Word of God is prioritized wonderful things happen in the church of God: Acts 6:7. People weren't just being added to the church; people were being multiplied to the early church! The people that heard the preaching of God's Word became disciples of Jesus Christ. Each one of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ can be used of God to bring others to Jesus Christ and to train them to also become disciples of Jesus Christ.

IV. WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE THE PRACTICE OF GOD'S WORD!

The last part of Acts 6:7 is very exciting: "and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." No other group of people was so dead set against the proclamation of Jesus Christ than the Jewish priest. But now, through the faithful preaching of God's Word many of the priests were coming to saving faith of Jesus Christ. These priest, because of the faithful preaching of God's Word were giving up their Jewish religion for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is not just preaching that changes lives; it is the preaching of God's Word that changes lives. Hebrews 4:12. The number one magnet that every Christian and every church should use is still the Word of God.