

Acts 2:41-47

Last week, as we looked at the latter part of Luke 2, we learned that even Jesus had to grow.

1. We saw that Jesus grew in wisdom, in stature, in favor with God, and in favor with men.
2. If Jesus had to grow, then obviously we all have room to grow as well.

As we get into a new year, we want to remind you of the vision of the church and challenge you to take one more step in your growth by putting before you again this year, the plus 1 challenge.

1. We not only want to challenge you in a sermon
2. We want to help you through the year
3. That is why we have put together, not only the ministry guide insert, but a website devoted to helping you take the next step in your spiritual walk: plusonechallenge.com
 - a. helps page
 - b. FB page
 - c. Sign up to get an email each week...visitors slip?

As we look at our text this morning, we are reminded of 7 things characterized the early church...7 things that we want to characterize us.

I. Scripture Intake v42a

2 Tim 3:16-17 *16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

1. That the man of God may be adequate...enough...sufficient
2. Scripture is sufficient to make us sufficient...equipped for every good work.
3. We have referred to this as Maturing in the Word

Plus 1...

1. **I will strive to read my Bible each day this week**
 - a. Last year we just said strive to read my Bible each day and suggested a Bible reading plan that took you through the Bible in a year.
 - b. We can get behind, get bogged, down, give up and think we have to wait until January
 - c. His mercies are new each morning...let's take it a week at time this year!
2. **I will memorize 1 Scripture passage this week**
 - a. We are not going to give you a Scripture...we just want to challenge you to consider
 - b. D groups can decide, maybe Awana verses, or you have a personal plan (some tips)
3. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God...give Him a sword to draw!
 - a. Take in the word
 - b. Memorize it.

II. Fellowship v42b, 46

Hebrews 10:23-25 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*

1. Stimulate one another to love and good works...how? By not forsaking our own assembling together.
2. Did you know that non-attendance is sin?
 - a. We have an inactive role...in essence saying....we have a role for people who choose to say they are Christians and part of the church, and yet live in habitual sin: the sin of non-attendance.
 - b. What if we had, not only an inactive role, but an adulterer role, a murderer role, a liar role, etc.?
3. We need to take church attendance, and fellowship with one another corporately, more seriously
 - a. That is why we added to our Plus 1 challenge this year: **I will be faithful to assemble with the body for worship this week**
 - b. When church attendance is viewed as optional and the consistency of our involvement depends upon a game, if the deer are moving, if the fish are biting, or if I just don't want to get out of bed, it says something about what value we put on fellowship and obeying the clear teaching of Scripture.
 - c. Let us not treat church attendance like spiritual bonus points, but part of the bare minimum of what it means to follow Christ.
4. We have referred to this as meaningful fellowship

Plus 1

1. **I will be faithful to assemble with the body for worship this week**
2. **I will host one family that I do not know well in my home this quarter**

III. Prayer v42c

1 Timothy 2:8 *Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.*

1. **I will join the church family in praying through this week's prayer guide**
 - a. This can really be a treasure for you to utilize if you will
 - b. This is a guide to help you know how you can pray...and how you can pray with others in the congregation
2. Use the prayer guide in your Sunday school classes
3. Use it in your d-group, at home, and in your other gatherings.

We have referred to this as making supplication.

IV. Tangible Impact v43

Matthew 25

1. We have called this miracles performed.
2. Be the miracle...we will talk more about this next week.

V. Serving one another v44-45

Acts 4:32-35

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. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. 34 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 35 and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.

Acts 6:1-7

We have referred to this as Ministry to the Body.

1. If you are part of this body...you have needs that need to be met
2. If you are part of this body...you have gifts and abilities and experiences that can meet needs.

VI. Worship v47

Romans 12:1-2 *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

We have referred to it as magnifying God.

1. **I will be faithful to assemble with the body for worship this week**
2. **I will practice family worship at least once this week.**
3. **I will give generously and sacrificially this week.**

VII. Missions, Evangelism, and Disciple making v47

Acts 1:8 *but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*

Acts 13:1-3 *Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*

We are going to come back to this one next Sunday and really flesh it out. Until then....

1. **I will be intentional about being discipled and making disciples this week**
2. **I will invite 1 person to church this week**
3. **I will participate in Who's Your one? this year**
4. **I will participate in at least one mission effort this year**

Conclusion:

1. Take one step at a time in your growth...and in being a part of the vision of the church
2. Some of you need to take the first step!
 - a. If you look back up at Acts 2:41 you will see that there was an assumption that these people were saved!!!
 - b. Verse 41
 - c. Are you saved? Have you been born again? Do you need to take that first step this morning? GOSPEL