

Introduction and Review

- I. The Company of God vs. 23-
 - A. "Fellows" [Gen. 15:9] Literally "their own." Idio: idiosyncrasies; ideology; the church is a fellowship of likeminded people; those who are committed to the teachings of the apostles and Jesus Christ.
 - B. As a minimum; to be a church and not just worldly club, the church must have:
 1. A confession of faith. Jesus said we are to confess Him; the church is built upon the apostles and prophets; Christ being the chief stone of the corner. The ideas of the apostles and prophets. Not just a mob. They were in one accord.
 2. An ethical bond: they practiced what they preached. We agree on how we are to live and treat one another; a method for solving disputes about life and doctrine.
 3. Carrying the cross: not ashamed to suffer for Christ and His doctrine. The fellowship of the Gospel is broken when people try to be men pleasers and satisfy everybody, for this denies the reality of sin and error. The church is not a mutual admiration society.
- II. The Providence of God: They praised God for directing their lives. Things had happened according to the will of the Triune God. They quote from Psalm 2; in fact we have in Acts the key to the interpretation of Psalm 2.
 - A. The Creator: vs. 24-27; the inspiration of Scripture; Scripture interpreted what they had experienced. Jesus is the Christ, anointed one.
 - B. The Son: vs. 27-28; Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God; God's holy child. The kings only did what God ordained that they would do.
 - C. The Holy Spirit: vs. 29-31 They prayed for boldness to speak God's word. They left the threatenings to God. God affirmed that He heard their prayers. These things do not need to be repeated: we have the New Testament and can rely on the inspired Scriptures.
- III. The Grace of God vs. 32-37 The unity of the church.
 - A. Unity of speaking the word of God. Vs. 32
 - B. Unity of oneness of heart and soul. Vs. 32, 33 the witness of the Apostles. They were totally committed. Not of two minds; not halting between two, with one foot out the door. Committed to each other and the spreading of the Gospel.
 - C. Unity of worship: they served God and not Mammon. 32, 34 Several things to say about the "communism" of the early church.
 1. It was voluntary; not coerced or taxed by government. See chapter 5.
 2. It was temporary in Jerusalem and nowhere else. Limited in time and place. Jerusalem was to be destroyed; they were commissioned to spread the Gospel. This did not replace the 8th commandment which establishes private ownership of property, or the instructions of scripture, especially proverbs, about hard work, frugality, taking care of your own family and business, etc.

3. It did not enrich the apostles and leaders. The apostles did not go build rich mansions. The money went to the needy and to support the Gospel. Our catechism says this is an important part of Sabbath Keeping: HC

Q103: What does God require in the fourth Commandment?

A103: In the first place, God wills that the ministry of the Gospel and schools be maintained,[1] and that I, especially on the day of rest, diligently attend church [2] to learn the Word of God,[3] to use the holy sacraments,[4] to call publicly upon the Lord,[5] and to give Christian alms.[6] In the second place, that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works, allow the Lord to work in me by His Spirit, and thus begin in this life the everlasting sabbath.[7]

1. Titus. 1:5; I Tim. 3:14-15; 4:13-14; 5:17; I Cor. 9:11, 13-14
 2. II Tim. 2:2, 15; Psa. 40:10-11; 68:26; Acts 2:42, 46
 3. I Cor. 14:19, 29, 31
 4. I Cor. 11:33
 5. I Tim. 2:1-2, 8-10; I Cor. 14:16
 6. I Cor. 16:2
 7. Isa. 66:23; Gal. 6:6; Acts 20:7; Heb. 4:9-10
4. It involved perhaps the excess of riches: vs. 34
 5. It happened and was written for our edification: the church would not be built upon greed and love of riches and mammon. It was a recognition that all that they had belonged to God; not to each other, but to God and His work.
 6. The 4th and 10 commandments would be taken seriously. You cannot keep the Sabbath if your heart is filled with love of the world: Greed destroys the Gospel.
 7. So much evil has come from a wrong concept; monks and nuns would “abandon” everything and go to monasteries richly endowed by rich men, and live in idleness, gluttony, and pretending that they were denying themselves and following Christ.
 8. From that temporary and local practice, the church would learn that the biblical model is for each man to use the things that he has for the good of Gospel, relief of sufferings, using good stewardship of the things that belong to God.
 - a. Work so you have something to give; increase your ability to earn; not just to please yourself, but to do some good. Paul says, “I am debtor...”
 - b. Use the wealth that you gain by work sensibly and unselfishly. Give according to God’s blessing
 - (1). Not a seen need only.
 - (2). Not to be seen of men.
 - (3). As God has blessed you and let not your left hand know what your right hand does. Not standing on the corner blowing the trumpet to be seen of men.

Application:

1. The Bible must be taken as a whole, not just piece and parts.
2. The love of the world is incompatible with love for God, and John tells us. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world,

the love of the father is not in him.” The church demonstrated that very early, and although the lesson has been widely misunderstood and applied, yet the principle remains: from the words of our Lord and the apostles: you cannot serve God and mammon.

3. The proper worship and love of God involves the right use of the things of the world; they are not to be loved and worshipped, but are to be used in terms of the love of God, the love of our fellow servants, and the maintaining of churches and schools for the ministry of the Gospel.

May God bless you. Amen and Amen.