

- I) **V47 PRAISING GOD:** And having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church
 - a) Today we conclude our series on the question: What is the Church
 - 1) As we have been going through this passage, we have seen certain qualities of the church
 - 2) The church was made up of born again believers who hungered for God's word, loved fellowship, openly identified with Jesus through baptism, enjoyed the Lord's supper regularly, loved to pray, continuously experienced the power and presence of God, were generous towards those in need, enjoyed formal times of teaching and worship as well as informal times of gathering, and who were filled with joy and had simplicity of heart

- II) **GOD:** Was truly moving through them and was moving in them
 - a) The church was a great group of people enjoying the presence of the Lord
 - 1) The fruit of this fellowship was a tremendous amount of gladness (joy)
 - 2) Ps 122:1 *I was glad* when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the LORD".

- III) **THIS JOY:** Was the fruit of being in the True Vine, Jesus (Jn 15:5)
 - a) Ps 144:15 Happy ('Esher, blessed) are the people whose God is the LORD!
 - b) Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ
 - c) Ps 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is fullness of joy*; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

- IV) **JOY:** Is not the same thing as happiness, because happiness relies on outward circumstances
 - a) JOY: Is something God gives, no matter what the circumstances and is from the inside
 - 1) Paul could have joy, even while in a Philippian prison cell
 - 2) Ac 16:25 At midnight Paul and Silas were *praying* and *signing hymns* to God, and the prisoners were listening to them

- V) **THE CHURCH:** Had *great joy* because they had entered into fellowship with God
 - a) REMEMBER: They had gladly received God's word and had been saved
 - 1) Jer 15:16 Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.
 - 2) Ps 1:1-3 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

- VI) **THE CHURCH:** Was overflowing with the joy of the Lord
 - a) It also was in *one accord*, or of one heart
 - 1) They had unity because their eyes were firmly on the Lord
 - 2) Ps 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!
 - 3) Pr 20:3 It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can start a quarrel.

- VII) **THE HOLY SPIRIT:** Had baptized them into one body, and they had *a heart of unity*
 - a) The unity of the Spirit was something they enjoyed, and something that they were to guard
 - 1) Eph 4:1-3 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace

- I) **AS A YOUNG CHRISTIAN:** I was encouraged to do my best to enjoy the unity of the Spirit
 - a) An early Christian group called Love Song even sang about living in unity
 - 1) Tommy Coomes wrote *Let us be one in You*

- II) Lord, don't let me strive against my brother I'm so tired of it, don't want to do it no more
Lord, don't let us fight against each other: Let us be one in you

Lord, give us love for one another: In what we say, yes, in what we do
Lord, teach us to build up one another: Let us be one in you

For your sake let us learn to wait on the Spirit's move
We know that the hour is so late and you'll be coming soon: Let us be one in you Let us be one

Lord, let us rest up in your Spirit: Knowing full well that we're in your hands
Oh, God, open up our hearts so we can hear it: Let us be one in you Let us be one

- III) **V46 THIS UNITY IN JESUS:** Made their walks smooth and undisturbed, uncluttered (simplicity)
 - a) Their eyes were on the Lord, and their desires were simple and not materialistic
 - 1) **KEY:** This simplicity made it possible for them to continually praise the Lord

- IV) **V47 PRAISING GOD:** Was the natural expression of their hearts for what they had found in Jesus
 - a) **PRAISING:** Honoring, lifting up; extolling; glorifying, commending because of perfection
 - 1) They were so blessed to be saved, that they continually praised the Lord
 - 2) Ps 34:1-4 *I will (choice) bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.*
My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; The humble shall hear of it and be glad. Oh, magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. I sought the LORD, and He heard me, And delivered me from all my fears.

- V) **THEIR JOY, UNITY, AND OPEN PRAISE:** Were extremely attractive spiritual qualities
 - a) It was something that had a tremendous impact upon the *watching world*
 - 1) **IT RESULTED:** In their having favor with *all the people (V47)*
 - 2) The people respected and commended them for their loving and simple lives
 - 3) Pr 16:7 When a man's ways please the Lord He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him

- VI) **THIS IMPACT:** Was exactly what Jesus intended for the church to have on the world
 - a) This was what He had prayed for
 - 1) Jn 17:20-21 I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that *the world may believe that You sent Me.*

- VII) **THERE ARE:** Few things that undermine the effectiveness of the gospel more than strife
 - a) Churches filled with inner strife are terrible testimonies to the world
 - 1) **SADLY:** Early in its history, strife became something that had to be dealt with

- VIII) **THERE WAS A PROBLEM:** Between two women in the church of Philippi
 - a) **KEY:** These two women were personally known to Paul and were laborers with him in Jesus
 - 1) They were well known to the Church, and were regarded as leaders

- I) **SADLY: They were having a well-known and well-reported conflict**
 - a) Paul had to publicly exhort them to reconcile with one another, for the good of the church
 - 1) Phil 4:2 I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.
 - 2) SOLUTION: They must take their minds off of themselves and put them back on Jesus
 - 3) Phil 2:2 fulfill my joy by *being like minded* having *the same love* being of *one accord* of one *mind*

- II) **THE EARLY CHURCH: Had unity, was filled with praise, and was attractive to the unsaved**
 - a) V47 THE FRUIT: And *the Lord added* to the church daily those who were being saved
 - 1) KEY: This was not transfer growth; these were *new believers*

- III) **KEY: Jesus is the one saving the people, but the people are the ones welcoming them in**
 - a) There was a joyful attitude that was infectious and hospitable
 - 1) New believers were added to the church, and all were blessed about it

- IV) **THIS IS SOMETHING: I thank God for with this fellowship**
 - a) We have a welcoming attitude towards any who would be here with us
 - 1) We desire people to come to the Lord and to join us as we love and serve Him
 - 2) Jn 4:35 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!

- V) **KEY: It is Jesus saving these people, through the preaching of the gospel (Jn 5:24)**
 - a) They were centered on the preaching and teaching of God's word
 - 1) 1 Co 1:17-18 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

- VI) **THE FACT IS: It is *the Lord was adding* to the church through the gospel message**
 - a) The growth did not come through disguising the message, programs, or entertaining
 - 1) REMEMBER: Anything man can make, man can destroy
 - 2) Jesus said: Upon this rock I will build My church
 - 3) Ps 127:1 Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it

- VII) **JESUS WAS BUILDING THE CHURCH: And the church was open to receiving the people**
 - a) This was not due to special services, revivals, conferences, or contests
 - 1) It simply was the normal process of daily church life as they were equipped to serve
 - 2) FACT: It was through the simple life of the church that people were getting saved

- VIII) **ONE LAST THOUGHT: As they were equipped, they *went out* and did the work of evangelism**
 - a) The church services were times of instruction, equipping the saints for ministry
 - 1) As they learned the things of the Lord, they went out, shared, and people were reached
 - 2) WORD, WORSHIP, WITNESS, AND WITNESS