

Topic: A Healthy Church
Text: Acts 2:38-47 (NIV)
Theme: “Marks of a healthy church”

INTRODUCTION

- The church that started in Jerusalem during the day of Pentecost was healthy, walking in love and unity, and WORDY; the church in Corinth was divided, immoral, “sickly” and WORLDLY.
- The Church problems during the early centuries still exist today.
- Most of the time, our standard for a church’s success is visual. We rate it by the size of the building, or by the satellite churches that are linked with the mother church, or by the number of baskets that are filled during tithes collection.
- The Word of God speaks of a different yardstick to measure a healthy church.

I. A HEALTHY CHURCH COMMITS TO ITS VISION

V38 “Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

V39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

A. Catch the vision

1. “To catch” means having a full understanding of the vision.
2. The Church’s vision should be fully explained to the congregation, and frequently preached on by the pastor.

B. Submit to the vision

1. It is every pastor’s dream that every member submits to the Church’s vision.
2. There are only TWO roads to traverse: SUBMIT Byway or RESIST Motorway.

- **Byway** is a secluded private road while **Motorway** is a wide, multilane road.
 - It is more difficult to drive in a narrow, single-lane. There is more freedom in driving into a motorway.
3. But driving through a RESIST Motorway is not God's way, His choice is the SUBMIT Byway.

II. A HEALTHY CHURCH WALKS IN LOVE AND UNITY

V42 *“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.*

V43 *A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.*

V44 *And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had.*

V45 *They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.*

V46 *They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity.” (NLT)*

A. Positive attitudes bring unity in the church.

1. All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. (v42)
2. Everyone was filled with awe (an overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration, fear), many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. (v43)
3. All the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. (v44)
4. They sold their properties and possessions and shared the money with those in need. (v45)
5. The Church in Jerusalem had demonstrated love in action; they had concern with one another.

B. Negative attitudes bring division in the church.

1. The first "Pentecostal" church in Acts 2 was a far cry from the church in Corinth which was worldly-- plagued with jealousy, quarrelling, forming factions, idolatry, false doctrines, etc. (1 Corinthians 3:3-4)
2. The church in Corinth was WORDLY, but the Pentecostal Church in Jerusalem was WORDY.

III. A HEALTHY CHURCH GROWS IN NUMBER

V41 "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

V47b ...And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." (NIV)

A. A healthy church (one that has a vision, walking in love and unity) grows to its appropriate size.

1. It is the Lord who adds to the numbers. (v41; 47)
2. 3,000 during those times was a landslide (the world estimated population during the first Century was between 170 to 400 million).

B. Every member of a healthy church that grows in number is a soul-winner.

1. It's not the pastor's duty to go out and fish; it's his responsibility to teach the members how to fish. Personal evangelism is not part of the pastor's job description.
2. A pastor is a disciple-maker, not a soul-winner; but being a Christian, he should also be a soul-winner. (Ephesians 4:11-12)
3. So pastors should STOP counting the sheep, instead MAKE the sheep count.

C. A healthy church that grows in number does not compete with other churches.

1. We are not running a beauty contest or any competition with other churches.
2. A church's goal should always be to reach its own full potential in the Lord, rather than to match the achievements and size of another church. A healthy, full-grown Chihuahua will not be as big even as a sickly Great Dane.
3. A healthy church is NOT interested in RECYCLED Christians. Recycling the Christians is not a real church growth. For a company, it's just like an internal movement, but the hiring is frozen.