

Lesson 158 The Church Grows

Scripture: Acts 2:42-5

Memory Verse: And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:47

By the authority of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church began to grow. 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. During these times, the believers witnessed many MIRACLES and much BOLDNESS in the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus.

One day, as Peter and John were on their way to the Temple, as they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in to a place called the 'Beautiful Gate', so he could beg as he had each day for his whole life. When the beggar asked Peter and John for money, Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ, get up and walk!" Instantly, the man was healed and he jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk!

All the people saw him walking and heard him praising God. When they realized he was the lame beggar they had seen so often at the Beautiful Gate, they were absolutely astounded!

Peter saw his opportunity and addressed the crowd. "People of Israel," he said, "what is so surprising about this? And why stare at us as though we had made this man walk by our own power or godliness? For it is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the God of all our ancestors—who has brought glory to **his servant Jesus by doing this**. This is the same Jesus whom you handed over and rejected before Pilate. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. And we are witnesses of this fact! It is through faith in the name of Jesus, this man was healed.

While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the Jewish religious leaders, who demanded an explanation. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of our people, let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that this man was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. "

The Jewish leaders continued to persecute the believers, yet by the power of the Holy Spirit, and even with the help of angels, the apostles continued to perform many miracles in Jesus' name preach the message that **Jesus is the Messiah**.

And all the believers were united in heart and mind. Together, they shared everything they had for the sake of proclaiming the Good News. Like the man who was nicknamed Barnabas (which means "Son of Encouragement"). He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles.

However, there were others, who claimed to be believers were exposed as liars. Like the husband and wife sold their belongings and claimed to give it all to the Church, but secretly kept some for themselves. God exposed their lie, and punished them with the same fate we ALL deserve (death). It was a sobering reminder to the believers that God does not abide falsehood.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, despite opposition and hardship, the miracles continued, the Good News of Jesus advanced, and the believers remained faithful. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved!!