

"To Be Continued"

Text: Acts 2:41-47

Introduction:

- In our passage we see some things that were characteristic of the early church.
- The church today should and must possess these same characteristics.
- Notice verse 42, "And they continued steadfastly...".
- Notice again verse 46, "And they, continuing daily...".
- From these verses we see that the early church, "They continued".
- In other words, the early church kept on keeping on.
- They did not quit at the least little bit of resistance.
- They were ceaseless in their pursuit of pleasing God.
- They were constant, enduring, persistent, relentless when it came to the things of God.
- As the early church was characterized as a people who continued in the things of Lord so should the church today.
- In our study we are going to look at some things God's people should "continue in".
- This is by no means an exhaustive list.

I. CONTINUE IN PRAYER

- In Acts 2:42, notice one of things the early church continued in was "Prayer".
- As Christians today, we are to "continue in prayer".
- The Bible presents a preponderance of evidence that the Christian is to "continue in prayer".

a) 1 Chronicles 16:11 - "Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually."

b) Job 1:5 - tells us that Job rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings for his children, in case they had sinned.

- We are told concerning this "Thus did Job continually."
- As New Testament saints we do not offer burnt offerings for our children, but I believe the inference is that we should be praying "continually" for our children.
- We should be praying that they do not fall into sin and succumb to the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.
- Today, I believe the pressures are greater on our young people to sin than in our day.
- The restraints of society have been greatly loosen.

c) Luke 18:1- "...men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

d) In Luke 18, in the parable about pray, verse 5, the judge said about the widow, "...I will avenge her, lest by her **continual** coming she weary me."

-The idea being conveyed is that if we want our prayers answered then we should "continue" in our prayers.

-In other words, not just praying once about something but keep coming to God.

-Keep on asking, Keep on seeking, Keep on knocking!

-Because if we do this then we are promised results - "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Matthew 7:7-8

e) 1 Thessalonians 5:17 - "Pray without **ceasing**."

f) Colossians 4:2 - "**Continue** in prayer..."

g) Romans 12:12 - "...**continuing** instant in prayer;"

h) Illustrations of Continuing in Prayer:

1. In Luke 6:12, we have an account of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning His prayer life. -"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and **continued all night** in prayer to God."

-Today, the average Christian has a problem continuing in prayer for 5 minutes!!

2. Acts 12:5, we are told that while the Apostle Peter was in jail that "prayer was made **without ceasing** of the church unto God for him.

-As a result of the church unto God praying continuously for Peter we are told in Acts 12:7, the prayer was answered.

-"And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

3. Acts 6:4, tells us one of the reasons the early church chose deacons was so that the men of God could give themselves "**continually** to prayer".

-The preacher is to be a great man of prayer.

4. All the past great men of God were great because they were great men of prayer.

-John Wesley: A preacher came to John Wesley. "It is rumored that you spend two hours a day in prayer. Is that true?" Wesley said, "Yes, that is true. From four o'clock to six o'clock every morning I pray." The preacher said, "Well, I'm just too busy to pray two hours a day." Wesley said to him, "Sir, I am too busy not to pray two hours a day. I cannot get done what has to get done without the help and intervention of God Almighty."

-Robert Murray McCheyene was a great man of prayer. He tottered into the grave at the ripe old age of twenty-nine. He literally prayed himself to death. Most of us, if we live to be one hundred and twenty nine, won't accomplish in the extra hundred years what he did in his twenty-nine years of fervent prayer. He said, "A wretched system, and unscriptural it is, not to begin the day seeking God. The morning hours, from six to eight, are the most uninterrupted and should be thus employed."

-So, we see that the Christian and Church today should - "**Continue In Prayer**".

II. CONTINUE IN PRAISE

-Acts 2:47, "**Praising God**, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

-The early church continued in "Praise of God."

-Today, Christians are to continue in "Praise of God."

a) Psalm 34:1 - "I will bless the LORD at all times: **his praise shall continually** be in mouth."

b) Psalm 71:6 - "By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: **my praise shall be continually of thee.**"

-The praise of God is the last thing on the minds of most Christians.

-Either the Christian is praising self or complaining about what they do not have or their lot in life.

c) Psalm 70:4 - "Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say **continually**, Let God be magnified."

-Christian are you happy that you are saved?

-Are you excited about not going to hell?

-Then the Bible says to "continually, Let God be magnified"! Amen!

-As John the Baptist said "He (Jesus) must increase, but I must decrease."

-Let the Lord be magnified in you, "continually" all the time.

-Let people see Jesus not you!

d) Christians in this present age of grace are also known as priests.

-The Apostle Peter says that the Christian is a part of a royal priesthood, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

-One of these spiritual sacrifices is found in Hebrews 13:15 - "By him therefore let us offer the **sacrifice of praise to God continually....**"

-When is the last time you praise God, let alone "continually".

-So, # 2, we are to **Continue In Praise to God.**

III. CONTINUE IN THE PLACE

- Acts 2:46, "And they, **continuing** daily with one accord in the **temple**..."
- The early church continued in the place, the temple.
- We know that today that the Christian's body is temple of the Holy Ghost.
- However, just like the early church continued in physical place, the church today is to do the same.
- The physical place the Christian is to continue in is the local New Testament church.
- Let's look at some scripture that tells us about God's people continuing in the place.

a) 2 Chronicles 24:14 - "...And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD **continually**..."

- Today, the Christian should not only offer continually his tithes and offering in support of the Lord's work but also himself. **See Romans 12:1**

b) Luke 24:53, we are told after Jesus was carried up into heaven that God's people - "...were **continually** in the temple, praising and blessing God."

c) Hebrews 10:25 - "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

- The Bible tells us that we are to continue in the place.
- In fact, we are to continue in the place even that much more as the day of our Lord's return approaches.
- The Christian needs to "continue" in the place.
- He needs to continue to be in church no matter the circumstances.
- If you are going through a difficult time then need to be in church that much more.
- The devil will tell you to stay out of church until your problems are all solved.
- Guess What?
- All your problems may never be solved!!!!
- So, #3, we are to **Continue in the Place**.

IV. CONTINUE IN THE PRECEPTS

- Acts 2:42 - "...they **continued** stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine..."
- The early church continued in apostles' doctrine.
- The apostles' doctrine would be the same thing as the Word of God or the Precepts of God.
- Today, the Christian is to "continue" in the precepts or the Word of God.

-Why should the Christian continue in the precepts?

a) 2 Timothy 2:15 - "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

-So he won't be ashamed and needs to know not only what he believes but why he believes it.

-So, he won't, "...be no more children, tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;") Ephesians 4:14.

-In other words be grounded in the word of God and be able to deal with the religious cults.

b) So they can be "...ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:" 1 Peter 3:15.

c) The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 119:44 - "So shall I keep thy law **continually** for ever and ever."

d) The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 119:91, concerning the servant of God in relation to God's Word - "They **continue** this day according to thine ordinances for all are thy servants."

e) In Psalm 119:117, we are promised safety if we "continue" in His Word.

-"Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes **continually**."

f) Proverbs 6:21, the young man is instructed to "Bind them [God's precepts] **continually** upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck."

-Proverbs 6:24, tells us why the young man is to do this - "To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman."

-In other words to flee youthful lust and keep yourself pure for God, for Christ, and for your earthly wife to be.

-You can only do this if you "continue in the precepts".

g) Jesus said concerning continuing in His precepts - "If ye **continue** in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;" (John 8:21).

-Today, the individual Christian and the church as a whole must "continue in the precepts", the Word of God as preserved without error in AV 1611, King James Bible.

-So, # 4, we are to **Continue in the Precepts**.

V. CONTINUE IN THE PRACTICE

- Acts 2:42 - "...they **continued** stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine..."
- This applies not only to the precepts or word of God but also the "Practice".
- The early church "continued" in the "Practice" or the "Faith."

a) The Apostle Paul said, "...**continue in the faith** grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel,..." (Colossians 1:23).

b) 1 Timothy 4:16 - " Take heed unto thyself, and unto **the doctrine; continue in them**: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
-Our verse tells us there is a twofold purpose "to continue in the doctrine" or the faith or the practice.

1) "shalt both save thyself" - This has to do with the preacher or the minister.
-He is to take heed to "continue in the doctrine" so as to save his ministry.
-By continuing in the practice then the preacher is less likely to fall to sin and therefore ruin the ministry that the Lord has given him to pastor.

2) "them that hear thee" - This applies to the preacher's congregation.
-The preacher's testimony effects the spiritual health of the congregation.
-He can cause those in his congregation to stumble spiritually and end up wounded and bitter causing them to stop serving the Lord.

c) 2 Timothy 3:14 - "But **continue** thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of."
-In other words, Christians are to "continue" in the things learned from the man of God whose authority comes from the author of the Scriptures.

- Today, God's people are to "continue" in the Practice, the Faith.
- Continue in the things learned from the word of God, and the man of God.
- No. matter how counter to society they may seem. Amen!

-So, # 5 we are to **Continue in the Practice**.

VI. CONTINUE IN THE PURPOSE

- Notice Acts 2:46 - "And they **continued** daily with **one accord**"
- The early church continued in purpose.
- Act 2:46, tells us they continued in "singleness of heart".
- They were of one mind, one heart.
- The church should be of one mind, one heart because each believer have the same Holy Spirit indwelling them.
- However, the problem is that not all believers are yielded to the Holy Spirit.

-But the early church was yielded to the Spirit of God because we are told that they were "with one accord".

-As result of being of one accord, they had gladness and singleness of heart.

-They well all pulling together in the same direction at the same time.

-Today, most church members are pulling in the opposite direction.

-This is the reason that most church do not accomplish anything for God.

-What does it mean to "Continue in Purpose"

-We are to continue in watering and planting.

-"Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." (1 Corinthians 3:8-9).

-We are to continue in the spiritual harvest.

-"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, **especially unto them who are of the household of faith.**" (Galatians 6:9-10).

-"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. (Psalm 126:6).

-The early church "continued in purpose".

-They were busy witnessing for God, winning souls.

-They did not have time on their hands to allow Satan to use them.

-They did not care about the color of the choir robes or the carpet in the church.

-The early church was a purposed church.

-They purposed in their heart to serve the Lord and others.

-They put others first.

-"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." (Acts 2:44-45).

-Today, we should do the same.

-So, # 6 we are to **Continue in the Purpose.**

-Finally, let me say this that even though it is not contain within our passage.

-I believe in order to "continue" in **prayer**, in **praise**, in the **place**, in the **precepts**, **practice**, and in the **purpose**.

-The early church had to "continue" in **patience**.

VII. **CONTINUE IN PATIENCE**

-Patience is counter to the flesh.

-The flesh wants it NOW!

-Ecclesiastes 7:8, "...the **patient** in spirit is better than the proud in spirit."

-We are to continue in Patience.

-Definition = Bearing or enduring pain, trouble, etc., without complaining, losing self-control, making a disturbance, etc; longsuffering, forbearance, endurance, perseverance.

-The Bible over and over again instructs the Christian to be patient.

a) Romans 5:3 - "...that tribulation worketh **patience**."

-One of the reasons a Christian goes through trials, and tribulation is so God can develop patience in His child.

b) 1 Peter 2:20 - "...if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it **patiently**, this acceptable with God.

-The Christian when he is persecuted is to suffer it patiently.

-When he suffer patiently then he pleases God.

c) Romans 2:7 - "To them who by **patient continuance** in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:"

-The Christian is to continue to serve the Lord with patience.

-Things are not always going to go the way we want.

-We need just be patience continue in our well doing for the Lord.

d) Hebrews 12:1, "...let us run with **patience** the race that is set before us."

-The Christian race is not a 100 meter dash but more of a marathon.

-We are to pace ourselves.

-Sometimes we are just to wait upon the Lord.

-Waiting and patience go hand and hand.

-Waiting on the Lord is one of the hardest thing for the Christian to do.

e) One of the qualification of a bishop or a pastor is to be "patient" according to 1 Timothy 3:3.

-A pastor should be one who is in control of his emotions.

-He should not be one who is easily upset over the least little irritation.

-2 Timothy 2:24, tells us concerning the pastor, the servant of the Lord, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, **patient**, "

-The pastor is to be patient in the teaching of the people.

-The Christian's approach in dealing with people should be one of patience.

f) 1 Thessalonians 5:14, the Christian is exhorted to "be **patient** toward all men"

g) 2 Thessalonians 3:5 - "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the **patient** waiting for Christ."

-James 5:7 - "Be **patient** therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord."

-The Christian is to be patient in the waiting for the Lord's return.

-1 Thessalonians 1:3 - Paul says, "Remember without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and **patience** of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."

-We are to "continue in patient" waiting for the Lord's return, waiting for our resurrection. Amen!

-James tells us 1:4, "But let **patience** have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

-Through patience we are conformed to the image of Christ.

-We can obtain this "patience" from the scriptures and God according to Romans 15:4-5, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through **patience** and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of **patience** and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:"

-We are to "**Continue in Patience**".

Conclusion:

-If you want the church to grow, if you want the Lord to build His church then we need to "**Continue In**"

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Praise
- 3) the Place
- 4) the Precepts
- 5) Practice
- 6) Purpose
- 7) Patient

-We can expect if we "continue" in these things the same results as the early church experienced, "**And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**" (Acts 2:47)