

"God's Plan For A Successful Church"

Text: Acts 11:19-30

Introduction:

- ❑ A successful church is not necessarily a big church with hundreds of folks.
- ❑ Successful means "to achieve the desired goals", "prosperous", "flourishing" and "progressing".
- ❑ The word Church means "a called-out assembly"
- ❑ The local church is a called is a called-out assembly of saved, scripturally baptized believers who have covenanted themselves to carry out the commands of Christ.
- ❑ The Church at Antioch had the Biblical characteristics of a successful church.
- ❑ This morning using the church at Antioch as our example let us together the characteristics of a successful local New Testament church.

I. The Success of Any Church Depends Upon the Presence and Power of God.

- ❑ **See Acts 11:21** - "And **the hand of the Lord was with them**: and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord."
- ❑ Man is not the indispensable ingredient.
- ❑ God is the supreme necessity.

- **1 Cor. 3:6-7** - "**3:6**: I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. **3:7**: So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

II. The Success of Any Church Depends Upon the Presence and Power of God of the Word of God

- **See Acts 11:19** - "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, **preaching the word** to none but unto the Jews only."
 - When a church begins to leave off the preaching of the Word of God, trouble is ahead.
 - When I speak of the Word of God, I mean the AV 1611, Kings James Bible, the preserved, inspired, infallible, inerrant Words of God.
- The preaching of the Word of God is of paramount importance in the Lord's Church.
 - Nothing is to take the place of the preached Word of God.
 - Not the music.
 - Not the announcements.
 - Not the church fellowships.
 - In a lot of churches today the preaching of the Word of God is given the least amount of time.

- Between the music program which includes the choir, special music and the different presentations the preaching of the Word of God takes a back seat.
- God commands in **2 Tim. 4:2** – **“Preach the word;** be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”
- The Word of God declares in **1 Cor. 2:21** – “...it pleased God by the **foolishness of preaching** to save them that believe.”

III. The Success of Any Church Depends Upon The Presence and Power of Teaching

- **See Acts 11:25-26** – **“25:** Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: **26:** And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church and **taught much people.** And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”
 - Barnabas and Paul taught the people at Antioch.
 - The ultimate success of a Church depends upon one generation teaching and grounding the next generation in the truths of God’s Word.
- The purpose of teaching is two-fold:
 - That people might know the truth.

- **2 Timothy 2:2** – “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able **to teach** others also.”
 - That people might observe.
 - **Mt. 28:20** – “**Teaching them to observe all things** whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
- No church can prosper and be successful in the eyes of God without being dedicated to the teaching of the Word of God.

IV. The Success of Any Church Depends Upon The Presence And Power Of The Missionary Spirit

- **See Acts 13:2** – “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”
 - A church who will support Missionaries with prayers and offerings will be blessed of God.
- A church that is not Missionary in spirit and practice cannot claim to be a successful church.

V. For A Church To Be Successful, The Church Must Be A Giving Church

- **See Acts 11:29-30** – “**29:** Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in

Judaea: **30:** Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”

- God’s work is to be supported by the offering of God’s people.
- God loves a cheerful giver.
 - **2 Cor. 9:6-8** – “**6:** But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. **7:** Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. **8:** And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:”
- One cannot out give God.
 - **See - Malachi 3:7-10**

VI. A Church Cannot Be Successful Unless The Church Is Christ-Like

- **See Acts 11:26** – “...And the disciples were called **Christians** first in Antioch.”
 - Christian means “Christ-like”
 - Paul wrote the believers at Corinth in **1 Cor. 11:1** – “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”
 - The Apostle Peter wrote in **1 Peter 2:21** – “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, **that ye should follow his steps:**”

- A church that is Christ-like its member should be displaying the **fruit of the Spirit. – See Galatians 5:22-23.**
- A church that is Christ like its members according to **Titus 2:12-13**, should be “..denying ungodliness and worldly lusts and ...should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”

VII. A Church Cannot Be Successful Unless There IS Faithfulness

- **See Acts 11:23** – “...Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”
 - Barnabas encouraged the people of Antioch to make up their minds to be faithful to the Master.
- The church is God’s stewards.
 - We are to take care of what belongs to God until He returns for us.
 - The Bible tells us that the steward is to have one basic characteristic.
 - **See 1 Cor. 4:2** – “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

Conclusion:

- I pray that God help us through His power to have a successful church.

- We have seen this morning according to the Word of God to be a **Successful Church**, WE **MUST** –
 - Depend upon the presence and power of God.
 - Depend upon the presence and power of the Word of God.
 - Depend upon the presence and power of the teaching of the Word of God.
 - Depend upon the presence and power of the missionary spirit.
 - Be a giving church
 - Be a Christ-Like
 - Be Faithful to things of God.