

GOD WANTS US TO GROW
(Daniel 2:34-35; 44-45)

I. A growing church was predicted in prophecy.

- A. No doubt, all of us are aware that God had prophets write by inspiration about the coming church.
 - 1. We've talked about in sermons about the church numerous times.
 - 2. These inspired prophets pointed to the time, place, manner and purpose of the church.
- B. These prophets also pointed the growth of the coming kingdom.
- C. So, hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth, God had prophets reveal the fact that the church would be a growing institution.
- D. Notice Daniel 2:34-35.
 - 1. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had a dream and he demanded his astrologers and soothsayers tell him the dream and give the interpretation of it.
 - 2. None but Daniel, who was allowed to by God, could do this.
 - 3. Daniel told the king that he had dreamed of an image that was made of four different parts.
 - 4. This image was struck in the feet by a stone that had been cut out not by human hands and it broke in pieces the great image that the king had seen.
 - 5. Notice the end of verse 35: the stone grows into a great mountain and covers the earth.
 - 6. Drop down to Daniel 2:44-45.
 - 7. Daniel has now explained to the king that the four parts of the image each represent a world power, with Babylon at the top.
 - 8. Each kingdom would conquer the previous kingdom,
 - 9. The stone would break in pieces the kingdoms and the stone represented a kingdom God would set up that would never be destroyed.
- E. Notice what is being taught about the growth of the church.
 - 1. It would start our small, which we know it did.
 - 2. It would grow to cover the whole earth, which Paul said the gospel had been preached to everyone under heaven in his day (Colossians 1:23).
 - 3. This kingdom would never be destroyed but would stand forever, which the church will as long as the world stands, at least in seed form.
- F. Another prophecy, and the last one we will notice is found in Isaiah 2:2-3.
 - 1. The church will be exalted, or, unlike any other institution because it is divine in origin, making it superior to all others.
 - 2. All nations will flow into it, picturing the universal outreach of it.
 - 3. People will go out and say come, which indicates the evangelistic

- nature of the kingdom and its citizens.
- 4. There will be teaching done, which is how faith is created (Romans 10:17).
- 5. People will walk in God's way, which means God's word will direct the steps of those in this kingdom.
- G. What these all point to is the fact that God wants His church to grow and always has, even before it was established.
- H. We need to want the same thing that God wants: growth.

II. God is interested in results.

- A. We have said from time to time that all we can do is sow the seed, we can't make it grow.
- B. While this is true, God still wants results.
- C. It is not an either/or proposition with effort and results.
- D. God wants us to make efforts that produce results.
 - 1. God expects us to bear fruit (Matthew 13:8).
 - 2. We must be fruitful (John 15:1-2).
 - 3. God wants a full banquet room (Luke 14:16-24).
 - 4. God wants the lost sheep found (Luke 15:3-7).
 - 5. God wants the lost coin found (Luke 15:8-10).
 - 6. God desires results when the gospel is preached (Matthew 10:14).
 - 7. God doesn't want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9).
- E. It is not enough to put forth effort.
- F. We should also expect results.
 - 1. The salesman who knocked on the lady's door to sell a vacuum cleaner put forth effort.
 - 2. It was half-hearted at best.
- G. We need to be interested in results from our efforts.

III. Jesus wants His church to grow.

- A. The mission of Jesus is simple (Luke 19:10).
- B. As Jesus went about His mission, He talked about the coming kingdom.
 - 1. In fact, Jesus is the first to call it a church.
 - 2. Matthew 16:18-19.
 - 3. This is the first time the word church is used in the New Testament.
 - a. Jesus said, "I will build my church."
 - b. We need to realize the process of building the church is ongoing today.
 - c. It was established on Pentecost, but it is still being built.
 - d. Whenever a soul is added to the church, the church is being built.
- C. Paul, by inspiration, compared the church to a house (1 Timothy 3:15).
 - 1. Jesus is the foundation on which the house is built (1 Corinthians 3:11-12).

2. Notice what Peter says about this building process (1 Peter 2:5).
 - a. Jesus is still in the building business.
 - b. By teaching and converting the lost, we help Him in building the church.
- D. Paul wrote this to the Ephesians (Ephesians 4:15-16).
- E. When Jesus gave us the Great Commission, He was talking about growth (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-47).
- F. Every creature, which in our time is seven billion souls, is a clear command to go and grow.
 1. Jesus wants His church to grow.
 2. We will never have growth if we don't want the same thing as Jesus wanted.
- G. We need to view the church as a living organism.
 1. Living organisms grow or die.
 2. We would be extremely concerned if one of our children suddenly stopped growing.
 3. We know something is wrong with that child if that happened.
 4. The same thing is true with the local congregation.
 5. There cannot be any growth in the Lord's church where there is not seed being sown.
- H. Jesus, the head of the church, has told us what He wants for the church: growth.
- I. As we obey the commission, we are helping Christ grow His kingdom.
- J. We need to be like Isaiah, and say, Here am I, send me.
- K. Remember that the Lord is not building His church out of brick, wood and stone.
 1. He is building it out of living stones.
 2. The souls of men and women make up the church.
 3. The only way to reach souls is with the gospel message.
 4. As the great hymn says, we are to "rescue the perishing."
- L. Are we helping Jesus build?

IV. Church growth brings glory to God.

- A. The Lord commanding us to teach all nations shows that wants His church to grow.
- B. When we go and teach and the church grows, God is glorified (Ephesians 3:21).
- C. When the church does God's will, God is glorified, and teaching all nations is part of God's will for the church.
- D. Through the gospel being preached, God's wisdom is shown to the world (Ephesians 3:9-11).
 1. When a sinner repents, there is rejoicing in heaven (Luke 15:1-7).
 2. This is because of the value of one soul (Mark 8:34-38).
 3. By this, we see that church growth glorifies God.

- E. Church growth has its focus, not on numbers, but on souls and maturing those souls into active Christians.
- F. When we think of the word “without”, it ought to motivate us to help the church grow, since growth is about souls.
- G. When souls are without Christ, they are lost and that means they are without:
 - 1. Spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3);
 - 2. Salvation (Acts 4:11-12);
 - 3. Hope (Ephesians 2:12);
 - 4. Light (John 8:12);
 - 5. Strength (John 15:5);
 - 6. Hope of heaven (John 14:1-6);
 - 7. Spiritual life (John 14:6);
 - 8. Peace (Romans 5:1).
- H. When we teach someone the gospel, and that person obeys the Lord’s message, we help take the without away from them.
- I. Not only that, we have taught that person the only message that can save them and take the without away.
- J. Not only that, when we teach the gospel, we glorify God.
- K. When one obeys the gospel, he or she glorifies God.
- L. Thus, church growth glorifies God and this is why He desires it.

From a book entitled “How To Have Biblical Church Growth” by J.J. Turner.