

Numbers

- 11
- 120
- 3,000
- 5,000
- What do these numbers have in common?

Rapid Growth

- Church grew at rapid rates despite:
 1. Men with little or no education. Acts 4:13
 2. May have had differences among them.
 3. Technology was limited.
- Yet, Acts 17:6.
- Why? Why was the 1st century church so successful when we struggle so much?

GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

Put the Kingdom First

- Matthew 6:33 is the command.
 - How often do we try to reprioritize? Matt. 6:24
 - Acts 14:22
- How different does your life look to that of your neighbor's?
 - Same entertainment? Same dress? Same problems?
 - Is the only difference that you assemble?
- Philippians 1:21; 3:20

Visible Love

- Romans: “See how they love one another.”
- Clement, describing Christians, “He impoverishes himself out of love, so that he is certain he may never overlook a brother in need, especially if he knows he can bear poverty better than his brother. He likewise considers the pain of another as his own pain. And if he suffers any hardship because of having given out of his own poverty, he does not complain.”

Visible Love

- Acts 2:44-47
 - It is likely that these Christians hardly knew one another.
- Acts 4:34-37
- Gentiles provide assistance to Jews in Acts 11:27-30.
- Not hard to see why such a charitable movement would be so appealing.
- John 13:34, 35

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

- “Negative” statements:
 - Acts 5:27, 28
 - Acts 17:6
 - Acts 19:25, 26
- Positive statements:
 - Acts 5:42; 20:20
 - Acts 8:3-5

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

- Luke provides progress reports.
 - Acts 4:4
 - Acts 6:1, 7
 - Acts 12:24
 - Acts 19:20
 - Acts 28:31

Can This Church Grow?

- Of course it can!
- Will we follow the pattern of the first-century church?
 - Keep the Kingdom first
 - Demonstrate a fervent love for one another
 - Teach the word

Conclusion

- Great things happen when children of God follow His plan.
- 1 Corinthians 3:5-7
- Won't you allow God to do a great work in you?