

*Keep Sowing until Church
Growth Happens*

“And they continued steadfastly....And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:42, 47).

A story is told by T. C. Hamlet concerning two frogs.

Two frogs fell into a can of cream.
Or so I've heard it told:

The sides of the can were shiny and steep,
And the cream was deep and cold.

“O, what's the use?” croaked Number One,
“Tis fate; no help's around.
Good-bye, my friend! Good-bye, sad world!”
And weeping still he drowned.

But Number 2, of sterner stuff
Dog-paddled in surprise.
The while he wiped his creamy face,
And dried his creamy eyes.

“I'll swim a while, at least,” he said-
Or so I've heard he said;
“It really wouldn't help the world
If one more frog were dead.”

An hour or two he kicked and swam
Not once he stopped to mutter.
But kicked and kicked and swam and kicked.
Then hopped out, via butter.
(Note: Butter is like margarine)

You have the same choice as the frogs. You can either give up or continue in steadfast perseverance until God moves in your situation.

I am sure each of us yearns to see our churches grow. Sometimes we feel hopeless and

inadequate because we know church growth cannot be produced by man. We understand that anything with eternal value will be accomplished by God. It is only God who can breathe on a valley of dry bones and cause them to come back to life. It is only God who can cause revival, church growth, and hearts to be receptive to Him.

God wants His Church to grow. It has been said, “Children are God's way of saying the world should go on!” The church, the called out ones, still being on the earth is God's way of saying, “The Church will go on!”

In Matthew 24 we see signs that precede the second coming of Christ. In verse 12 it reads, “...the love of many shall wax cold.”

We can't quit now. We can't retreat. We must march forward because this is a forward moving Church. We will not stop loving Him; serving Him; worshipping Him; trusting Him; witnessing for Him; praying to Him; living for Him now.

We've come too far to quit!

1. Would the walls of Jericho have come down if Israel had stopped walking after six days?
2. Would Naaman have been healed of leprosy if he had stopped dipping in the Jordan river after six times?
3. Would the New Testament Church have grown continually if the Apostles and believers had stopped sowing the Word (seed)?

Some predict that in the last days there will be a great falling away. A great falling away was seen through the Council of Nicea, the falling away from the Early Church. We have passed through the Reformation and are presently in

Church Growth

the latter reign of revival and outpouring of the Spirit as Joel prophesied in Joel 2:28-29.

“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24: 13-14).

Note: Endure: “...The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong...” (Ecclesiastes 9:11); but the race is won by the one who runs with patience (Hebrews 12: 1-2).

Have you ever wondered what you are doing on earth that you cannot do in heaven? Praying, singing, worshipping, fellowshiping, listening to the voice of God, etc. can be done in heaven. However, sin and witnessing will not be done in heaven. Which one are you continuing to do?

God wants His Church to grow because He is the God of the Full House. Some say God is concerned with the quality of our members rather than the quantity. Surely God is interested in both; a glorious church without spot or wrinkle and a great host of men and women who serve Him. After all, before He left for heaven, He proclaimed, “In my Father’s house are many mansions...” (John 14:2). He also came because of His love for the world (John 3:16).

In Luke 14 Jesus tells a convincing story of His desire for churches to be full and to experience Church Growth. A man had prepared a great feast and invited many. The servant was sent with a message, “Come, for all things are now ready” (verse 17). Those invited gave foolish excuses and refused to come. When the servant informed the Master, he sent him out quickly to bring the poor, blind, halt, and withered. The servant brought those but there was still room for more. The master sent the servant out again.

Lesson 14

Why was the master insistent on sending his servant again? “Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled” (verse 23).

Jesus has prepared a great feast; all things are ready; and He is compelling all to come in so His house (the church) will be filled. Jesus declared, “upon this rock I will build my Church” (Matthew 16:18).

In 1 Corinthians 3:6 Paul reveals the partnership role we have with God when it comes to church growth. “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.”

The Psalmist said, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. (This is the law of the Harvest.. sow, then reap) He that goeth forth (you must go if you expect results) and weepeth, (denotes a burden) bearing precious seed (the Word of God), shall doubtless (for sure; without a doubt; it’s a promise) come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves (you will have Church Growth) with him” (Psalm 126:5-6, emphasis mine).

We must continue doing our part and our great Partner will do His part. At times the road is rough and there are setbacks but we must press on toward the mark (Philippians 3:14). As the song says, “Onward Christian Soldiers.”

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:7,9).

“Quitters never win; winners never quit.” It’s always too soon to quit! “If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small” (Proverbs 24:10). Also read Isaiah 40: 29, 31.

The songwriter wrote:

Church Growth

Lesson 14

“He didn’t bring us this far just to leave us.
He didn’t teach us to swim, to let us drown.
He didn’t build His home in us just to move
away. He didn’t pick us up, to let us down.”

DON'T QUIT

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you are trudging on seems all
uphill,

When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must - but don't you quit.

Life is queer with it's twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up though the pace seems slow
You might succeed with another blow.

Success is failure turned inside out,
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt.
And you can never tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far.
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,
It's when things seem worse
Then you must NOT QUIT.

We must do as the Early Church: They continued!

Ecclesiastes 11:1, 4-6 is an encouraging Scripture of sowing until church growth happens!

“Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds you plant” (Robert Louis Stevenson).

Study Questions

1. Who can cause the church to grow?

2. Who wants your church to grow more than anyone else? _____

3. What lesson can we learn from the story of the two frogs? _____

4. Where do we find a prophecy of a revival in the last days? _____

5. Is God interested in quality or quantity? Explain! _____

6. What do we learn from the story found in Luke 14? _____

7. What does 1 Corinthians 3:6 reveal? _____

8. In one word describe what the Early Church did. They _____

9. For what reason has the Lord allowed us to remain on earth? _____

10. What is an encouraging Scripture when it comes to Church Growth? _____

