

## **Problems Inside The Early Church**

### **Acts 2:41-47**

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

The Church as we know it today was formed on the day of Pentecost. It was greatly magnified because of the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit and the great sermon preached by Peter. When it was founded, all the members were of one accord. This is the only time in the history of the church that this has happened.

You see that it was not too long after it was founded that problems began. This morning I want to look at some of the problems of the early church, for they didn't go away and are still with us today.

I am not talking about the problems they had with the Government, for it has always been against the church, but the problems that the people caused who were members of the church.

### **I. The early church had a problem with liars. In fact this is the first problem mentioned in Acts, Chapter 5.**

The people had decided previously to sell all their goods and place the money in a common fund so that each had according to his needs.

There was a husband and wife team who wanted to be accepted as part of the congregation as doing what others were doing, but were too greedy to fully commit themselves to the task. Their story is told in Acts, Chapter 5.

Ananias and Sapphira sold a possession and decided to keep back part of it for their own personal needs. They were not required to bring it to the church to start with, but they wanted to give the appearance of being strong supporters of the church while in their hearts they were still dedicated to Satan.

Peter confronted Ananias and he lied about what he had got for the possession. Listen to the exchange in Acts 5:3-5.

**3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?**

**4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.**

**5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.**

His wife came in later and repeated the story that Ananias had told and the exact same thing happen to her. She fell dead.

They clearly had liars in the early church, and we have liars among us today in the modern church.

**It is a strange thing about a liar.** He never fully recognizes that he is working for Satan. The Bible says that Satan created the lie. He is the father of all liars. Liars are excluded from heaven as clearly stated in Revelation Rev 21:8.

**“all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”**

**Who are the liars in the modern day church?** They are about us in many forms.

**Those who use the church for personal gain are liars.** They deceive God’s people, claim to worship Jesus Christ, but never have but one thing in mind, deception.

**Those who tell part of the truth to deceive are liars.** They want to make a point by leaving out part of the facts to paint an erroneous picture.

**Those who add to the truth are liars.** They want to embellish the facts to make themselves appear more important.

**“Those in the church who lie are not of God, they are of Satan, and they are in reality the children of Satan.”**

**II. The second problem we look at in the early church is one of murmuring. This is found in Acts 6:1**

**And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.**

What is murmuring, one may ask? The dictionary says it is to complain or grumble. It is close kin to gossip, but with a different approach.

Generally, people who gossip don't really care who hears them, but those who murmur have an ulterior motive, and it is to build up a following to cause someone trouble or instill change. Those who murmur have a deep conviction that if they were in charge things would be a lot better.

The early church was able to fix the murmuring problem they encountered by appointing a board of deacons. They came up with a solution and it worked. The murmuring stopped.

We still have murmuring with us in today's church. Unfortunately, it can't be easily fixed because it seems too wide spread, and generally the damage is done before it comes to the forefront. I have even encountered murmuring being done by a deacon and his families. The very person who was to take care of the problem was creating it.

Generally, murmuring is structured towards the pastor or other leaders of the church. People who don't like the way we do things, but won't do it themselves.

Among the things that they complain about is how the worship service is conducted, how the preacher preaches, how the deacons run the business of the church.

I was once the recipient of a murmuring campaign because one person in the church didn't like the way I conducted the baptism services. As you know I like to baptize as soon as possible after a person joins the church. This particular murmurer wanted me to baptize twice a year in larger groups because "it looks better and doesn't take away from the worship service."

**"Murmurers are not of God, they are of Satan, and they are in reality the children of Satan."**

**III. The early church had a problem with people trying to buy their way into the community of God. This is illustrated in Acts 8:18**

**18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,**

Of course we know that Peter rejected Simon's offer for money and admonished him because his heart was not right with God.

Today's church have a more serious problem with the money situation for that seems to be all that makes our country tick. We have reached a point where we no longer trust God to provide for His work and go out into the world and do it man's way.

I often see people at K-Mart or Wal-Mart taking up money for their churches. I recently saw some men at a traffic light holding out buckets collecting money for a church.

I could name a church that recently had a raffle to raise money, and then praised the Lord for helping them sell all the tickets. Gambling is not God's way to raise money. He expects each of us to give liberally to His cause, but He also expects us to be selective about how we spend the money He provides us.

We have many examples in the modern church of business people joining the church and giving liberally because it is good for business. Some even use the church for business contacts. I know a car dealer back home who was kept a woman on the side, was fowl mouthed and bragged about cheating people, who was always in church on Sunday because it was good for business.

**“People who buy their way into the church or use the church for material purposes are not of God; they are of Satan and are in reality the children of Satan.”**

**IV. The early church had a problem with adultery. In fact it was the grossest kind of adultery. We read in 1 Corinthians 5:1**

**1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.**

The modern church hardly ever addresses this problem. Our society has made the sin of adultery so common place that we don't even bat an eye anymore.

I suspect that every adult listening to me today can name at least one couple that is living together without being married. This is plain and simple adultery.

This is another category that will not enter into the Kingdom of God, but we don't seem to realize it. People who continually live in adultery are doomed for hell unless they give it up and repent.

I know all the excuses given why this situation exists. We are so much in love that God will surely understand. He does, and the adulterer will understand one-day the God's Word is true. There will be no adulterers in heaven.

Homosexuality falls into the same category. The Homosexual crowd will tell you that God does not condemn a loving relationship between two consenting adults of the same sex. The Bible says different, unless you are sold on the modern versions that downplay this sin. Listen to the words in Romans 1:26-28.

**26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:**

**27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.**

**28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;**

**“The adulterers and homosexuals in the church are not of God, they are of Satan, and are in reality children of Satan.”**

**V. The early church had a problem with the worship of God being turned into social affairs.** There is nothing wrong with social activities within themselves, but the worship of God must never be social. You have all heard of the social Gospel. This is exactly what has happened; the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been distorted to include things of the world.

**The Corinthian Church was having a problem with the Lord’s Supper.** The rich were bringing their own food and were turning it into a drunken feast instead of a time of worship as Jesus had instructed us.

In 1 Corinthians 11:20-22 we read.

**20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.**

**21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.**

**22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.**

It is clear that the Lord’s house must be used to honor God. Even our social activities must honor Him if we are truly followers of Him.

I was told that Trinity Baptist Church used to let anyone who desired to have social functions in the church. One of the deacons told me about an outside wedding where beer was placed on the tables for the guests.

Drinking alcohol is common among many denominations. It is too common among the Baptists to suit me, but God can sort this all out. My job is to keep the church that I am pastoring free of this kind of activity, and God will hold those responsible who does permit it.

**“Those who use the church as a social club are not of God, they are of Satan, and are in reality the children of Satan.”**

**VI. There is one other area that I want to cover, and that is the corruption of the Scriptures. The early church had a problem with this.**

We find in 2 Cor 2:17:

**17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.**

You see there are many ways to corrupt the Word of God. It

**may be done by misinterpretation while preaching. It**

**may be done by misinterpretation while teaching.**

**It may even be done deliberately by misquoting Scripture.**

**However, the one distortion we face most in the church today is scholars producing Bible Versions that do not clearly represent the Word.**

The new versions do not only disagree with the tried and true King James Bible, they even disagree with each other.

I don't want to belabor the point so I'll only use one example that is will be clear to all who are listening. It is found in Philippians 2:5-6

The King James Bible reads:

**5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:**

**6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:**

**The New International Version reads:**

**Phil 2:5-6**

**5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:**

**6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,**

It doesn't take a rocket science or a brain surgeon to realize that something is wrong here. Jesus either considered Himself equal with God or He didn't. If He didn't, then He lied when He said, "**The Father and I are One.**"

**"Those who deliberately change the words of the Bible whether preaching, teaching, or translating are not of God they are of Satan and are in reality children of Satan."**

They destination is clear for God's Words in Revelation reads: Rev 22:18-19

**18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:**

**19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**

**CONCLUSION:** There are some things wrong with the modern church, and there have always been things in the church that God didn't approve of, however the church has survived in spite of the wrongs.

Your challenge at Calvary is to not only to root out evil, but also to live your lives as if you really believe the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The greatest weapon we have against Satan is the Holy Spirit in our lives. When He controls us, we will live as God wants us to and all our actions will be pleasing to Him.

Let us remember that Jesus loved the church, and He gave His life for it. Can we do anything less?

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