

THE CHURCH THEN AND NOW

Pastor Joseph Hovsepian

Acts 4:31-35

The question often asked is: “What is the matter with the churches. Why are they empty and so many are closing down?”

Well, there may be many reasons, but many believe that God has turned away and rejected the church!

Now, this may be true with many churches today. God may have walked away from them due to sin, worldliness, Christlessness and corruption

But this morning we will look at the early church, the growing and going church.

It was a church on fire. It grew from 120 members to 10 million in one century. And yet, it had few of the things we think are necessary to have a church today.

They had: No church buildings – No printed material – Bibles - Hymnbooks - No Sound systems – No professional clergymen and Leaders

And yet, those early believers would put us to shame today. With all our technological progress and education and organizational skills put together we still don't do well.

WHY?

What did they have then that we need today?

A- It was a Praying Church – (v.31)

1. The church was born in a prayer meeting
2. Both man and women prayed in unity. **Acts 1:14** – *“They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.*
3. They prayed and they were filled with the Holy Spirit.
“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the Word of God boldly.” (v.31)
4. When Apostle Peter was jailed they prayed. (Acts 12)
5. They prayed with such a faith that it made them **bold**
6. They prayed so fervently the building was shaken. Prayer is so vital if the church is to move ahead
 - The Church that is not **praying**, is **playing**
 - The Church is powerless without prayer

THE CHURCH THEN AND NOW

Pastor Joseph Hovsepien

Acts 4:31-35

B- It Was a Loving Church - (Acts 4:32)

“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.”

1. Love made them to share with others
2. Love enabled them to care and give to those in need ...
3. Love enabled them to **put away** their differences Today minor differences **divide** and cripple the church
4. Love united them. This kind of love brings revival. They began to love God and spiritual things more than earthly possessions.

C- It Was a Witnessing Church - (Acts 4:33)

“With great power They continued to testify”

Jesus had promised that power would be given to all the believers who would receive the Holy Spirit to become His witnesses.

Acts 1:8 - *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

Christ’s last words (the great commission) were: *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* (Matthew 28:19)

David Dawson said: “The silent pew is the curse and blight of Christianity.”

When the Apostles were arrested and thrown in jail, *“An angel of the Lord came and opened the doors of the jail and brought them out,”* did not say: *“Go home or hide and warn the other church members to be quiet and politically correct.”* But rather he said: *“Go stand in the Temple courts and tell the people the full message of this new life.”* (Acts 5:19-20)

And that’s exactly what they did, immediately, not a week or a month later

I believe that many Christians and Churches have forgotten or misunderstood the purpose and roll of the Church. The great commission has become the great omission

The new thinking is that the church and their members should be politically correct and not seek to convert or bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to others

THE CHURCH THEN AND NOW

Pastor Joseph Hovsepian

Acts 4:31-35

Let's not forget that the New Testament Church was not established by gentiles, but by Jesus Christ our Lord and His disciples who were Jews, they brought the Gospel to the rest of the world

Why today's church has so little impact? I believe the reasons are many, but let me give you some that are obvious:

- Too many spectators, no workers and doers
- Many interested in methods than the message
- Very concerned about public image rather than the truth and godliness.
- Little or no concern for the lost
- Few churches hold evangelistic meetings. Evangelism largely is forgotten now
- Churches have settled for lesser causes
- Christian believers have forgotten their mission, the Great Commission – “Go and make disciples”

Jesus' words: “*You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*” Seems to have been forgotten even though the world needs the Gospel, the “Good News” today more than ever before

And we must not forget that we have the Gospel because of those who obeying Christ brought the Gospel to us

They, the Disciples and those who followed them were unstoppable.

They, **Praying, Loving, and Witnessing** marched ahead.

We have the same marching orders.

They changed the World. (Acts 17:6)

So Can We by Bringing the Good News to Others.