

The University Heights Messenger

March 7, 2010

The Church At Antioch of Syria--7 A well taught congregation

Growing up the son of a preacher and now a preacher myself, I have had the opportunity throughout my life to visit many different congregations. They come in all shapes and sizes and all with varying levels of congregational maturity. Every spiritually mature congregation I have ever attended regularly or had fairly consistent communication with had one thing in common--good teachers.

One church had such exceptional teachers that the Holy Spirit took a verse to list them by name. That church was Antioch of Syria and the verse is Acts 13:1. **“Now there were in the church of Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.”** If Saul, the man who would become the great apostle to the Gentiles, can be mentioned last in a list of teachers then we know that these were some extraordinary men indeed!

Throughout this bulletin series we have noted several exemplary things about this particular church. Previously we noted that this was a church of generosity and giving (**Acts 11:27-30**). We noted that this was a congregation very dedicated to being what God desired (**Acts 13:1-2**). From there we discussed the prayerful nature of the men mentioned in **Acts 13:1**, a practice the entire congregation would have noticed and imitated. **Acts 14:26-27** showed us how the entire congregation was a very interested and involved in the work. **Acts 15:31** showed us how eager they all were to please the Lord. There is a reason that I saved this particular characteristic of that church for the last article in the series--the abundance of strengths attributed to this congregation is thanks largely to the strength of the teaching they received.

Sound, strong teaching is so important to the spiritual well being of a congregation.

This teaching needs to be found in the pulpit, the classroom, and in small study groups that take place in the homes of individual members. That there were so many capable men willing to teach in the church at Antioch shows that the church was actively developing men to fulfill that role. There are a few lessons for us to take from this church.

First, a congregation needs to actively seek to develop teachers. My personal feeling is that 2 Timothy 2:2 is a preacher's instruction to a preacher about potential preachers, yet one does not damage the Scripture by extending the application. **“And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”** A congregation must not become satisfied with one or two good teachers when there is a congregation full of Christians who are not developing their skill in that area. Understanding that not everyone's talents and abilities are to be found in the same area, it is imperative that a congregation encourage as many members as possible to grow in their knowledge and understanding to the point where they could teach. Having done that, the congregation needs to encourage these members to become actively involved in the teaching process *within* the congregation, not just among non Christians on the outside. Any experienced teacher will tell you that you never grow quite as much as you do when you are to stand before knowledgeable Christians to teach a portion of Scripture. So, let's encourage one another to see if our talents may be best served in the realm of teaching.

Second, the faithful congregation not only receives sound teaching, they demand it. Paul instructed Timothy to **“keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching”** (1 Timothy 4:16). The congregation where such teaching is taking place needs to be doing the very same thing. Do you remember what was said of the Bereans in Acts 17:11? **“Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with**

all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.”

Three additional verses come to my mind as we consider this point. Philippians 2:12 says, **“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”** 2 Corinthians 13:5 says, **“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you fail to meet the test!”** Finally, Jude 21 says, **“Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.”** As individual Christians we have the responsibility to work out our own salvation and to keep ourselves in the love of God. It has been shown that we can fail in this test. Let me suggest that we are almost certain to fail if we allow weak or even erroneous teaching to fill our ears week in and week out. We must *demand* sound teaching from our teachers each time they stand before us. We fail them, ourselves, and God if we refuse to do this.

After writing these seven articles about lessons learned from the church at Antioch of Syria I can only think to conclude with this--What a church! Let's learn from their example. We'll be better for it.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Esmeralda Agustin is struggling spiritually.

Sister **Glenn Kimberlin** is shut in.

Rachel Crawford's aunt, Gail Stein, is in the midst of her treatments for breast cancer.

Bill Morelan's mother passed early last week.

Taylor Osterling had a tracheotomy and remains hospitalized on a ventilator.

Shannon Gilbert is receiving treatments for breast cancer.

Rachel Knollman's continues her cancer treatments and is feeling some better.

Robert Brundige, Richard's brother, is in Parkside Manor in Cynthiana dealing with some issues. **Sarah Brundige**, Richard's mother, is in Cambridge Place Nursing Home and in need of our prayer.

Let's also remember **David Day and his wife, Michelle Oxendine, Ron Catchen, Chuck McDavitt, and David Blakeman.**

Rejoice!

Our brother **Jim Edwards** was restored to the Lord last Sunday evening! Let's be there to support and encourage him.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

There will be a men's meeting today at 4:30 PM. Men, please make your plans to attend.

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE FOR 1/7-13:

Sunday: Ex 15-16, Ps 33, Mark 12

Monday: Ex 17-19, Ps 34, Mark 13

Tuesday: Ex 20-21, Ps 35, Mark 14

Wednesday: Ex 22-23, Ps 36, Mark 15

Thursday: Ex 24-25, Ps 37:1-22, Mark 16

Friday: Ex 26-27, Ps 37:23-40, Luke 1

Saturday: Ex 28, Ps 38, Luke 2

SERMON TOPICS:

Sunday AM. **The Eldership--3**

The congregation's obligations to the elders.

Sunday PM. How to destroy an enemy

CLASS INFORMATION:

We will start lesson 12 this morning.