

“A GROWING CHURCH”

Acts 9:31

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INTRODUCTION

Remember the changed life of Saul, his surrender to service, and his sacrificial service with a smile—**See Romans 12:11**: “*Not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.*”

What church does Luke refer to here:

- Identity—Expansion by persecution
- Galilee—Cf. Chapter 8 for Samaria; undoubtedly many believers in Galilee.
- Not a reference to the “universal church—no mention of Damascus, Tarsus, etc.

The Lord wants the church to grow—Matthew 16:18.

- It is His church.
- He is the Builder.
- He guarantees its ultimate success.
- We may have confidence in our ministry because of Him.

This passage speaks of TWO KINDS of growth, and speaks of TWO ESSENTIAL QUALITIES for growth.

God wants our church to grow. Will you be part of that growth?

I. TWO KINDS OF GROWTH

A. The Peace of the Church

- Meaning of “peace”
- Edification—_____ and inward “building up”
- See Eph. 4:12-16—Paul often uses this term for spiritual growth.

B. The Increase of the Church—_____ and outward

The Lord both **wants** and **expects** the church to grow—including our church!

See Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7; 11:21, 24; 14:1, 21—etc.

*Yes, the Lord wants the church to grow spiritually and numerically, but there are **two essential qualities** in order to experience such growth.*

II. TWO ESSENTIAL QUALITIES FOR GROWTH

A. The _____ of the Lord

- Reverence

- _____ Him—attentiveness and attitude
- _____ to Him—obedience
- Humility—turning from Sin in _____, thoughts, and _____.

B. The _____ of the Holy Spirit

- Jesus promised another “Comforter”.
- The Spirit enables believers to engage in such a “comforting” process.
- See Romans 12:10, 15; Galatians 6:2; Colossians 3:12-14

CONCLUSION

God wants us to grow!

God wants our Church to grow.

Growth is not dependent upon our wisdom, our plans, our work, or upon any persons.

GOD BRINGS GROWTH UPON A CHURCH WHOSE PEOPLE:

Fear God

Share the comfort of the Holy Spirit.