

May 23rd & 24th, 2026

Churches Strengthened and Growing in the Faith

Acts 16:5

“As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. ⁵So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.” Acts 16:4-5

The Pattern of Church Growth in Acts

Acts 2:41, “So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.”

Acts 2:47, “And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

Acts 4:4, “But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.”

Acts 5:14, “And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.”

Acts 6:1, 7, “Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number... And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.”

Acts 9:31, “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.”

✧ The early church grew rapidly as the Gospel was preached clearly and received with joy. Growth was both spiritual (strengthened in faith) and numerical (increased daily).

Strengthened in the Faith

❖ The Message: Salvation by Grace, Not Works

Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Acts 15:11 “But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.”

📖 Galatians 1:6-9

✧ The Gospel must remain simple and Christ-centered, not mixed with human works or legalism. The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) clarified that salvation is by faith in Christ alone.

❖ The Practice: Removing Obstacles to the Gospel

✧ Paul and his companions delivered the Jerusalem Council's decision to the churches, ensuring unity and clarity (Acts 16:4).

✧ Acts 16:3 – Paul circumcised Timothy, not as a requirement for salvation, but to avoid unnecessary offense and keep the focus on Christ.

1 Corinthians 9:22 “I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.”

✧ Remove distractions and stumbling blocks so the Gospel remains the central message.

The Joy of the Gospel: Excitement That Spreads

- ❖ **The Gospel Received with Joy**—circumcision and keeping the law of Moses were not part of salvation.

Acts 15:31 “And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.”

Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.”

Colossians 2:13-14 “And you, who were dead in your trespasses... God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”

- ↳ The Gospel brings joy because it offers forgiveness, new life, and freedom from guilt. When received with joy, by faith, and with an understanding of the grace involved in the cross of Christ, it naturally spreads to others.

❖ **Excited People Sharing Their Faith**

◆ **Biblical Examples:**

- ↳ Woman at the well (John 4)
- ↳ Man freed from demons (Mark 5)
- ↳ John the Baptist

The Call: Strengthen and Share the Simple Gospel

- ❖ **Strengthen the Church by sharing what you love about Christ with others.**

2 Timothy 1:13 “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”

(Greg Stier Pattern: G.O.S.P.E.L)

- G. God created us to be with him. (Genesis 1-2)
- O. Our sins separate us from God. (Genesis 3)
- S. Sin cannot be removed by good deeds. Genesis 4-Malachi 4. (O.T.)
- P. Paying the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again. (Matthew to Luke)
- E. Everyone who trusts him has eternal life. (John)
- L. Life with Jesus starts now and lasts forever. (Acts to Revelation)

Colossians 2:13-14 “And you, who were dead in your trespasses... God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”

Colossians 2:19 “...the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.”

Ephesians 4:16 “From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Know the faith. Share your joy. Strengthen others.

❖ **Where is the Power of the Gospel?**

1 Corinthians 3:6 “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.”

John 12:32 “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

Matthew 7:13-14 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”

↵ The Gospel spreads where it is clear, simple, and Christ-focused. Growth comes from God as we faithfully proclaim Christ.

Application and Encouragement

- **Recognize your role:** Your presence and testimony help the church grow.
- **Worship first:** Keep Christ at the center of all you do.
- **Be ready for open doors:** The Spirit leads to opportunities where people are seeking truth.
- **Obey the call:** All believers are called to make disciples and share what excites us about Christ.
- **Keep the message simple:** Salvation is a gift, not earned by works.

Ephesians 2:8-9 *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

Romans 1:16 *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.”*

- **Live as forgiven people:** Let your life reflect the joy and freedom found in Christ.

Endnotes:

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