

HISTORY OF THE SMALL CHURCH AND HOW IT CAME TO BE SO SMALL

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

~1 Corinthians 15:58

1. The Dilemma

- a. The mission is to be God’s ambassadors to “all men” – 1 Tim 2:4, Eph 3:9
- b. But the world we live in is presently evil rejecting God – Gal 1:4, Eph 2:2-3
- c. Paul said our labour is not in vain – 1 Cor 15:58, Gal 6:9
- d. But he saw many in his ministry turn on him and away from him – Gal 4:11
- e. All in Asia turned away from Paul by the end – 2 Tim 1:15, 4:9-16
- f. The Lord alone stood with Paul - 2 Tim 4:17
- g. Those that mattered were the faithful men – 2 Tim 4:11, 2:2
- h. The church has a history of being small because the message gets in our way

2. Will Right Division Ever Catch On?

- a. The easy way to grow = disguise, compromise, water down the message
- b. What is right is more important than drawing a crowd – Gal 1:8-10, 1 Tim 3:15
- a. Only eight survived the flood - 1 Peter 3:20
- b. The whole earth disobeyed in Genesis 11:1
- c. Abraham’s great nation of Israel became a little flock – Luke 12:32, Rom 9:6
- d. Samuel, Gideon, Daniel, Jeremiah, Elijah were all alone (1 Kings 18:21, 19:14)
- e. Jesus said about the kingdom: few there be that find it - Mat 7:13-14
- f. Paul laid the foundation and was stoned - 1Cor 15:10; 2Cor 11:23-30
- g. Our message is truth, but people by and large don’t want it – 2 Cor 4:1-4

3. What Paul did to “Lose” People

- a. He focused on Bible study and doctrine – 1 Tim 1:3,4:13; 2 Tim 2:15
- b. He identified and refused wrong doctrine – 1 Tim 4:1-6, Rom 16:17
- c. He separated from people: Titus 3:10, 2 Tim 3:5, 1 Cor 5:9, 2 Thes 3:6
- d. He corrected people when they were wrong – 1 Cor 3:1-2, 6:5; Gal 4:16
- e. He took away the monetary incentive – 2 Cor 9:7, Titus 1:11
- f. He taught that it is not about your life anymore – 2 Cor 5:14-15, 1 Cor 6:19-20
- g. He taught the church under Christ, not under a priest – 1 Cor 12:12, 1 Tim 3:5
- h. He did not teach religious traditions, days, or the law – Gal 4:9-11, Col 2:16
- i. He taught something more excellent than miracles – 1 Cor 12:31, 13:6
- j. He taught a message of the cross that appeared foolish – 1 Cor 1:18, 1:22-23
- k. His pattern was teach faithful people not the most people – Rom 3:4, 1 Cor 4:1-3

4. The Future of the Small Church

- a. The small church that is faithful to right doctrine will survive and grow
- b. We continue because our hope is not ashamed – Rom 5:2
- c. Our rejoicing is in the Lord for his truth – Phil 2:14-16, 3:17, 4:4