

THEY CONTINUED STEDFASTLY

One of the characteristics of the Jerusalem church was their steadfastness. Luke by inspiration wrote, “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42). The words “they continued stedfastly” are translated from one Greek word (proskartereo) which is defined as “to continue to do something with intense effort, with the possible implication of despite difficulty - ‘to devote oneself to, to keep on, to persist in.’” (from Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain. Copyright © 1988 United Bible Societies, New York. Used by permission).

This characteristic, steadfastness, is needed desperately in the church in every generation. This day is no exception. Just as there is a need in the workplace for dependable workers, so there is a need, a greater need, in the church for dependable workers. The fact that there is no greater work, no greater business, no greater cause than the church of Christ, emphasizes the need to be steadfast.

The early church was steadfast in the apostles’ doctrine. They studied the teaching of the apostles. They did not have access to the written words of the apostles as we do today; yet they listened in order to learn and apply the teaching to their lives. The fact that one does not learn everything at once, or in one sitting, highlights the importance of steadfastness in learning the truth of God’s word. Though the occasion was different, the principle stated by Isaiah applies in our learning: “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little. (Isaiah 28:10).

Wednesday Night Bible Study is a litmus test. Those who attend indicate their interest in studying the Bible and helping the church to grow. They love the Lord, the church, and the truth. Somewhere I read something like: Those who attend Sunday morning do so because they like the preacher; those who attend Sunday night do so because they like the church; and those who attend Wednesday night do so because they love the truth.

There are more Bibles on the market and in the home today than ever before; but there is also more ignorance of what the Scriptures teach than ever before. Many today could not tell you whether Jesus was crucified on Calvary or shot at Bunker Hill. They know more about sports figures, celebrities, rock stars, and political figures than they do about Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jesus, Peter, Paul, James, John, etc. They know what the news of the day is, but do not know the good news of Jesus.

The Jerusalem church was steadfast in fellowship. The word “fellowship” means “joint participation.” They were steadfast in participating together. A group cannot work together for a common cause if it is not together. The word in this context may be a reference to their giving. It is used for giving in other places (II Cor. 8, 9). Regardless as to the application of the word in Acts 2:42, the early church gave regularly as was commanded (1 Cor. 16:1-2). They were steadfast in then- giving. We have some good dependable givers here, but we also have some who, when absent from the services, feel no compunction to make up their contribution when they return. When trouble comes their way, they do not hesitate to call upon the church. They, when in need, depend upon the church; but the church, which is always in need, cannot depend upon them. Needless to say, they are a part of the church. And if the church as a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, then the church is weak indeed.

The first church continued stedfastly in the breaking of bread; that is, partaking of the Lord’s supper. This was a regular practice. It was done every first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Remember the definition given earlier? To continue stedfastly is “to continue to do something with intense effort, with the possible implication of despite difficulty - ‘to devote oneself to, to keep on, to persist in.’” I must frankly admit to you that there are some in this congregation who do not manifest this wonderful characteristic - steadfastness. They look for excuses to stay away from worshiping the Lord with other saints. They can be so puny on Sunday that they just cannot get out for a few hours to worship; but come Monday, they have made a miraculous recovery so that they can be at work

on time, go to the grocery store, and generally run all over the creation! The sniffles can keep them away on Sunday, but nothing short of death will keep them from work on Monday or other errands that they just must get done. Brethren (and sisters, too), we need steadfastness.

Steadfastness and prayer go together. They do in Acts 2:42. Luke records that Jesus had spoken “a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). Paul said, “Pray without ceasing” (I Thess. 5:17). “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” (Luke 22:31-32). People who pray regularly will be steadfast; people who are steadfast will pray regularly. They go hand-in-hand.

When we consider what the earlier saints endured to serve Jesus, how can any one of us use such flimsy excuses to keep us from being steadfast in service to the King of kings and Lord of lords? Paul exclaimed:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39).

Paul wrote, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” (1 Cor. 15:58). Again, he said, “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.” (Heb. 3:14). Let us be characterized by steadfastness.

Ben F. Vick, Jr. from *The Informer*

BIRTHDAY

Kyle Greer, 01-28.

ILL

Sunday: Gary Cole. **Wednesday:** Gary Cole, Sarah and Jill Marcum. Wilba Hopkins had cataract surgery on Tuesday of last week. Bob Adams is undergoing treatment at the Shawnee Mission Medical Center.

Those battling cancer: Jamal Abyad, Diane Cannon, David Cole, and Ledgia Campbell. Please remember these, as well as: Meredith Greer, Millie Robertson, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

HOME BOUND

Bob Adams resides at Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

OUT OF TOWN

The Nemechek's and Lynda Cole were in Hutchison, KS last weekend visiting with relatives. Robin Brown was working out of town this week.

MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING

There will be a special Men's Business Meeting this Sunday following our AM worship. All men of the congregation are encouraged to attend this meeting.

POT LUCK DINNER

Our monthly Pot Luck Dinner will be held next Sunday, February 4, following our AM worship. Plan to come and enjoy the good food and good company.

INDIA MISSIONS

Jim O'Connor and John Shafer left for India on January 15 and will return on February 14. There is a report from John Shafer on the bulletin board in the foyer.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 37; Sunday PM, 33; Wednesday PM, 35.

Those To Serve

January 28, 2007

BUILDING AND COMMUNION.....Thomas

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Joel Nelson
SONG LEADER..... George Thomas
OPENING PRAYER John Dodson
PRESIDE..... Ken Greer
ASSIST..... Jared Nelson
ASSIST..... John James
CLOSING PRAYER..... Steve Brown

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER Myron Nebergall
CLOSING PRAYER..... Jeff Nemechek
LORD'S SUPPER..... Ken Greer

WEDNESDAY 31st

SONG LEADER..... 5th Wednesday Singing
INVITATION John Cody Carter

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Morning Worship 10:30 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

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