

Unfavorable Circumstances July 18th, 2020

Pastor Gary Ford

Script - Esther 4:14 Who knows if you have come to the kingdom...

It doesn't appear that with all of our current problems it would be a good time to grow a church. You could say that circumstances were not favorable at this time to move forward.

A. Current events

1. The Corona virus pandemic has cause a lot of grief

a. Loss of income by the closing of the economy

b. Pent up emotions by sheltering in place for months

c. Protest because of the death of George Floyd seem to be the spark that ignited the keg of dynamite.

d. Closure of businesses and houses of worship.

e. Businesses burned because of the riots... so they will never reopen.

f. Houses of worship could re-open for a while, but with many restrictions (25% capacity; no singing, no SS classes for the little children, no fellowship meals, etc).

It doesn't appear that with all of our current problems it would be a good time to grow a church. You could say that circumstances were not favorable at this time to move forward. But let's look at the history of the Christian church.

B. History of the early church.

1. When Jesus was crucified it left his followers sad and confused. (Lk. 24).

2. They were hiding behind a locked door, "for fear of the Jews" (Jn. 20:19).

3. Pentecost took place and the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them. He gave them understanding, encouragement and power to proclaim the message of a risen Savior in the midst of their crisis.
4. The result was that they shared their new understanding and they ended up baptizing 3000 in a day (Acts 2:40-41).
5. They healed a man by Solomon's gate (Acts 3:1-10).
6. God blessed the disciples with special miracles (even Peter's passing shadow) (Acts 5:12-16). They shared their convictions with others around them in the temple and the Jewish leaders condemned them for "filling Jerusalem" with their teaching (Acts 5:26-27). Then they threw them in prison (Acts 5:17-18).
7. God released them and told them to continue to proclaim the good news (Acts 5:19-20).
8. They were beaten and released (Acts 5:40-42).
9. Stephen was stoned (Acts 6:8-7:60).
10. Saul of Tarsus persecuted the church and the church was scattered about (Acts 8:1-3).
11. Saul was not content persecuting the Christians in Jerusalem alone, but obtained letters to chase them down and persecute them more in other cities too (Acts 9:1-2).
12. But then Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-7).

C. Analysis

1. Undesirable circumstances and even persecution has not stopped the spreading of the gospel but in many times it has aided in the spreading and advancement of the gospel.
2. Difficult circumstances for God's people and church are not limited to just the N.T. alone...
3. Daniel in exile in the lion's den (Dan. 6).
4. Daniel's 3 friends in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3).
5. Esther under the death decree (Esther 4:14).

D. Summary of what we can do (Acts 9).

1. We, like Paul have to encounter Jesus to wake us up from our fixed mind set and normal routines.
2. Sometimes we have to be willing to admit that we are blind and need to be (Acts 9:8).
3. God was not only working to lead Saul had to lead Ananias too (Acts 9:11-16). Stated twice!
4. Saul was told that he was on the wrong pathway but he was chosen by God and God had a special purpose for him in sharing the gospel (Acts 9:17-18).
5. Paul recounts this experience in (Acts 22:12-16).
6. Paul became a major force for the spreading of the gospel, inspiring many others and starting many churches.
7. The book about suffering example
8. 1 Pet. 1: and 1 Pet. 4:12?
9. God knows in advance what the believers will pass through. (4 horsemen).
10. Nathaniel said “Can anything good come out of Nazareth? It is not the difficulty of the unfavorable circumstances that determines whether or not the church will grow, but the shining examples that come forth by the power of God working in their lives that will make a difference.
11. Esther 4:14