

LIVING TRUTH

A C T S

THE **NEW**  
COVENANT

Filling Jerusalem

MESSAGE GUIDE

## MESSAGE GUIDE

*This Message Guide may be a little different from those that you have used before.*

*The purpose of these Notes is not an in-depth study of the scriptures used, but rather to assist you or your Study Group as you reflect on this message given by Pastor Brett McBride.*

*We present questions in order to stimulate discussion. Sometimes we will give you the answer ... sometimes not. At other times a statement or a theme is presented for your consideration.*

*As you allow the Holy Spirit to guide the direction of your study and discussions we pray the flexibility of this Message Guide will help you as you delve more deeply into Charles' message, and that you will unearth more lessons from the Lord that may not have been immediately obvious.*

# MESSAGE GUIDE & QUESTIONS

## The New Covenant Series

### PART 1 – WAITING PATIENTLY

#### *Acts 1:1-11*

1. Read and consider Luke 1:1-4. What to these verses tell us?

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2. The book of Acts was written by Luke as a legal brief for a Roman official named 'Theophilus'; but what significant purpose does it fulfill for Christians?

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3. As we look at the period of transition between 'the resurrection' and the 'birth of the church' on Pentecost, we are going to look at 3 things:

i. The P \_\_\_\_\_ Required

ii. The P \_\_\_\_\_ Promised

iii The P \_\_\_\_\_ that is Constant

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4. Read and consider Acts 1:1-11

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5. This is the essential starting ground for us before we enter Christian service... Why?

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6. **i. The Patience Required**

Read and consider Acts 1:3-5. Why did Jesus have to COMMAND the disciples not to leave Jerusalem?

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7. Read and consider Acts 1:6-8

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8. What purpose is there when God calls us to wait?

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9. In the 'waiting' they end up receiving the 'Promised Power' Which is ?

i. 'the gift My Father promised

ii. You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit,

iii You will be clothed with power from on high

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10. What is this 'gift' for? What is this 'power for'?  
And what is the 'Holy Spirit' for?

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11. So here is a question for you: What should we spend our time doing when God has us in a season of waiting, not knowing, and not seeing?

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### Final Thoughts

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Transitions are, by nature, very unsettling as they entail moving from the familiar to something that is unfamiliar.

The early church went from the excitement at the reception of Jesus during the triumphal entry to Jerusalem, to seeing their dreams cast down during the crucifixion.

From the overwhelming joy at His resurrection, to all their preconceived ideas being shaken.

**Jesus made them wait in a difficult and dangerous situation so to strengthen their dependence upon Him.**

## The New Covenant Series

### PART 2 – FROM BEING SCATTERED TO BEING GATHERED

#### Genesis 11

1. Please read and consider Genesis 11

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2. A quick summary of human history up to this point:

In Genesis 3 –

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In Genesis 6 –

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In Genesis 9-10 –

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3. This brings us to: **i. The Plans of Man**

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4. From Genesis 10 what do we learn about 'Nimrod'?

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5. What is the difference between what God commanded the people to do [after the flood], and what the people [under Nimrod] decided they wanted to do?

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## Final Thoughts

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Babel later became Babylon, a city that has always played a leading role in false ‘worship’. Consider this ‘Tower of Babel’ and what its purpose really was:

6. What was God’s response to ‘The Plans of Man’?  
Read Genesis 11:5-9

- It was a brick building filled with sand.
- It had a stairway to the top that would reach the heavens.
  - It would act as a gateway – a pathway to the divine.
- At the top was a room with a bed and a sink to refresh themselves.
- Towers were erected to different gods as symbols of their worship
- **It went past simple idolatry – it portrayed God as having needs.**
- **It was the beginnings of the ‘humanistic’ approach to the divine.**

7. Read and consider: Psalm 135:15 and Isaiah 14:13-15

8. Right after God **scatters** the people He puts **HIS PLAN** into action.

## The New Covenant Series

### PART 3 – A WHOLE NEW FREEDOM

*Acts 3:1-0*

#### ii The Plan of God

Read and consider Genesis 12:1-4

#### 9. iii The Promise Fulfilled

Read and consider Acts 2:1-13

1. Please read and consider Acts 3:1-20

2. We should first of all take a brief look at the religious climate in Israel at the time.

3. Within this system of New Testament religion what was one of the common perceptions?

4. And what did this mean for a cripple, or a blind person or a leper?

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5. So what is it that the OLD Covenant law reveals to us?

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6. And this, of course, is why we need the Gospel of Jesus Christ – and what does that do for us?

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7. To further understand the contrast between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Please read and consider: Hebrews 10:11, Hebrews 10:1, Hebrews 8:7, Hebrews 7:18

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8. Read and consider also: Hebrews 10:14, Hebrews 7:27, Hebrews 9:28, Hebrews 10:16 & 17

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9. **ii Brutal Truth**  
Read and consider Acts 3:11-16

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10. **iii. Bringing Good News**

Read and consider Hebrews 11:17-20

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### Final Thoughts

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Many people today are ‘crippled’ in their relationship with God.

- People who have tried hard to live a ‘religious’ life that operates on Old Covenant principles. [‘Do this and you will be blessed; but if you don’t do them you will be cursed]
- Old Covenant religion appears righteous and devout, but always comes up short and leaves us distant from God.
- Even in our day we Christians have created a ‘Christian Talmud’ – as set of exterior rules.

Maybe you are crippled by:

- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| Religion      | Sexual Addiction |
| Law Keeping   | Drugs            |
| Rules         | Fear             |
| Shame & Guilt | Worry            |
| Alcohol       | Gambling         |

**Religious observance [what we do for God]  
leaves us crippled and unable to walk.  
The Reality of Christ [what He did for us]  
brings complete healing, times of refreshing,  
new life and new power to walk.**

The New Covenant Series

PART 4 – NO OTHER NAME

Acts 4:1-22

1. Read and consider Acts 4:1-22

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2. A 'name' can be good or bad.  
Suggest a few examples of this.

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3. To recap: God has instituted a New Covenant with His people, and has performed a miracle through Peter & John to capture the attention of the people at the Temple in Jerusalem

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4. i. **The Confines of Careless Theology**

Read and consider Acts 4:1-4

We need to consider 'Who were the Sadducees', and 'What is their theology?'

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5. What **were** the 'Confines of their Confused or Careless Theology?'

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6. Read and consider the following scriptures:

1 Timothy 4:1

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1 Timothy 4:3-4

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1 Timothy 4:16

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7. Now go to Acts 4:5-7

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8. **We now see a totally different Peter.** Read and consider Acts 4:8. What is different about Peter and John? And WHY are they different?

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9. Now, Peter – filled with the Holy Spirit – makes a statement that is a complete game-changer to all theology. Read and consider Acts 4:12

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10. Saved from what? Read and consider Romans 3:9-18

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## Final Thoughts

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Throughout our Christian life we are often tested, very often in our workplace by unbelievers. We have a tendency to try to avoid these situations, seeing them as traps, but in fact: **The purpose of a test is not to trap you or to teach you something; It is simply to see if you have already learned what has been taught.**

**Salvation is found in no one else:**

- Salvation is not found in religion.
- It is not found in a checklist of rules.
- It is not found in words on paper.
- It is not found in modern meditation.
  - It is not found in psychology.
  - It is not found in happiness.

Salvation is found in **A PERSON**  
And only **ONE PERSON!**

Finally read and consider Hebrews 10:16. **Salvation is by faith in what HE HAS DONE, not what we do!**

### The New Covenant Series

## PART 5 – THE HEART OF THE MATTER

*Acts 4:32-5:11*

1. Please and consider Acts 4:32-5:11

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2. What are the 3 ways in which the Enemy attacks the early church in Acts?

P \_\_\_\_\_

M \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_

F \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_

3. Here in Acts 4 & 5 Luke draws our attention to:

i. G \_\_\_\_\_ Filled G \_\_\_\_\_

ii. G \_\_\_\_\_ Filled H \_\_\_\_\_

4. **i. Grace Filled Generosity.** Read and consider Acts 4:32-35

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5. What was at work in them?

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6. How was this GRACE manifested through them?

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7. Sadly, however, there was also manifest some: **Greed-filled Hypocrisy.** Read and ponder Acts 5:1-6

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8. What was the actual offence here? Read and consider again verse 4

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9. What was at the heart of the 'gift' of Ananias & Sapphira?

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10. To close please read and consider these two warning from Jesus: Matthew 6:1-4 and Matthew 23:25

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### Final Thoughts

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**Grace points to God's hand at work.  
Greed wants praise for itself.**

### The New Covenant Series

## PART 6 – THE CHALLENGE OF LEADERSHIP

*Acts 6:1-7*

1. Please read Acts 6:1-7

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2. The context is: The church is growing. God is moving powerfully. Opposition is intensifying. Enemy's tactics to stop the church continue to take place'

Acts 6 reveals the importance of Cultivating...

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3. **i. Cultural Awareness**  
Read and consider Acts 6:1

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4. **ii. Leadership Awareness**  
Read and consider Acts 6:2

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5. When you have time it would be good to read and ponder Romans 12 & 1 Corinthians 12

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6. **Our Leadership Awareness needs to be coupled with Gospel Awareness.**

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7. **iii. Change Awareness**  
Read and consider Acts 6:3-4

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8. In this 'change' 3 great management principles are recommended.

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9. How did the people respond to the Apostles recommendation?  
Read and ponder Acts 6:5

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### Final Thoughts

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When we put our faith in Christ we experience **Salvation**.  
The Spirit comes into our lives and we begin the  
process of **Sanctification**.

**Salvation** is an immediate event.  
**Sanctification** is a process that lasts a lifetime.

## LEADER'S MESSAGE GUIDE

*This Leader's Guide is prepared to help the Study Group Leader to keep the discussions moving along. Maybe your people will come up with different answers, or perhaps they will need a little prompting from you.*

*Remember, you want to encourage your people to fully participate. This is not a 'teaching session' by the Group Leader, but rather a discussion group. This may at first seem like a contradiction, but you will need for the Lord to give you wisdom to keep the discussions 'on track' whilst also allowing the Holy Spirit to direct your path.*

# LEADER'S MESSAGE GUIDE & QUESTIONS

## The New Covenant Series

### PART 1 – WAITING PATIENTLY

#### *Acts 1:1-11*

1. These verses tell us the 'purpose of Acts', as written by the Luke, who also wrote the Gospel bearing his name.
2. The Book of Acts provides a bridge of understanding between the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles.
3. As we look at the period of transition between 'the resurrection' and the 'birth of the church' on Pentecost, we are going to look at 3 things:
  - i. The Patience Required
  - ii. The Power Promised
  - iii. The Prayer that is Constant
4. Apart from the obvious, what is it that links the Gospel of Luke with the 'Acts of the Apostles'?

The Gospel of Luke is all about what *Jesus began to do and to teach*. The Book of Acts is a recording of *what HE continues to be doing and teaching*, **but now through His Body the Church.**

5. This is the essential starting ground for us before we enter Christian service... Why? Because:  
It is not about 'us' doing it. **It is about Him doing it.**  
It is not about 'us' teaching. **It is about Him teaching. It is about Him leading. It is about Him increasing, and us losing ourselves in Him.**

**Our understanding of this essential truth is foundational to how we live the Christian life.** Because we continually forget and drift from this understanding, it becomes a repeated lesson in the Christian life.

6. Because Jerusalem had become a dangerous place for them since Jesus had been crucified. Having basked in the triumphal entry with Jesus, they were now afraid of being recognized as the disciples of Jesus. Things can change so quickly.

In our western society we make 'the church' to be a safe haven from the troubles of the world. We retreat into 'holy huddles'. But that was not an option for the church in the New Testament.

They were 'commanded' to wait in a dangerous place.

7. The disciples were not good at waiting, and spent their time speculating on the future; but Jesus was not going to reveal that to them.

Sometimes God just says 'Wait' and trust me for your future... It is not for you to know.

8. Times of waiting and not knowing foster our dependence upon Him. As we get older, mature believers actually become content with not knowing.

9. **ii. The Power Promised**

Read again and consider 1 Acts 4, 5 & 8

10. The gift is His Holy Spirit, which provides us with His Power, so that we can effectively witness to the saving Grace of Jesus Christ.

The Spirit is the one doing His work – And we get to go along for the ride. As we cooperate with His leading.



## The New Covenant Series

### PART 3 – A WHOLE NEW FREEDOM

*Acts 3:1-0*

1. Our study today will break down into 3 sections:
  - i. Born Into Bondage
  - ii. Brutal Truth
  - iii. Bringing Good News
2. **i. Born Into Bondage**
  - Israel was a covenant nation based on the Law
  - All children would have been schooled on the first 5 books of the Bible.
  - There are 13 verses of blessing for obedience.
  - There are 53 verses of curses for disobedience.
  - People would be exiled for disobedience to the Covenant.
  - They had a ‘law based’ legislated relationship with God.
3. One of the common perceptions within this system of New Testament religion was that sickness, lameness and disease was a curse for din in you life?  
  
Read and consider John 9:2. Even Jesus’ disciples had that attitude towards sickness during their time with Jesus.
4. Life under this Old Covenant was brutal for all humanity, but for the disabled and blind etc. it was impossible. A constant reminder that they cannot ‘enter in’, and that there is distance between them and God.
5.
  - i. We are all equally born into bondage.
  - ii. We are born spiritually crippled from birth.
  - iii. No matter how hard we try, Religious good behavior does not save us, and does not liberate us from our bondage.

- iv. The LAW could only reveal our inability – our sin.
- v. The Law leaves us helpless – outside of the holiness of God.
- vi. Still separated by the curtain.

**The Law could only pronounce a person to be unclean – it can only expose our condition.**

6. It enables us to enter into God’s presence, and walk with those burdens lifted from us.
7. Hebrews 8:13. By calling the covenant ‘new’, **he has made the ‘Old’ one obsolete.**
8. **The Gospel of Jesus Christ restores us.** And it’s all about HIM.
9. Peter uses this event to drive home the Truth and the Message of the Gospel! **We can be healed because of Jesus only. Period!**
10. Look beyond the miracle to the message.  
God moves around us to **awaken us from our ignorance.**

**What covenant are you under? The Old – where all you can see is your disability, and the distance between you and God? Or the New – where all you see is Christ and the freedom you have?**

## The New Covenant Series

### PART 4 – NO OTHER NAME

*Acts 4:1-22*

1. This will be the basis for our study today.
2. We say things like: He/she has a ‘good’ name. His/her name was dragged through the mud. In Acts 4 we learn that there is a name that stands out amongst all names throughout history.

3. Today we will explore what happens as a result of this proclamation of this New Covenant, under these 3 headings:
  - i. **The Confines of Careless Theology**
  - ii. **The Courage of Truth**
  - iii. **The Centrality of the Name**
4. **Who were the Sadducees?**
  - They were an influential group among the Sanhedrin, highly educated and well-off – they were the Aristocracy of Israel.
  - The High Priest and Temple Authorities were Sadducees, and they were in charge of Temple Worship.
  - They were among the group that rejected Jesus as the ‘son of God’ or ‘messiah’.

#### **What was their Theology?**

- They believed that God’s covenant with the Jewish people centered around proper Temple observance.
- They didn’t believe in the Resurrection – so they didn’t believe in the afterlife.
- They did not believe in the existence of angels or demons.
- They rejected the ‘tradition of the elders’ and insisted on only obeying the laws of Moses.

This was a major source of conflict between the Sadducees and the Pharisees since they don’t hold to the traditions or rabbinical teachings.

5. What **were** the ‘Confines of their Confused or Careless Theology?
  - They were concerned because Peter & John were teaching the Resurrection.
  - Their theology was getting in the way of their accepting Christ.
  - Despite the NEW covenant being confirmed through the message of Jesus Christ with miracles, signs and wonders... they were still trying to maintain the OLD covenant. Read and consider John 5:39-40
  - But perhaps worst of all; **Their ‘theology had become their God’.**

6. In these verses Paul is warning Timothy about bad theology and contaminated doctrine.
7. Acts 4:5-7. **ii. The Courage of Truth**  
**They were tested by the question, “By what power or what name do you do this?”** And Peter responded with Acts 4:8-12
8. Peter and John were now filled with courage.  
Why? Because they had been with Jesus, and they were now **filled with the Holy Spirit**
9. **This verse could be the most important verse you will ever hear, and it is what is central in all of human history!**  
**“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved”**
10. And we close by reading and considering Romans 3:19 & 20

### **The New Covenant Series**

## **PART 5 – THE HEART OF THE MATTER**

*Acts 4:32-5:11*

1. This will form the basis of today’s study.
2. The 3 ways in which the Enemy attacks the early church in Acts are:  
Persecution | Moral Compromise | False Teaching
3. **i. Grace Filled Generosity**  
**ii. Greed Filled Hypocrisy**

4. This is the second time in as many chapters that Luke draws attention to the health of the early Church, it was :-
  - Multi-generational, multi-ethnic, speaking many languages.
  - It numbered approximately 5,000 men – not including women and children.
  - It was of one heart and mind.
  - That oneness was manifest in their generosity of sharing their possessions.

In fact, look again at what it says in verses 33 & 34 of Acts 4

5. What was at work in them was:  
GRACE: the free and unmerited favor of God.
6. Through **GENEROSITY**.
  - They gave **VOLUNTARILY**.
  - Not under law because they **HAD** to, but because they were so overwhelmed by His Grace that they **WANTED** to.
  - People of means sold houses and property to meet the needs of others.
  - Text gives no indication that these people made themselves poor in doing so.

**A Grace-filled Heart is a Generous Heart: When you full realize and receive His amazing grace, generosity follows. In Acts 4: God's Grace was so powerfully at work in them, that there was no needy person among them.**

7. In the case of Ananias & Sapphira:
  - That situation escalated very quickly.
  - Peter spoke just one sentence and Ananias falls dead.
  - No discussion – just an accusation through Peter.
8. The offense was not the holding back the money; The offense was the lie! It was the hypocrisy! They lack integrity. They said it was all they had received – but it was only a part of the sum total. They could not be trusted!

9. Why would Ananias and his wife sell a property, but keep back some of the money, and then lie about it?
  - It was not Grace that was at the heart of this gift – **It was Greed.**
  - Greed for the praise of others.
  - Greed for a good reputation.
  - The so-called 'gift' was rooted in selfish motives

**You can appear to be charitable,  
but it can be done out of an impure heart!**

10. Are we **Honest** before God, or are we **Hypocritical** before Him?

### **The New Covenant Series**

## **PART 6 – THE CHALLENGE OF LEADERSHIP**

*Acts 6:1-7*

1. This will be the basis for our study today.
2.
  - i. Cultural Awareness
  - ii. Leadership Awareness
  - iii. Change Awareness
3. There is no denial that cultural tension did exist in the early church. Although we are a 'new creation' when we come to Christ, our old nature and upbringing will be challenges as Jesus brings things to the surface of our lives.

When we come to Christ, part of His work in our lives is planting His **Gospel Culture** – that begins to challenge and uproot our **human culture**.

On top of the cultural awareness, this event cultivates leadership awareness among the Apostles, as the church has grown to such a size that diversity in leadership roles and responsibilities are required,

#### 4. Leadership Awareness

- The church has grown rapidly.
- The daily distribution of food is an important responsibility of the church.
- Proper oversight of this ministry is required.
- That requires time and energy to do it well.
- As this part of the compassion ministry grows – the question becomes, how do they provide oversight to this growing part of the ministry?
- How do they manage the demands on their time?

Some people complain that the modern church operates like a Corporation, but it is important for us to remember that we serve a King – Who is establishing a Kingdom. Kingdoms must have organization – otherwise they fall.

5. There are a number of gifts required in the healthy organization of a Church body. These gifts enable healthy growth and development, and we need to have Leadership Awareness that clarifies priorities and delegates responsibilities appropriately.
6. The Apostles were to be His witnesses and proclaim the Gospel – but as the social compassion aspect grows in scope, so it will demand more of our time.

**In order for this challenge to be addressed, a change needs to occur. We need to have awareness of WHEN change is required.**

#### 7. Change Awareness

- The Apostles rightly discern their function.
- The Apostles rightly focus on prayer and preaching – because that was the primary function.
- It wasn't a matter of status, but of functionality – they were to be His witnesses, and the Church was 'devoted to the teaching of the Apostles'.

#### 8. In this 'change' 3 great management principles are implemented.

- i. Involve the people in the change process.
- ii. Set a criteria for decision making.
- iii. Endorse the new leadership.

#### 9. The results speak for themselves:

- The Word of God spread
- The number of disciples increased rapidly.
- A large number of priests became obedient to the faith.
- As the Church reorganized – explosive growth occurred.
- The delegation of responsibilities to trustworthy competent disciples was a part of God's plan for the Kingdom's expansion.
- The Priesthood of all believers – every part doing its designed function promotes growth within the Body and enables more people to be reached.
- **This is a crucial lesson for the Church?**