

## Challenges In The First Century Church

## The Challenge Of Sin

### Tremendous growth in the church.

Acts 2:41 – Three thousand

Acts 4:4 – Five thousand

Acts 6:7, *“Number of disciples increased greatly.”*

Acts 9:31, *“So the church throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied.”*

Acts 11:24, *“... and much people was added unto the Lord.”*

## The Challenge Of Sin

### Acts 5:1-11 First recorded sin in the church.

1. Peter exposed their sin and they both died.
2. Acts 5:11, *“And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.”*

## The Challenge Of Sin

### 1 Corinthians 5:1-7 – Even a small amount of leaven would contaminate the whole lump.

1. Note: verses 3-4 By the authority of Christ, the guilty was to be disciplined.
2. Keep the church morally pure.  
Ephesus. Revelation 2:2  
Thyatira. Revelation 2:20  
Sardis. Revelation 3:4

## The Challenge From Authorities

### Authority of the Jews. Acts 4:5-6

Court put on trial ... *“Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard.”*  
Acts 4:19-20; cf. 1 Peter 4:14-16

## The Challenge From Authorities

### Authority of the Jews. Acts 5:17ff

1. *“We must obey God rather than men ...”*  
Acts 5:29
2. Note: Acts 5:41-42
3. Stephen stoned. Acts 7

## The Challenge From Authorities

### Authority of the Jews. Acts 9:1ff

- *“But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord ...”*

## The Challenge From Authorities

### Authority of Herod. Acts 12:1-2

1. Death of James.
2. Arrest of Peter.

### Authority of the Magistrates in Philippi. Acts 16:22ff

1. Paul and Silas arrested, beaten, and imprisoned. Acts 16:22ff
2. Returned to Lydia’s house. Acts 16:35ff

## The Challenge From False Teachers

Jesus warned. Matthew 7:15; 24:4-5

Apostles warned.

1. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 – Satan has ministers.
2. 1 Timothy 4:1-3 – Some would depart from the faith.
3. 2 Timothy 4:1-4 – Men would turn from the faith.
4. 1 John 4:1-3 – False prophets gone out into the world.

12

## The Challenge From False Teachers

- *“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”* 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22
- *“Hold the pattern of sound words ...”* 2 Timothy 1:13
- No longer be tossed to and fro. Ephesians 4:14
- Not be carried away. Hebrews 13:9-19

13

## The Challenge From False Teachers In The Leadership

Elders to watch the flock. Acts 20:28-30

1. Danger from without. Verse 29
2. Danger from within. Verse 30
  - a. Paul had warned them night and day *“with tears.”* Verse 31
  - b. Commended them to the *“word of His grace which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified.”* Verse 32

## The Challenge From False Teachers In The Leadership

Preachers to “preach the word.” 2 Timothy 4:2

1. Some would preach the whims of the people. 2 Timothy 4:3; cf. Jeremiah 5:31-32

## The Challenge From Controversy In The Church

Some taught Gentiles to be circumcised. Acts 15:1-5

Truth revealed by:

- a. Approved example. Acts 15:7
- b. Necessary inference. Acts 15:12
- c. Direct statement. Acts 15:13
- d. Respect for God's silence. Acts 15:24

➤ Peter and Barnabas influenced by this controversy. Galatians 2:11-13 (cf. 2:4-5)

## Application And Conclusion

- God wants people to confront sin.
- Discipline must be practiced to protect the church and save the soul of the one in sin.
- *"We must obey God rather than men."*
- False teachers must be challenged.
- When we feel isolated, even paralyzed, remember we are not alone. *"Yet will I leave (me) seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal"* (1 Kings 19:18)