

GREATER BETHEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.

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“Investing in the Kingdom of God, by Sowing Seeds for the Saviour” – Matthew 13:24

The Marks of a Growing Church (Continued)

Scripture: Acts 2:42-47

April 16 and 23, 2024

Intro: *The Church at Sardis, Rev. 3:1-6.*

What are the **four characteristics of living things?**

- (1) **Living things are made up of cells.**
- (2) **They need food.**
- (3) **They exhibit growth.**
- (4) **They reproduce.**

The church at Sardis had a reputation for being alive, but they were as good as dead.

1. First, the cells of this church body were not working well.
2. This church had stopped taking in the right spiritual food.
3. They had stopped growing as a body.
4. A church in such bad shape was reproducing very little is probably safe.

Acts 2:42-47 reveal **certain marks** that can identify whether **Greater Bethel is a living church or a dying church.**

I. MARKED BY THE RIGHT KIND OF WORKS

A. v. 42 **They Were A Practicing People**

B. v. 44-46 **They Were A Practical People**

1. **They Were a Single People** - These early saints were a true body in every sense of the word. There was a mutual concern for each member that is lacking in most churches today.

According to the Bible, **there is only one body, 1 Cor. 12:12.** The members of that body, being one, are responsible for looking after the needs of that body.

2. **They Were Spiritual People** - A growing, living congregation is marked by spiritual people.

C. v. 47a **They Were a Praising People** - Notice that we do not find these people complaining, fighting, making excuses, etc. They are engaged in the practice of praising the Lord Jesus. They are using their mouths for a noble pursuit!

II. v. 43A **MARKED BY THE RIGHT KIND OF WITNESS**

A. v. 43 **The Community Was Attentive** - The people outside this congregation sat up and took notice of this group of saints. When the community sees God doing in us that which can only be done by God, then they will take notice of Greater Bethel.

B. v. 43 **The Community Was Astounded** –

Notice that "*fear*" was on these people who lived around this church. They were afraid to attack the church because the power of God was in that place. They were sold out to the Lord and operating under the power and energy of the Holy Spirit of God.

C. v. 47b **The Community Was Affected** –

Notice that **souls were saved by the Lord**. This church grew because it was what God wanted it to be and He blessed it in return.

III. v. 47b **MARKED BY THE RIGHT KIND OF WONDERS**

It is a great day when people become involved in the work of the church, but ministry picks up when the Lord gets personally involved in the work of the church.

A. v. 43, 47 **The Wonder Of His Blessings**

1. **He blessed them with His Peace (Unity)**
2. **He blessed them with His Power**
3. **He blessed them with His Presence**

B. v. 47 **The Wonder Of His Building** - The Lord added to His church! When God begins to pour His blessings out on a hungry, holy people, one of the advantages is that souls will be delivered.