

Theme: Luke describes the early church as thriving with continuous growth as it is strengthened by the Spirit through the means of grace to fulfill the Great Commission - even in the face of severe opposition..

## I. Intro – The Use of a Refrain

- A. A refrain - repeating words or music in art
- B. A great device to tie together a work of art
- C. This type of device used a lot in classical music
- D. Luke does something similar to tie together Acts

## II. Luke's Refrain - A Thriving Growth

- A. Remember the theme statement in Acts 1:8
  - 1. You will be empowered by the Spirit
  - 2. The church will thrive and grow
- B. The growth refrains in Acts
  - 1. Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24
  - 2. Acts 16:5; 19:20 (and 28:31 - 2 weeks)
  - 3. Luke pictures a thriving, growing church
- C. A continuously thriving Church
  - 1. Imperfect verb for increase (6:7; 12:24; 19:20)
  - 2. Imperfect verb for multiplied (6:7; 9:31; 12:24)
  - 3. This was a continuous increase & multiplication

## III. The Conditions Surrounding Thriving Growth

- A. The circumstances surrounding growth - opposition

- 1. The context of every single passage shows difficulty
    - a. Acts 6:7 - persecution; division in church
    - b. Acts 9:31 - persecution under Saul
    - c. Acts 12:24 - Herod kills James; arrests Peter
    - d. Acts 16:5 - Jerusalem council; Paul suffering
    - e. Acts 19:20 - Magicians and riot in Ephesus
  - 2. Ease does not produce growth!!
  - 3. The church thrives through opposition
  - 4. Be encouraged - He has overcome!
  - 5. I've read the end of the book - Jesus wins!
  - 6. More on this next week
- B. The means producing growth - Spirit through means of grace
- 1. The church is caused to thrive - by the Spirit
    - a. Passive - was caused to multiply (6:7; 9:31; 12:24)
    - b. Passive - was built up & strengthened (9:31; 16:5)
    - c. This is done by the Spirit - Acts 9:31
    - d. Promised Spirit's power for our mission - Acts 1:8
  - 2. Spirit works through the means of Grace - especially Word
    - a. Note Word increases - Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20
    - b. The Church thrives as Spirit empowers by the Word
    - c. Shorthand for Acts 2:42-47 (show 42,47)
- C. These summaries show Acts 1:8, 2:42-47 continue!!

- D. Don't look to gimmicks and fads - look to Spirit!
- E. Don't look to gimmicks and fads - look to Word!
- F. Jesus builds His Church through the means of grace
- G. Such a Church will thrive - no matter what!

#### **IV. The Fruit of Thriving Growth**

- A. People come to Jesus!
  - 1. Luke stresses people are coming to Jesus
  - 2. Church grew in numbers - Acts 6:7; 9:31; 16:5
  - 3. New believers turning to Christ in faith
- B. People from every group are coming
  - 1. Acts 6:7 - Jerusalem Jews, including priests
  - 2. Acts 9:31; 12:24 - Jews in Samaria; Galilee
  - 3. Acts 16:5 - Gentiles
  - 4. Acts 19:20 - magicians
  - 5. And remember Saul the Persecutor is converted!
  - 6. Nothing can stop the growth of God's People!!

#### **V. Applying the Word**

- A. Be encouraged - Christ is victorious!
  - 1. He has come, fought the Devil and won!
  - 2. He has conquered sin, death, hell, and Satan
  - 3. He has done this for us!

- B. Christ ensures the Church's thriving future
  - 1. We are His covenant people
  - 2. Bought with His blood, sealed by His Spirit
  - 3. Look to Him - and Thrive!
- C. Thriving Through the Lord's Table
  - 1. Here we see Christ's victory for us
  - 2. Here the Spirit meets us to give us power
  - 3. Here we are fed that we might Thrive for God's glory
  - 4. Come, eat, receive, and thrive!

**A Thriving Growth**  
Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20  
November 6, 2011  
Communion  
Deuteronomy 1:11

And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Acts 6:7

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

Acts 9:31

But the word of God increased and multiplied.

Acts 12:24

So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

Acts 16:5

So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

Acts 19:20