

# The Secrets of the Early Church's Success - Part 2

by G.W. North

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*The early church's success was due to their oneness, genuine prayer and worship, and living in the will of God.*

**Duration:** 45:42

**Scripture:** Acts 4:12, Acts 15:1

**Topics:** "Early Church"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being in the center of God's will. He challenges the audience to examine what they are preaching and exhibiting in their lives. The preacher highlights that the troubles in the church often arise from within, rather than from external forces. He references Acts 4:34, where the early believers sold their possessions and shared with those in need, emphasizing the importance of living by the law of God. The sermon concludes with a call to flow with love and grace in order to draw others to the gospel.

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## Transcript

Ah, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord. There it is. Oneness.

One accord. Nobody hesitated. Nobody hung behind.

Nobody had to have somebody like me in front of them to say, come on, you're not doing properly. Let's come. Let's get your heart in.

Let's get your voice in. Nobody sit there. It was genuine.

It was pure. Ah, it was right. It was the flowing of the Spirit.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. Oh, what would it be, beloved? And I want to tell you, it must be. And I give you permission, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to leave your fellowship, that you call your fellowship.

If they don't conform to this, I'm going to find some where they do. How about that? I don't care if it's called a fellowship. Leave it.

It isn't a fellowship. It is pretending under the name. And God wants us to see this very clear.

We hang on. We think we are going to change it. Listen, if the Holy Ghost can't change it, you won't.

Even if He can't, He meets the opposition that you will. They won't be changed. So get out.

What a great thing it is to understand this. Get out. Keep your garments clean.

Get out or you'll be embroiled in their quarrels. You'll be sucked in. Yes, you will.

It's a maelstrom of evil, boasting to be filled with the Spirit. What a great and glorious truth it is. Prayed with one accord.

Now look, I want you to look at this prayer with me again. Here it is. They heard, they knew all about the cross, all right.

They knew all about the blood. They knew all about this. Then they said, Oh Lord, we are sheltering under the blood.

You protect us. They were saying, Lord, you expose us. So they didn't say that, but that's the implication of their prayer.

Isn't it? You see. That's the whole implication of it. I was a little boy in London during the First World War.

That's surprising, isn't it? Some of you say, oh, he was in the First World War. That's right. It had nothing to do with it, of course.

I was in the First World War, and when the sirens used to go, I can remember some of you have heard me say this before, I'm sure. It was your fault for getting tapes or something. Here's the thing.

We used to go to a grand old couple. He was an elder deacon or whatever they want to call them, class leader in the Methodist church. Now, I'm going back a long time ago.

He and his wife, funnily enough, their name was Cave, brother and sister Cave, and they had an underground kitchen. I'll tell you the truth. I talk of refuge in the time of storm.

We used to go, and there blind Charlie would come, and he'd peddle away at the little harmonium, and he would sing. And when he got tired, my mother would play and sing, and some of us would be thrown down. Listen to this, all you people.

You listen to this, you lovey-dovey people. We were thrown onto an old bed of straw up in the corn. That was good enough for us.

Which isn't for your baby, is it? Oh, no. God doesn't believe all that stuff. We were on this bed of straw, and I used to sing, and one of the hymns I used to sing was, The Lord's our God, in Him we hide a shelter in the time of storm.

Is that right? Do you sing that? That's right, brother. What is it today? Don't tell me. Here, here, here is the great thing, beloved.

And we used to think of being protected, but they never did in the early church. My God, I was only a boy then. A baby, really.

About three, I can remember it. Under three, two. God wanted us to see, in Scripture, that they said, Lord... All right, what did they say? They said, Lord, Thou God.

And listen, they knew all about the cross, and all about the resurrection, and knew all about the blood, they knew all about the baptism of the Spirit, they knew all about, that's not what they said. Do you see where they went? Back to creation. Back to creation.

They had a vision of God. They'd heard the history of their own nation, for they were all Jews. They'd had the Old Testament read out to them about Moses crossing the Red Sea, and I don't know what.

They knew all about Joseph and Pharaoh, they knew all about Elijah and Elisha and calling down fire from heaven. They knew all about this. They knew everything.

They knew about it. Well, they didn't talk a little bit, none about that. We plead the blood, Lord, stop them doing this, stop them.

I'm not mocking. I'm showing you yourselves. They said, Lord, Thou God that created me, heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.

They saw that they were in the center of the will of the great Creator, and what was happening to them and around them had been foreknown, and it was in the will of God. Well, you wouldn't think it was in the will of God, Peter or John, would you, or new convert, for you to go to prison? Would you? You get all the churches praying for you, Lord, stop these horrible things. Am I right or wrong? There's been a marvelous, an evil marvel of a change.

I read this. I speak from pursuing a path that landed me in prison some years ago. Well, I speak from that position when I needn't have gone.

And prison, to me, became my first great Bible school. What did the Screws, sorry, Waters, did they come round and give you Bibles? No. Did the Chapman give them? No.

He was a hypocrite. Alone, where no one could interfere, and my precious little baby Judith couldn't keep me awake or distract me. And my wife couldn't say, dear this or dear that, and I was alone in a horrible cell.

With God. Oh, I don't mean to be away from them. With God.

I was in there in the will of God, no matter what the enemy said, or what the authorities said. But you don't believe these things are in the will of God, do you? That's why, I'll tell you why. Because you aren't yourself in the will of God.

I am? Oh, all right. Then why aren't we having the same results? Oh well, God changes. He's never changed His mind that this gospel should go to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Never. Never changed His mind that it should go by the flowing of the stream and not by the sending of a missionary society. Though that may be necessary in these days.

It goes, beloved, by the uprisings of the spring. God, Thou didst create the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them is. You prophesied through David, I'm changing the wording, follow me.

You prophesied through David that the heathen would rage and the people would imagine vain things and the kings of the earth would stand up and the rulers would gather together against the Lord and against His Christ or to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined. And only that. Now why are you moaning? Why are you groaning? I'll tell you, you have no vision of the truth.

God made this book of the Acts of the Apostles something better than trying to find out great miracles that took place. The greatest miracle is speaking right out of this chapter four. Everything's in His hands.

Everything. When you come right into the center of God's will, everything is perfect. Do you believe that? Oh, it's nice stuff to preach.

Keep preaching it, brother. But I'm not interested in preaching except that I am. I can't live without preaching.

Isn't that, beloved? Isn't that? Son, I want to ask you, you preach a man and I beg with you and I beg you, I go on my knees. What are you preaching? What are you exhibiting? What is happening? Listen. We're in the great creation cycle.

We're in it. I was talking about the new creation the other day. You remember, New Jerusalem.

We're in the great cycle. It circles this earth like we circle the sun. It's there.

Listen. Everything goes by law and in the church only the law of God. There have been substitutes.

I could name them, but you wouldn't like me to in case I name what goes on in your fellowship. Lord, oh Lord, strip me bare like the man that hung on the cross and was prepared to pay the price. Strip me bare, Lord, that I may be naked with him before thee in the church of his heart and of his desires.

For I know that thou wilt not change, oh Lord. I know thou wilt not change because it is 1990. And you won't change because of me.

Isn't that wonderful? The whole secret of the preaching of the gospel, beloved, is to flow with such love and grace and power that they'll come in and say, this is what I want. That's the whole purpose of it. Hallelujah.

Lord, alter our whole heart. Change everything. The other day I complained before you.

You say, well you're a complainer. Oh yeah, Jesus complained once. He said, I entered into your house.

You didn't kiss me. You didn't wash my feet. You should have done.

That's your job. Oh, he didn't complain and growl or anything like that. He said, you should have done it.

You should have done it. My complaint was that I listened to people prophesying and I hear condemnation in their voice that doesn't go with the things that they are saying. That's what I hear.

I do not hear. I hear people trying to be teachifying. It's an invention of mine, that word.

Teachifying. That's what they're trying to do. And they need to be taught themselves.

They think that a gift can be hyped up by resident psychic power. And it can't. Oh Lord, open our eyes to do great things.

As I've said, they went back to the beginning. Lord, here we are. We're in Jerusalem, Judea.

Everything's going right. Don't you tell me you didn't spend the night in prison, did you? You, you, you, you, you, you. They said that.

They went back and said, this is what happened. So and so, so and so. And they heard their brothers and sisters saying, well, it was all foreordained.

It was all planned. It was all understood. You're only in the stream.

She said, but doesn't the devil get in and try and interfere? No. He gets into your fellowship and gets into your church because you're not right on these things. He can't get in unless you give him the opportunity.

He said, well, I've never heard of these things before. Well, thank God you're hearing them now. Do you believe? Oh, well, I won't, I won't implicate you, Norman.

I don't think you'll differ from me, but I won't, I won't draw you in. I'll stand, I'll be a man, stand on my own feet. Here, here, here is the great thing.

You remember what we said the other night, the other day at a ghetto. It wasn't morning or night, I don't know. I am what I am.

So is God. And I want to tell you, he hasn't got one ounce of fear in his being. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, they said, when Jerusalem was being invaded and when the terrible powers of darkness and hosts with devilish ensigns on their banners were parading round the power of the devil.

The virgin daughter of Zion laughed, she ate a scorn. What a tremendous thing it is to become acquainted with a true human being that is truly immersed in God. Strange in these days.

You read through the Acts of the Apostles and you will discover something. And this is what you will discover. That the church had nothing to fear from forces without.

And I want to say, neither has it today. Nothing. It was never the outside forces that destroyed the church and turned it from its ways following that great fourfold visitation of God.

All the trouble, now are you listening, arose from within the church. And that's where your trouble is. In your church.

It doesn't matter about this, that and the other, one thing or another. It doesn't matter one jot. What does matter, beloved, and you can see it.

I'm in the fourth chapter, listen. Let's go reading on, shall we. Here it is, you'll see it as plainly as anything.

Verse thirty-four. Neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which is being interpreted the son of consolation, a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it.

Brought the money, laid it at the apostles' feet. But a certain man named Ananas, with Sapphira and his wife, sold the possession, kept back. Oh, how expressive those two words are.

It's not what you give, it's what you keep back. You keep this clear. They kept back for a rainy day, because they had other commitments.

All the things that you say, all the things. Of course, they hadn't got the expense of a car or all that kind of thing. Kept back.

They kept back of the price. We've got the word part in, because that's what our minds tell us. But that's not put in by the Holy Ghost.

Kept back of the price. Oh. His wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Peter said to Ananas, you know, you've read it, haven't you? Why has Satan filled your heart? I'm full of the Holy Ghost. I belong to the Church. I'm one of these people who prayed this great prayer.

I'm this, I'm that. You see where it came from? All the trouble came from within the Church, by the way. Nothing from outside.

Let them sling us in prison. It will not strengthen you. Let them do that.

But it came from within. Wherever you read throughout the Acts of the Apostles, that is exactly what you will find as you read on. All the Church's troubles came from within.

Not from without. You would have said, oh, we've got a lot of trouble outside here. They laughed at it.

Notice Peter. You may think that was drastic, what happened to Ananias and Sapphira. It was, wasn't it? But how would you have fared if you'd have been there? How would I have fared? You could read on, get the thing balanced in your thinking, but it hasn't changed.

The nature of truth remains eternal. It cannot be changed. What a great thing.

They both died. And the result of it was, as you shall read in chapter 5, a great fear came. Verse 11.

They didn't have a rave up. Great fear came. Not only on the Church, but as many who heard it.

And in verse 13, no man doth join themselves to that company. Are you wanting people to join your Church? Purge your Church first. But don't let some amateurish person who thinks they have some gift of discernment or word of knowledge do it.

You won't find any of that operating here. Peter simply said, because he knew, why Satan filled your heart. They were saying, the Holy Ghost has filled my heart.

That's what they would have said. Somewhere inside the line is crossed. And what was fullness of the Spirit of God becomes a fullness of the Spirit of the devil.

Can that happen? I'm reading my Bible. I believe it. I don't want any theories about it.

What a tremendous truth it is. It should keep us on our toes, beloved. Shouldn't it? And that's what it's all about, because you have a race to run.

And you don't run that back on your heels. You run it on your toes. It's so glorious, isn't it? You do this, beloved.

I want you to do it. You can go right where you want, through the Acts of the Apostles. You go as far as chapter 15, you will know what happened in chapter 15, following the great opening of the door to the Gentiles, that Paul should go through.

And God poured out His Spirit to enable Paul to go through. You can read about it, Acts 10, 11. You can read it all there.

Paul went through. Went around preaching. Came back with a message to the church at Antioch.

God has opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. What a triumphant message. But listen.

He said to the Gentiles, through much tribulation you must enter into the kingdom of God. Do you believe that? You're bound to if it's written in the Bible. But how much tribulation have you been through? You'll know.

I mean tribulation for Christ's sake. You might have had a lot of tribulation with your children. Whose fault was that? You might have had a lot of tribulation with your husband.

Why did you marry him then? Well, I didn't know. You might have had a lot of trouble with your wife, but why did you marry her? You said for better, for worse. And then you run away.

There are exceptions to that. I'm not discussing that subject at the moment. But please don't everybody think they are the outstanding exception.

God wants us to understand these great things, beloved. If we want what we say we want, you've got to get back to this New Testament. That's right.

That's where we've got to come. At all costs, whatever anybody thinks about you or says about you, that's where you've got to go and live there. It's a brave man and a brave woman who will do that.

Well, you can get to that 15th chapter and what do you find? There'd been an outpouring of the Holy Ghost at Judea, as we've already looked at it, in this fourth chapter. And it says certain men, born again, listen, Christians, whatever you want to say, they came down and they taught the Gentiles the stupidity of it, that they've got to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses or else they couldn't be saved. Where did that come from? Within the church.

That's where it came from. Error from in the church. How are you teaching your people, my brother? You can't teach them what you believe to be solid truth when you're acting by dividing.

That's what you're doing. You see, you have to see the great truth and come into line with it. I want to say that many men before you, whoever you are, for the fact that you live in the 20th century, have tried the very things you are going to try and have failed, but you've not learned from it.

In other words, you think you're better than they. The whole glorious truth, my brother, my sister, is that it is in oneness. Then you have nothing to fear from anybody or anything.

Persecution, yes, part of your daily diet. But that's what it's about. Would God that the church became a persecuted church.

What, in England? In England? You know, there was a time, I can think back quite a few years, and I can remember the time when there used to be a great lot of talk in the church. You're accepted from this, most of you here. You were born too late in the century.

But they used to talk about, we don't want a continental Sunday. We don't want a continental Sunday. We don't want continental things.

And at first I believed that, and I sort of thought about the Lord's Day Observance Society and so on. And then there came a time when I went to India, and I saw how the Christians in India actually lived. They couldn't have a special day.

They were surrounded by the heathen. And I confess to you, I found them to be better Christians than people were in England. Yeah.

The Muslims keep Friday. And somebody else keeps Saturday. And the Christians still have to keep going on.

They have to live with worse than a continental Sunday. We know what continental Sunday means, don't we? You don't? Why, you see, I told you you were born too late. I mean, you don't go to church, and you go and play your games, and you do all these things, and you do all the way, and I love it.

Would God. I know you won't want anything more to do with me after this. I don't care.

Would God that such persecution arose against the church in England that it drove us into truth. And when you ladies and you young men to read Paul when he says it's better for you not to marry, it's this that's behind what he says. Are my wife and child persecuted? I've got to say yes, Lord, if I want persecution.

Who? Which? What is greater in your estimation? He wasn't against marriage. He was saying you might bring two, three, four, five children into the world. I see them raped and butchered by invading armies.

Horrible people. That's what he meant. He wasn't against truth.

So from now on, ladies, don't go, because I want to get married. Something like that. You must understand the heart from which it comes.

You must understand what it's all about. Would I want to see my wife butchered by a murderous invader? No. But you have to come to the place where you say, Lord, they're in your hands.

If it's for the furtherance of your church, let anything happen. If I said, stand up, those of you that are agreeing with that, now think about your baby, think about your home, think about your wife, think about everything, think about your husband, think about the children of your womb, think about your dear ones. Just think.

What a marvellous and glorious thing it is, Lord, to come into this. Thou, Lord, thou God, that made the heavens and the earth and all that in them is. These men, these persecutors, these prison keepers, they are made.

There are a few people who have real rest. Real rest. It's all so glorious, wonderful in the extreme.

But if you even want power, leave alone to explode into more power. I am pointing out the way for you. Not say, whoa, whoa, we'll do a lot more singing, we'll have praise sessions, that'll do it.

Some people do get changed in praise sessions. Some people do. Not many.

I mean, beyond a superficial change. The Lord wants us to see these great and glorious things. Lord, why did you have this Bible written? I know the answer before I ask it.

As you may know my will and my way and my works and my wisdom. That's why it was written. Sometimes I wonder whether people really read it for these reasons.

Lord, let it all multiply. Let it build up. Oh, God.

I'm going back to chapter 2. When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all, again here it comes, with one accord. And I want to tell you it wouldn't have happened unless there were one accord. Do you know why Jesus was born in a manger, hung on a cross, and died? It's because he was in one accord with his Father and the Holy Spirit.

We habitually change the basic reason. The basic reason is because there is one God and God was manifest in the flesh. What happened on the earth was exactly what had already happened in heaven.

For the Lamb had been slain before the foundation of the world. It was all mapped out. Oh, I don't mean it was mapped out that a certain soldier named Alexander or whatever his name was, spat at him.

I don't mean that. But the way that he should go. He wasn't foreordained that he should be smitten and denies our year.

That's foreknowledge. He knew he would. Put down.

He simply followed in. It's never God's ordination that you should be brutally treated. It's the devil's manipulation in the will of God of certain things, twisting them.

And you've got to be very careful lest you pray against evil spirits under the blood, as you say, and think that you're changing the will of God. I want to tell you that in 1990 the will of God is being done. The overruling will of God.

But you are to seek more than the overruling will of God. You are to seek the personal will of God for your life. That's what you are to do.

And go on and go on. In his mercy he will allow you to do lots of things. How do I know that? Because he has allowed me to.

He will not usurp your will. He will not force himself upon you. But he does think that he ought to be so basic in your love and in your desires that he can expect you to do certain things.

Amen. Isn't that wonderful? They were all with one accord in one place. Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind as though God had been sailing it up and it had been blowing from all eternity and had just arrived.

That's just the way my mind goes. It's there. A rushing mighty wind on the stroke of a minute.

There it was. Filled all the house where they were sitting and appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire and it sat upon each of them and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with utter tongues as the Spirit gave the utterings and so on. That's the way.

They had a uniform experience. That's true, isn't it? In every way they had a uniform experience. If you read down, people repented.

People were baptized. People got breaking of bread together. In the fellowship of the apostles and teaching of the doctrine of truth they all got together.

Everything. It's unification. Hallelujah.

Ah. How can we then, beloved, with making allowance for the fact that we are in the 20th century, how can we be like they? How can we be? I remember Norman speaking the other night and saying about people that went out to Africa and died there and we get this sort of comparison of that you can come home. Well, who's to know whether they might have come home if there had been airplanes in those days? We just can't tell.

We can't pass judgment on these things. What we can know is that that's the way the Lord took the church. Expanding.

Increasing. Multiply. Living in the center of God's will.

That's the thing we're to know. God keep us sane. God keep us from too narrow a vision.

God above all keep us from dividing. Keep us together. Keep us together.

Lord, make us one. God wanted them to be one, so he made them one. He made them of one.

They all had the identical experience. That's true, isn't it? Although I don't believe that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism. I better say that.

Somebody will write me a letter. But I say it so often anyway. Here is the great and glorious truth.

They were one. And the devil did his utmost to divide them. But he failed.

He failed. Doesn't matter where it cropped up. Dealt with.

Straight away. Slay Ananias and Sapphira. That's it.

Finished. Gather together at Jerusalem. Wherever it is.

Let the truth be told. Then the letter was written. The circumcision nonsense.

All got to be dealt with. Hallelujah. Everything that would say, you've got to do this and you've got to do that and you've got to do the other.

If it's not in this book 100%, I don't mean just hinted at or drawn by your conclusions. Plainly stated. Let us get on this foundation first.

We'll read the rest. And God may show us the way forward. I see.

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