

## RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 52)

DISCIPLESHIP AND THE CHURCH (CONTINUED). Concerning the ministry of the church in making disciples, J. Sidlow Baxter comments: "How largely can the Church of today learn from those first assemblies of believers which figure in the Acts! We do well to turn back again and again to those Spirit-wrought originals and test ourselves by them, both individually and corporately. How far, alas, from that Christian communion of the first days have many so-called 'churches' fallen away in these days! 'See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount,' was the Divine admonition to Moses. The Holy Spirit says the same to the churches through the Acts of the Apostles. 'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.'" The Jerusalem church established an immutable template for making disciples, and it modeled a lifestyle that serves as an example for the entire church age. The church flourished without buildings. The only central gathering place was the Temple courtyard, where they praised the Lord, preached the Gospel, and released the power of the Spirit. It was in small groups, mostly in homes, where the work of discipleship took place. Small groups were the power cells where new disciples experienced teaching, fellowship, communion, and prayer. Since there were no buildings, the church was forced to go small. In Jerusalem discipleship was the priority, not church growth. Yet because the disciples were radical, the church continued to grow. If we learn anything from the Jerusalem church, it is that disciples must be radicalized by the Spirit so His power can be released. The church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs to return to the original blueprint.