

## **INCREASE – “People of Increase” (What is a true Christian?)**

### **INTRO**

We have been talking about increase...increase in the church, increase in gifts, Convention's and the UK churches' theme is *increase...*

**God is saying** *“If we want to see increase as a church, we must be ‘people of increase’ ourselves”.*

The saying goes. *“Charity starts at home”; “Increase starts at home”!*

**FIC – “It’s not what you do that matters, it’s what you are like”**

- **Discuss – Is that true? If you don’t do anything but are nice?**

When your attitude is right, your actions are too. **EXPLAIN**

*“If a man cannot be a Christian in the place he is, he cannot be a Christian anywhere”*

**2 Corinthians 5:14** – Christ’s love compels us to serve

### **PEOPLE OF INCREASE**

Who is a person of increase? - A TRUE Christian.

- **Discuss – type of person, characteristics**

Christians are called to be different:

*“2 marks of a Christian – giving and forgiving”*

*“A true Christian is a person who is right side up in an upside down world.”*

*“True Christianity has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left alone”*

**We are meant to be different in our own amazingly divine way!**

**How am I different?**

**What are my unique characteristics?**

**How can we use them?**

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD only 100 years or so after Jesus, an early Christian, *Mathetes*, wrote this:

*“The distinction between Christians and other men does not lie in country or language or customs... They follow local customs in clothing, food, and in the rest of life; and yet they exhibit the wonderfully paradoxical nature of their own citizenship. They live in their own countries, but as if they were resident aliens. They share*

*all things as citizens and yet endure all things as if they were an underclass. Every foreign country is their homeland and every homeland a foreign country. They marry like everyone else, and have children; but they do not abort their young. They keep a common table but not a common bed. They live in the world but not in a worldly way. They enjoy a full life on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the appointed laws, but they surpass the laws in their own lifestyle. They love everyone – and are universally derided. They are unknown – and roundly criticised. They are put to death – and gain life. They are poor but make many rich. They lack all things and yet have all things in abundance. They are dishonoured and are glorified in their dishonour... They are abused and they call down blessings in return. When they do good, they are beaten up as never-do-wells: when they are beaten up they rejoice as men who are given new life... In short, what the soul is in the body, the Christians are in the world. The soul lives in the body but is not confined by the body, and the Christian's live in the world but are not confined by the world... God has appointed them to this great calling, and it would be wrong for them to decline it" (The Epistle to Diognetus, ch5, 6)*

- **Discuss - Are we different? Do people notice us for the right reasons?**

Do our friends, family, colleagues, neighbours notice us?

## **A CORRECT MINDSET** – *How can I serve God?*

God wants us to be:

1. **Loving** – How? Ask God to fill you!  
**1 Corinthians 13:1+** - Let's look at LOVE
2. **Faith-filled** - Aggressive faith in God's word.  
**Hebrews 11:1** - If God's word says it, it's true.
3. **Witnesses** - When I feel unmotivated I remember that people CAN actually change through Jesus!  
**Romans 1:16** - Power of God

**Philemon 1:4-7** sums it up perfectly:

*"I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints."*

## Strive for better Bible Study!

To be the \_\_\_\_\_ God want us to be:

- Friend – in relationship – **John 14:1**
- Husband or Wife – in marriage – **Eph 5:21**
- Worker – hard-working, helpful – **1 Thes 4:11+**  
**Col 3:22-24**
- Servant – with friends & family – **Philippians 2:3-4**
- Witness – about town – **Col 4:5-6**
- Minister – in ministry – **2 Corinthians 5:16,18-21**

**Every Morning: Think through you day & *put on the mind of Christ***

**Romans 12:2** – renew your minds

We must make the change to ourselves!!! We are the change!

## Our mindset has to change:

If we want:

- to be **loved**, then **love!**
- to have more **faith**, then **believe!**
- to see **revival** in BOCF, then **pray!**
- better **worship**, then **praise!**
- to see new **Christians**, then **witness!**
- better **teaching** then **study!**

Don't you want to leave a change wherever you go??:

- The church?
- Burnt Oak?
- Other people?

## Conclusion

If we want to see INCREASE then we have to do it together:

Pray together  
Serve together  
Help together  
Love together

**A problem shared is a problem halved**

If you have an idea, great, let's help you! IDEA SESSION for you to serve as God leads you. *Football ministry??*

**Pray in your groups for God to make you a person of Increase**