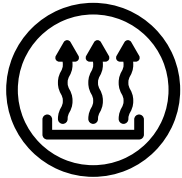




ACTS: THE STORY CONTINUES



WARM-UP

When traveling, what are the things that stick out to you the most?

Pray for your time together as a group.

Read out loud as a group

ACTS 11-19-30 (NIV)

19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. 20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. 21 The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. 22 News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23 When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. 24 He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. 25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26 and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. 27 During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 29 The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. 30 This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.



In verse 19, we see echoes of the cross by spilt christian blood coming before an increase in believers. How might this encourage us today? How does this remind us of God's sovereignty?

Possible Answers: Answers may vary. Examples: it could encourage us because even the pain and death in the world was used by God and can continue to be used by God today. Could also be encouraging because this is not our ultimate home, in that place there will be no sin and death as well as keeping our eyes open when horrors happen in our time to watch for how God will use them or spread his message. Reminds us of God's sovereignty over everything. Sin can still be used by God for His will and purposes. Praise God that he works through our good, sin, and stillness because ultimately it is not about what we do, but about what He does.



In verse 23, it says that Barnabas noticed "what the grace of God had done". Why do you think grace was emphasized? How does this inform how we interact with non-believers and believers alike?

Possible Answers: grace of God was emphasized probably because Barnabas was a jew and was seeing Jesus' message spread among the gentiles. The undeserved gift spread through the Greeks and many people turned to the Lord. Barnabas also probably remembered that he was considered no better than these Greeks, for all are in need of grace. The message of grace is powerful and draws people in versus messages about doing things and acting certain ways. Grace is often the catalyst for heart change.



Barnabas and Saul stayed an entire year to build up the Church in Antioch. Why do you think they did this? What might have been some reasons for staying there?

Possible answers: to build up/teach the christians in the ways of Christ, build up leaders in the church, learn themselves about the hang ups and pitfalls greek gentiles would have about the gospel. It's clear that Barnabas and Saul didn't speak and immediately leave, especially because the gentiles would have less understanding of the Old Testament. They were intentional about teaching and helping others' understanding. They helped nurture the new believers until they were more mature.



How can we prioritize the teaching and nurturing of new believers in our own church or circles?

Possible Answers: disciple someone, meet one-on-one with people, follow up with people and ask questions, remind people of grace, plant new small groups, etc



The disciples didn't wait to measure the faith or worthiness of those they sent gifts to during the famine. How does this remind us of God? How does this impact your ideas of giving?

Possible Answers: God gives freely without measure. He didn't measure our worthiness when giving of His only son. He gives out of love. Answers may vary, Examples: could impact who you give to, how you measure what someone needs, giving what you are able to, etc.

Read out loud as a group:

ACTS 13:1-3 (NIV)

1 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.



What is different about the church in Antioch here?

Possible Answers: they had many prophets and teachers. They were built up. Together they were actively participating in spiritual disciplines like fasting and praying. They were open and listening to the Spirit. They were willing to take on the hardship of sending off their beloved teachers and friends to follow Christ and for the sake of the gospel.



What does this passage teach us about the importance of community in the life of a believer (vs. 25-30)?

Possible Answers: we learn, grow, support each other, spread the gospel, are sent out, and refine our ears for the Spirit together in community. It's how we were always meant to be (Genesis 2:18).

DISCUSSION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY



- How have you experienced God's grace this week?
Community this week?
- How have you seen God bring good from terrible circumstances in your life?