

Acts 11 – The Church @ Antioch

Hey good morning church. So good to be with you online today through Facebook Live. Our family is so appreciative of your prayers for us as we've been dealing with COVID these last few weeks.

As we turn to our time of worship through the Word of God this morning, I invite you to turn to Acts 11 as we continue our study through the book of Acts → God's Unstoppable Mission, Gospel, Spirit and Church.

Last week, if you remember, we're continuing to see these barriers between Jew and Gentile break down by the power of the Gospel. Peter gets this vision, preaches to Cornelius (a God-fearer, but a guy that needed Jesus) and we see the Holy Spirit descend on the Gentiles, like a 2nd Pentecost.

Opening the flood gates to the truth that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is for all nations, all people. People like us, people unlike us. People near to us. People far from us. The Gospel is for ALL nations.

I. Barriers breakdown, but sometimes slowly

We see in the opening verses of CH11 that the church back in Jerusalem heard what had happened, and they were confused

READ 11:3 – You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them

The Jewish believers still held to Jesus as Messiah to Israelites – and would have been outraged by break in tradition – for Peter a Jewish Christian to have eaten with “those people”

II. Peter Recounts the story – the vision, and the falling of the Holy Spirit

Read 11:15-17

¹⁵ “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came down on them, just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷ If, then, God gave them the same gift that he also gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, how could I possibly hinder God?”

The Holy Spirit of God is UNSTOPPABLE. And the Jerusalem brothers, start to get it, and the floodgates would be opened.

Read 11:18

¹⁸ When they heard this they became silent. And they glorified God, saying, “So then, God has given repentance resulting in life even to the Gentiles.”

All of this, setting the stage for the church at Antioch to be planted.

III. Ordinary People – with an Unstoppable Gospel Message

11:19 – The believers that were scattered – went everywhere speaking the word. First to the Jews only, but then some of them started speaking to the Greeks also, proclaiming the good news about Jesus the Lord in the city of Antioch.

Antioch:

- **Major city in the Greco-Roman world – 3rd most important city**
- **Called the Queen of the East**
- **About 300 miles north of Jerusalem**
- **Center of activity – like what you and I would call a HUB city**

And these ordinary men shared the greatest news in the history of the world.

- They took the message to the people. They didn't sit around and wait for people to come to them. They went.
- They understood the greatness of Jesus
- They had news they had to tell to people.

Hear me – if you are a Christian – you have news to share. You can do good things. You can be a nice person. But you are never going to smile people into the kingdom of God. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest news in the history of the world – but IT'S NEWS THAT MUST BE SHARED.

And hear me too – you don't need a celebrity to share it. We don't even know these guys' names. If you have the Spirit of God in you, you have all you need to share Jesus with people. I don't mean

- “hey come to this great concert, or
- come hear some superstar athlete speak at my church, or
- come see how awesome our pastor is.
- I mean call people to turn from their sin and trust in Jesus.

As a pastor, I got no interest in putting together an entertainment program for the church in hopes that church people will come and stay. But hear me, I have EXTREME interest in equipping the people of God to live our lives together on mission – for the glory of God and the good of others.

The promise – I believe all over the Scriptures, is that as we live our lives to declare and display the greatness of Jesus, the Lord's hand will remain with us and He will add to our numbers.

READ 11:21

²¹The Lord's hand was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord.

IV. A Necessary Checkin & A Time of Training