

Would They Call Us Christians?

Acts 11:19-30 ¹⁹ Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. ²⁰ But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. ²¹ And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. ²² The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, ²⁴ for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. ²⁵ So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶ and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. ²⁷ Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). ²⁹ So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. ³⁰ And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

❖ We have to read the text twice...

➤ Too much good stuff in here this week...

- Take the outline, write some notes...
- Pray over it at home...
- Make it come alive in you

❖ Recap

➤ Chapter 10 and 11 (There is no time for a recap...)

- Peter Goes to Cornelius... Gentiles Get Saved... Some Jewish Christians are critical
- Peter Remembered God's word... It then changes the hearts of the leaders...
- Here We are!

❖ Intro:

➤ I am especially excited about the Word today.

- There is so much MEAT and Milk
- You will learn at least SOMETHING today

➤ This is a Story about God:

- Sure there are characters here and story lines...
- But the main character is God... God is moving... God is changing hearts...

➤ Outline:

- There is this ONE BIG THING overarching the whole story...

- I want to share it at the beginning... but I will wait...
 - ◆ Maybe you can guess it... maybe you can see it...
 - ◆ The biggest thing of all in this section of scripture is what?
 - ◆ Can you guess? You will have to wait for it...

➤ 3 Main Points:

- 1) The Spreading of the Gospel Continues (With 5 Sub Points)
- 2) Growing in the Gospel Begins (With 7 Sub Points)
- 3) The Gospel Produced Hearts Eager for Good Works
- Raise Your Hand if you feel like we are going a little too fast... Just stop me

❖ 1) The Spreading of the Gospel Continues (19-21)

- ¹⁹ Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. ²⁰ But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. ²¹ And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.
- **So... If you remember back to the end of ch. 8**
 - ⁴⁰ But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.
 - So, chapter 9 and 10 are like a “Meanwhile over here... Meanwhile back at the bat cave...”
- **The Gospel has spread because of Stephen’s murder and the persecution of the church...**
 - (Pause)... Saul gets saved
 - Gentiles get saved...
 - And honestly... the end of ch. 8 is seeing Philip baptizing an Ethiopian... A gentile.
- So end of ch. 8 a Gentile is saved... and it just all breaks loose from there.
- **Let’s look briefly at 5 lessons gleaned from these 3 verses**
 - And also an **application** to go along with each one.
 - Remember the title of the book: The **ACTS** of the apostles...
 - So our goal is to pay close attention to all the Acts we see in this book.
- **1) God’s Providence in Reaching the Lost Continues**
 - ¹⁹ Now those who were **scattered because of the persecution** that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch,
 - **Application: God isn’t afraid to add affliction/persecution to his children to accomplish His Will...**
 - Example of Joseph and Moses, etc.
 - **God also does this as He sanctifies us.**
 - As He grows us up to be worthy of our calling.
 - He often tries us and tests us...
 - We know this because He tells us...
 - ◆ Psalm 66:10 ¹⁰ For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried.
- **2) Exclusivity Continues**
 - **speaking the word to no one except Jews.**
 - **Application: To put it simply... Don’t Be Like This! Well... except in one way...**
 - Some of my best lessons ever learned were learning what not to do...
 - Heard someone say we can all serve as examples...
 - Even if that is a bad example!
 - **There was a continued outlook that the Gospel was only for the Jews.**
 - Why were they so exclusive?
 - Still thought the world revolved around them
 - They thought they were God’s chosen people.
 - Still had not realized it was not a national birth that did this...
 - **They Were Not Listening!**
 - Jesus had told them to go to the whole world, especially every nation
 - It isn’t like they had not heard the gospel was supposed to go out to the whole earth...
 - Then persecution is driving
 - **So do not be exclusive like them...**
 - Don’t be a church goer that only wants certain types of people...
 - If that is in you heart, let me tell you, your heart is deceived, it is dark. Your heart is not right
 - **But... at least they were doing one good thing... they were speaking the Word**
 - At least they were telling someone...

- So lets not knock them too bad ...
- **Notice this though: Those that were speaking only to Jews got 8 words here....**
 - Speaking the word to no one except Jews.
 - When your outlook is narrow and inward focused, your results are narrow and contained...
- **These next guys, although unknown...**
 - Begin a huge movement and the center of the church begins to take root in Antioch
 - Because of their faithfulness
- **3) Some of them Preached to All:**
 - ²⁰ **But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus.**
 - **These guys preached to the Hellenists Also... ALSO...**
 - They did not keep the gospel for just a few... but gave it to all...
 - ◆ They were not exclusive...
 - ◆ They remembered the Word of Jesus... take the gospel to all nations... all nations!
 - And now they have a monumental movement beginning...
 - **The names of these men are not mentioned:**
 - **Sometimes we will never get the credit**
 - ◆ No one will ever know
 - ◆ God will know
 - **These unnamed men were about to start the biggest church in the world.**
 - The center of Christianity was going to shift to this area
 - **They were doing two great things**
 - **1) Preaching the Lord Jesus**
 - **2) To all sorts of people...**
 - **Their Preaching:**
 - Preaching the Lord Jesus
 - **They were telling the story... Jesus who is God, the Son of God came as a real person**
 - ◆ He left His glory behind, unclothed Himself
 - ◆ Lived a perfect life
 - ◆ Died for the sins of men... All sorts of sin... He took on God's wrath
 - ◆ He was punished for our sins... He was our substitute...
 - ◆ He was killed, but raised from the dead...
 - And some of these guys may have seen Him... It is likely they could say with the apostles
 - He appeared to us... we saw Him...
 - ◆ And The Lord Jesus is demanding people to turn from sin, believe and follow Him
 - **Application: The Gospel is for all people. Be prepared like these men. Preach the Lord Jesus**
- **4) God Was With Them**
 - ²¹ **And the hand of the Lord was with them**
 - We can trust God to be with us when we are obedient
 - **Look at HOW God was with them.**
 - His Hand – a symbol of strength... and not just strength, but goodness
 - God's hand could be on us in power, but in discipline.
 - We do not see that here.
 - God's good power was with them and helping them...
 - **God's hand was with them because they were listening...**
 - What a valuable lesson for us...
 - When we listen, God is with us...

- **Remember:**
 - ◆ God is the one working...
 - ◆ If God is working and calling us to go... it only makes sense that He would go with them
 - ◆ What a great promise
- **Acts 28:20 "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**
- **Application: God is with His Children when they ACT in faith.**
 - God calls us to do all sorts of things right...
 - To serve Him, Read the Word, Turn from Sin, Give, share the gospel...
 - All of these things are ACTS... They are actions we do...
 - But, they are acts of faith...
 - ◆ It takes faith to do the things of God...
 - ◆ Because we must trust in the worthiness and rightness of the action
 - ◆ And we must trust that God will be with us when we do these things..
 - Here is the promise... God's hand was with them
- **5) Many Who Believed Turned to the Lord (Let's park here for just a moment)**
 - **and a great number who believed turned to the Lord**
 - **Important that we see this in the text this morning...**
 - It is tucked away in here, and easy to be overlooked.
 - But I think Luke was very purposeful with how he wrote this.
 - And a great number who believed.... Turned to the Lord.
 - ◆ They had not just believed like many others had done before...
 - ◆ But they also turned to the Lord...
 - **We ought to be able to use that word believe and it mean, universally... salvation**
 - ◆ But we have seen that is not always the case...
 - Pharisees had believed but feared me
 - Some believed, but Jesus knew what was in their heart
 - Some believed, but soon Jesus is saying they are sons of the devil
 - ◆ **There is a believing that does not lead to salvation...**
 - It is a belief like Demons believe... and James says they tremble
 - **Literally in greek:**
 - A great number... having believed... turned to the Lord...
 - From Luke's perspective He sees both as being in the past...
 - ◆ They had believed, and they turned to the Lord
 - We notice, there is no turning to the Lord unless there is belief...
 - And we also notice that all turning to the Lord is birthed from belief...
 - **Luke could have left it at believe...**
 - But I think He wanted to make sure it was certain for the readers and hearers of this book...
 - ◆ That believing on the Lord Jesus involves turning to Him...
 - ◆ Very clear
 - **Application: Believing without turning to the Lord leaves a man with nothing but knowledge.**
 - Be careful that you know the difference here...
 - ◆ Be careful to look at your life and say... Is my life different since Jesus
 - ◆ Can I notice that I have turned to the Lord Jesus...
 - ◆ Or am I still pretty much walking the same path I have my whole life...
 - ◆ My sins aren't as young as they used to be, but deep down...
 - ◆ they come from the same place

❖ 2) Growing in the Gospel Begins (So much to see here) (Main thrust of the sermon)

- ²²The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³When he came and saw the **grace of God**, he **was glad**, and **he exhorted** them all to **remain faithful to the Lord** with **steadfast purpose**, ²⁴for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. ²⁵So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and **taught** a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.
- **This growth has all sorts of factors...**
 - **We have the people that need to grow**
 - ◆ The Holy Spirit working
 - ◆ Faithful men of God being obedient
- **IMPORTANT:**
 - **There are great things in God's Word...**
 - ◆ If you dig deep enough for them... You will find the diamonds and gold
 - **Some of these things are just... yeah... I see that has happened...**
 - ◆ Very good then... very glorious... very good for them...
 - **But... 6 of the 7 Big Things We see are worth some thought...**
 - ◆ They are worth a little prayer time...
 - ◆ A little time on the knees praying: "Oh God make that true of me"
 - ◆ God, let me see this in my church...
 - ◆ Prepare me O Lord for your work...
 - **Then, there is one great and glorious overarching Thing here in the text...**
 - ◆ That should cause our hearts to exult in God for His goodness...

➤ 1st Big Thing we see here: Word Spreads

- ²²The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.
- **When God does great things... Word gets out...**
- **So, When these main leaders here about this...**
 - They have already had their heart and mind changed by Peter and Cornelius...
 - Which was so important
 - **Please do not forget what a big deal it is that God offered salvation to gentiles...**
 - ◆ God did not have to do this...
 - ◆ **Hosea 2:23 "and I will sow her for myself in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'You are my God.' "**
- **After they hear of this, they send Barnabas...**
 - Barnabas whose name was Joseph... And they changed it to mean son of encouragement
 - They sent the right man for the job... A great man...
- **After He arrives... He notices something amazing...**

➤ The One Big Over-Arching Thing: The Grace of God

- ²³When he came and saw the **grace of God**
- **I'm not even going to put this in the sequence of things we see happening...**
 - This needs to be in the front, in the middle and at the end...
 - Through it all, we see the grace of God
 - Its glorious!
- **The Unmerited Favor of God is seen by Barnabas...**

- In case you did not notice, God giving grace from the day He sent Jesus...
- To the day He died, and then rose again.
- Jesus, being full of grace sent out His disciples to share His grace with others...
- Eventually they were just hanging out only in their own community...
- So God being gracious scattered them through persecution
- Some of these guys that were scattered share the love and grace of God with some people in Antioch...
- They are saved, and then God continues grace by bringing in Barnabas, more are saved
- Then He brings in Saul...

▪ **God's Grace:**

- Is totally something unearned by us...
- If we did anything for it, it would not longer be Grace... Rom 11:6

▪ **Lavished it on us:**

- **Ephesians 1:7-8 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight**

▪ **God's Grace to Love Us Even though we do not deserve it is what we see here!**

- We have been redeemed... by his blood... meaning bought back (BY HIS GRACE)
- We have had our sins forgiven ... our guilt is removed (BY HIS GRACE)
- And He has lavished it on us... Given it to us abundantly, richly...

▪ **Do Not Take God's Grace in Vain**

- Do not think you can use it to sin more...
- Ah... I can do this or that... God will be gracious... never act on that...
- Satan may tempt you with it, but it is not a thought from God...

▪ **God's grace showed up in this town of Antioch**

- One of the largest cities in the Roman Empire
- Probably had around 500,000 people living in it... that is a lot of people, people
- And they are heathens... Worshipping false gods like Daphne
- The town was full of idol worship
- One of their biggest things prostitution in these religious temples...
- Just bad bad stuff...

▪ **One Day in the midst of their deep dark sins...**

- God sends His light... emanating from His servants
- Who take the light of the gospel of Jesus
- And start spreading it and sharing it
- They have not hidden their light under a bushel, NO!
- They were gonna let it shine...

▪ **And Shine it did...**

- The Holy Spirit led them, gave them the words to speak
- Then they spoke it, and He was working in the hearts of the hearers
- And was changing their hearts as they heard and believed the gospel

▪ **God was GRACIOUS in that City!**

- And it did not stop there

➤ **2nd Big Thing: Gladness: The Proper Human Response to the Grace of God:**

- **he was glad**
- He saw it and He was so happy...!

- 1 Chronicles 16:29-31 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; ³⁰ tremble before him, all the earth; yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. ³¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, "The Lord reigns!"
- **His Response to God's Grace was being glad...**
 - He cared that others were brought to God...
 - That others had their sins forgiven
- **It Was obvious**
 - God had saved these men and it was evident...
 - Barnabas saw it... these people were not living their former lives...
 - They had turned from those ways...
- **Barnabas was living out Psalm**
 - Psalm 35:27 Let those who delight in my righteousness shout for joy and be glad and say evermore, "Great is the Lord, who delights in the welfare of his servant!"
- **Can You See This in Yourself?**
 - Do you see God's grace in others? Is your response gladness?
- **3rd Big Thing: Discipleship Begins**
 - and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose,
 - **When People Get Saved, Its time to disciple them:**
 - Jesus told us to go out and make disciples...
 - To do this, they first hear the gospel...
 - Then they get in the Word... They pray... They spend time in the church growing...
 - ◆ **So... you need to be doing one of two things... or both...**
 - Being Discipled, Or Discipling Others...
 - **What did it look like:**
 - He exhorted them to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose
 - ◆ He was encouraging them to stay close to the Lord, and make it the purpose of your life...
 - **1) Exhorted them**
 - He came along side them and began to call on them to do something...
 - Now that you have come to know the Lord...
 - ◆ Remain Faithful
 - **2) Remain Faithful**
 - Barnabas knew how important it was for those that named the name of Christ to be preserve
 - **There are two reason I think He was concerned...**
 - ◆ He knew only those who continued in the faith would be saved...
 - If they fell away, they would prove they had never knew the Lord
 - ◆ He also knew that remaining faithful was the key to continued gospel growth
 - The more faithful the servants of God are
 - The more great things they get to see Him do
 - The more lost souls they will see get saved.
 - **Stay Faithful**
 - ◆ **The Faith you had to believe need to continue in how you live**
 - When faced with a choice to sin... live in faith...
 - Trust that God is better...
 - When God tells you to go... have faith that He will take care of everything...
 - When He calls you to give... it is faith that KNOWS God will provide even more
 - And that those who sow bountifully will reap bountifully
 - Those who plant little will harvest little...

- **3) With Steadfast Purpose**
 - **Purpose with your heart...**
 - ◆ That within your heart a purpose burns
 - ◆ And that purpose is to remain Faithful to the Lord....
 - ◆ Every day and Night...
 - ◆ When you fall down, you get back up and keep fighting with a purpose
 - **Story about Kobe Bryant... hurt knee... can only train on bike for 45 min a day**
 - ◆ He said, you begin to look around and see, I have no purpose!
 - **Your Purpose is to Remain Faithful to the Lord**
 - ◆ We are here to bear His image
 - ◆ Paul Said:
 - **Phillippians 3:14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**
 - **Living With Purpose Means Effort...**
 - ◆ Paul put in the effort... and He saw the results
 - ◆ **1 Corinthians 9:26-27 ²⁶So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control**
- **Can You See Yourself Doing This?**
 - Are you being disciplined? Are you purposely trying to disciple anyone?
 - Are you living with a Purpose from God...
 - ◆ Or are you just trying to get through to the next day with no eye on the prize?

➤ **4th Big Thing: Barnabas was the Right Man for the Job: A Man to Imitate**

- **²⁴for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.**
- I want more time here, but can not take it...
- **1) A Good Man**
 - Meant He did good things...
 - As a result of the grace of God in His live... He did Good deed...
- **2) Full of the Holy Spirit**
 - Here is the reason He did good things... He was full of the Holy Spirit
 - The Holy Spirit created Faith in Him
- **3) Full of Faith.**
 - So He was full of Faith...
- **Now... I want you to see that all three of these things work together...**
 - **The Holy Spirit comes along and creates Faith**
 - ◆ This Faith causes Him to believe...
 - ◆ He continues in his faith and grows in God.
 - **He remains full of the Holy Spirit... He does not just have the Spirit,**
 - ◆ but He is walking in the Spirit and it is noticeable to everyone around him...
 - **The Spirit is just oozing from Him...**
 - ◆ This continued faith and walking in the Spirit awakens him to Good works...
- **Pray for Revival...?**
 - We are always praying for revival...
 - At least in some of the circles I walk in...
 - Wanting God to bring a wave of His favor to thousands all at once...
 - I think it is more important to live out revival in your own life every day.
 - Barnabas was like this... th men that preached Jesus to the people of Antioch were like this
 - ◆ They went about doing the Lord's will

- Sometimes revival comes quickly, and sometimes it can come slowly over time...
- **Can You See Yourself Being a Believer Like Barnabas?**
 -
- **5th Big Thing: Evangelism through Discipleship (can u see it?)**
 - **And a great many people were added to the Lord.**
 - **These unnamed guys from Cyprus and Cyrene came and preached to the greeks**
 - God is gracious and the turn to the Lord
 - Barnabas comes to exhort them and teach them
 - As He disciplines them, More people get saved.
 - **The Church is doing church... Its what it does... It multiplies!**
 - As people grow in their faith... As they grow in their knowledge
 - They see a need that they share with others...
 - They are growing...
 - **As A Natural Outflow of their growth in God...**
 - More people come to know the Lord...
 - A great many people were added to the Lord
 - **Can You See Your Discipleship Turning into Evangelism?**
 - **Does it automatically just go there?**
- **6th Big Thing: Teaching is the Key in the Church...**
 - **²⁵So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and **taught** a great many people.**
 - **So.... So what... Why does Luke put the SO here....**
 - Well... he just said **a great many people were added to the Lord**
 - So... So What...
 - So we need more Help...
 - **Barnabas knows the right man for the job... Saul!**
 - **The Church Gathers to teach...**
 - Now... we already hit on this where we saw Barnabas Discipling the people...
 - This is just going beyond that initial stage and getting a little bit more involved...
 - There was a bigger need... So there was a need for another teacher...
 - **The Importance of Teaching in the Church**
 - Teaching helps us gain knowledge
 - Knowledge Helps us know God better
 - Helps us love God more
 - Helps us walk in a stronger faith... Give us more tools for fighting sin...
 - **I wanted to focus on this for a second because I think**
 - This is the key to what we are going to see at the end of verse 26...
 - The teaching is the key to these people from Antioch being called Christians...
 - **Can You See How Important Teaching is in the Church?**
 - **Are you a part of it? Are you preparing yourself to be able to teach?**
 - **Are you part of the help in teaching?**
 - **Do you see the importance of being taught?**
 - **Are you even hungry to be taught?**
- **7th Big Thing: These People are Called Christians...**
 - **And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians**
 - **Look at the series of events as they have unfolded...**

- Grace... Preaching... grace...people turn to the Lord... grace... Holy Spirit leads barnabas.... Grace... He teaches them... grace... more souls saved... grace... Saul comes and helps teach... grace... a whole year... grace...
- **They are called Christians... Why?**
 - Because they acted like Christ...
- **If the grace of God is the One Big Thing here in the text...**
 - Being called Christian is the One Big Application....
- **These guys were being mocked...**
 - Little Christs...
 - Trying to be Like Jesus...
 - You guys are of the Christ Party...
- **How about being made fun of because:**
 - You live a godly life... What a crazy proposition...
- **Jesus tells us:**
 - Matt 5:16 ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
 - 1 Peter 2:12 ¹²Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.
- **Can You See a Reason for people to call you a Christian**
 - If it wasn't for this country where everyone is considered a Christian
 - Would you stand out as a Christian?

❖ 3) The Gospel Produced Hearts Eager for Good Works

- ²⁷Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). ²⁹So the disciples determined, every one **according to his ability, to send relief** to the brothers living in Judea. ³⁰And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.
- **The Rubber Meets the Road here...**
 - There is a need... And these guys have grown...
 - And they are eager to do good works...
 - Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
- 2 Corinthians 9:8 ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

❖ The Holy Spirit is At Work: Remember this story is about God

- scattered because of the persecution
- The hand of the Lord was with them
- Those who believed turned to the Lord
- Barnabas saw the grace of God
- Barnabas was full of the Holy Spirit
- More Added to the Lord
- Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit

❖ Invitation