

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 10TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

A DEFENSE (ACTS 11:1-18) TO DEFEND THE FAITH

Aristotle identified three kinds of speeches: political (future), ceremonial (present), and judicial (past). The judicial speeches were either accusations or defenses.

- Apologetics isn't proving other people wrong. It's **defending the truthfulness of the faith**, historically and theologically.

A BETTER RESPONSE

This isn't the last time that Peter's association with Gentiles will be under attack. Later in Antioch, Peter caves to social pressure and withdraws from the Gentiles (Galatians 2).

- Have grace for those who backslide, including yourself. Sin is never excused, but we can **respond with grace and righteousness** or with condemnation.

THE OLD LAW

Why does Peter need a vision to say he can eat anything? In the Mosaic Law, God represented His holiness through separating the Jewish people from Gentile practices.

- The old law wasn't righteousness from works or protection from allergies. **It was about representing God.**

THE NEW LAW

In the New Covenant, we are still saved by grace through faith. But the way we express that faith has changed by God's direction. Now, we have freedom in Christ to do as we should.

- Both the law and freedom from the law are **about God**, not us. We are free in Christ to do His will.

ASSOCIATING WITH GENTILES

Peter uses his new freedom not for dietary indulgence but evangelistic outreach. Associating with Gentiles wasn't prohibited, but zeal for the law made it taboo.

- Sometimes, our "protections" can distort the purpose of the law. **This requires wisdom.**

THE SPIRIT POURED OUT

Repetitions in the narrative should make us perk up. There's a reason Luke repeats himself so many times. One reason is emphasis, to get it through our thick skulls.

- The point isn't the gifts of the Holy Spirit but **the gift who is the Holy Spirit**. Anyone from anywhere can be saved and fully participate in God.

VINDICATED

It won't always go this well, but when our faith is challenged, we should humbly and confidently defend it. Apologetics isn't about winning arguments but representing Christ.

- Peter himself tells us how to do this: regarding Christ the Lord as holy, give a defense for your hope with **gentleness and reverence** (1 Peter 3:15-16).

ANTIOCH (ACTS 11:19-30) SCATTERED AND ISOLATED

After persecution began in Jerusalem, many Believers left the area for their safety. The first group we read about stayed isolated even in the Diaspora.

- We aren't told why exactly they only spoke to Jews, but whatever the reason, their isolation is contrasted against the missional success of the second group.

SCATTERED BUT MISSIONAL

The second group didn't stay within their own ethnic and cultural boundaries. They reached out to people who were unlike themselves. As a result, one of the most important missionary centers (Antioch) was born.

- You never know where your faithfulness might lead. Even when you don't see results, **trust God's faithfulness.**

TRUST AND VERIFY

When the church in Jerusalem heard about the revival in Antioch, they sent Barnabas to check it out. What he found was sound teaching, genuine worship, and godly living.

- Revivals can be genuine, and **we should hope they are**, but some investigation to verify them is wise.

SAUL JOINS BARNABAS

Barnabas was doing just fine on his own in Antioch but sought out Saul to be a partner in ministry. Together, they disciples in Antioch and would constantly return there.

- What work has God given you that you can involve other people in? If God made us for community, do not call isolation (**cultural or vocational**) good.

FAMINE PREDICTED

Agabus is a recurring character in Acts. Next time we meet him, he will be predicting Paul's imprisonment (Acts 21). The gift of predictive prophecy, like that of tongues, is a good gift to be used in wisdom.

- Prophecy, whether forthtelling or foretelling, is **always aligned with God's written word** (the Bible).

FAMINE RELIEF

The church in Antioch, having their spiritual needs met and seeing a physical need, met that need with generosity. A major theme of Saul's ministry will be fundraising to provide relief to the Believers in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16; 2 Corinthians 8)

- Local churches shouldn't be solely focused on themselves. The Body of Christ needs to act as a body.

THE EXAMPLE OF PETER

- Peter stood firm in his convictions. But Peter didn't always stand firm. We should strive towards perfection but **have grace** for ourselves and others.
- Peter used his freedom not for self indulgence but for outreach.
- Peter defended the faith with **reverence, gentleness, and holiness.**

THE EXAMPLE OF THE SCATTERED

- Some who left Jerusalem kept to themselves and their own people. Others who left Jerusalem reached out to other cultures and ethnicities.
- The Kingdom of God is made up of every tribe, nation, and tongue. Yet, the church is the **most segregated** institution in America.

THE EXAMPLE OF BARNABAS

- Barnabas is willing to do what's needed.
- Barnabas rightly identifies spiritual fruit and encourages it more and more.
- His discernment and joy come from **being a godly man**, being **full of the Holy Spirit**, and having **faith**.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE ANTIOCHIANS

- The church in Antioch is receptive to teaching, both in **mind** and in **action**.
- Like Cornelius and the Antiochians, we should **desire to know more** about God while also **being obedient** to the knowledge we have.
- Sometimes, the greatest results come from where we least expected.