

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 9TH–10TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

## FOR EVERYONE (ACTS 11:1–18) MINDS BLOWN

Centuries of preconceived beliefs were contradicted by one act of God, disorienting the Jewish Christians. They believed the Messiah was only for the Jews, not also for the Gentiles. Back in Jerusalem, Peter had some explaining to do.

- **We must read God's Word rightly so we won't limit His work in and around us.**

### TWO QUESTIONS FOR PETER

The circumcision party (not necessarily bad people but those who still believed Christianity could only be experienced through the Old Covenant) wanted to know why Peter went to the Gentile home and why he ate with them.

- God wanted Gentiles to know Him. **But man's laws had overshadowed God's plan.**

### PETER'S ANSWER

Peter recalls, step by step, all that God did to get him before the Gentiles. He tells them of the sheet with unclean animals. He tells them of the Gentiles showing up, asking Peter to meet Cornelius in Caesarea. He tells them of the gospel preached and the salvation of the Gentiles. Then Peter asks, **"How could I possibly hinder God?"**

### THE RESPONSE

The people respond with silence as they process Peter's words and God's work. Then they glorify God! Why? Because God had worked far beyond what they could ask or imagine. He granted repentance even to the Gentiles, amazing them!

- **Most of the time, we need to get out of God's way and let Him do God-sized things.**

## CHRISTIANS (ACTS 11:19–26) ONE-OFFS, THEN A MOVEMENT

Luke has recorded one-offs of non-Jews trusting in Jesus (Samaritans/Ethiopian eunuch in Ch. 8; Cornelius in Ch. 10). Here, we see Jewish people taking the gospel to non-Jewish regions, still only to Jews. But a movement was about to be born.

- **Courageous Jewish Christians were about to spark a movement among the Gentiles.**

### ANTIOCH

Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire, behind Rome and Alexandria. It had over 500,000 people and was very metropolitan, with lots of trade, paganism, and ethnicities. It was a perfect city to launch the gospel to the world.

- **We shouldn't be afraid to take Jesus to cultures that are far from God, like ours.**

### POWERLESS MEN, A POWERFUL GOD

Unknown Jewish men boldly shared with the Gentiles in Antioch that Jesus is Lord, not Caesar or other gods. God empowered the gospel to be heard and believed so many trusted in Jesus.

- **Little is much in the hands of Jesus. If we are willing to share the gospel, He can save the lost.**

**Will we say yes to Him?**

### THE JOYFUL ENCOURAGEMENT OF BARNABAS

The church in Jerusalem heard of this outpouring of converts in Antioch and sent Barnabas as their representative. He saw God's grace at work, which led to him encouraging the Gentiles to devote themselves to Jesus in all things.

- **Don't take the work of God for granted. It's a work of grace. So, rejoice!**

### TRUE CONVERSION LEADS TO DISCIPLESHIP

For Barnabas, no one was better equipped to disciple Gentile converts than Saul, who was a former Pharisee steeped in the OT and a Roman citizen well-acquainted with that culture. Their effective discipleship so transformed the Believers that they were called "little Christs."

- **Our continued call is to make little Christs.**

## GENEROSITY (ACTS 11:27–30) THE NT PROPHETIC GIFT

Prophetic ministry in the NT, continuing today, is primarily *forthtelling* the teachings of Scripture for "strengthening, encouragement, and consolation" (1 Cor. 14:3), not foretelling. However, there are still times when God may choose to give a future word.

- **We are to be more concerned with biblical truth (our job) than future events (God's job).**

### AN OPPORTUNITY

Agabus, a prophet from Jerusalem, predicted by the Holy Spirit that a severe famine was coming to the Roman world, which occurred around 45–47 A.D. Instead of being fearful and hoarding, the church at Antioch responded in faith and generosity.

- Their response showed the effectiveness of Saul and Barnabas's disciple-making in Antioch.

### NOT JUST BELIEF, BUT ACTION

The church's belief moved them to action. Though the Jerusalem church was mostly Jewish, the Gentile Christians saw them as brothers and sisters. Luke says, "they" (the people) determined to help as they had ability. They sent the offering to the leaders in Jerusalem via Barnabas and Saul.

- **Biblical faith leads to obedient response.**

## HOW CAN WE HINDER GOD'S WORK?

- **Indifference:** We don't care about people.
- **Silence:** We don't share the gospel.
- **Priorities:** Other things occupy our attention.
- **Faithlessness:** We don't really believe that Jesus can change a heart or a city.
- **Fear:** We're afraid of what people think.
- **Disobedience:** We say "no" to God.

## FAITH IN GOD, NOT GIMMICKS

- Is our belief in God's power to change lives so strong we obey His command to witness rather than hope in clever marketing plans?
- **Obedient disciples change their worlds.**
- Do we act on God's command to live like Jesus so we are His aroma in whatever we do and wherever we go?
- "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in Christ's triumphal procession and through us spreads the aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For to God we are the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. "To some we are an aroma of death leading to death, but to others, an aroma of life leading to life. Who is adequate for these things? For we do not market the word of God for profit like so many. On the contrary, we speak with sincerity in Christ, as from God and before God" (2 Corinthians 2:14–17 CSB).

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## HOW DO WE HELP GOD'S WORK?

- "We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. **I labor for this**, striving with His strength that works powerfully in me" (Colossians 1:28–29).
- Be a **disciple**, not just a convert.
- Be a **disciple-maker**, not just an evangelist.
- Be a **worker**, not just a spectator.