

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 10TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

### EVANGELISM (ACTS 11:1-18) THEY RECEIVED THE WORD OF GOD

News traveled fast that Gentiles in Caesarea had received the word of God.

- In the past, Gentiles could convert to Judaism by being circumcised and adopting all the Torah's laws. Others were labeled "God-fearers" if they believed in one God and followed ethical laws.
- Although God remains the same, this was something new to the Jewish community.
- **It was new because it was the fulfillment of what they had observed for 1,500 years.**

### EATING WITH UNCIRCUMCISED MEN

It's interesting that when Peter returned to Jerusalem, the Christian leaders there were more concerned with who Peter sat and ate with than the actual salvation of the Gentiles.

- In their defense, their standard of holiness had been based on external observations, and now it would be a transformed heart set apart by the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- **Jesus brings grace-enabled transformation to everyone who calls Him Savior.**

### PETER EXPLAINED STEP BY STEP

For a third time, we read the events that led to the salvation of Cornelius, his family, and many other Gentiles.

- This time, it is Peter's testimony. Although it was Peter's experience, he was actually revealing how God directed his understanding and actions.
- **Are we offended when we are asked to give an account of our actions? If our actions are within God's will, it is an opportunity to share what He is doing in us and around us.**

### "WHAT GOD HAS MADE CLEAN"

A vision and voice helped Peter understand that Christ fulfilled the law and that faith in Christ brings cleansing to every Believer.

- Peter understood that he could share the gospel with the Gentiles and fellowship with them as a community of Believers.
- **Does our identity keep us away from others? As Believers, we are drawn to share Christ with anyone, everyone, anywhere. Are we so "clean" that we would deny others the truth?**

### "I REMEMBERED THE WORD OF THE LORD"

Following the direction of the Holy Spirit, Peter entered Cornelius's house and began to speak.

- In that moment, as the Holy Spirit was poured out on them, Peter remembered what Jesus had said seven years earlier in Acts 1:5.
- What happened with the Jewish Believers at Pentecost was happening to these Gentiles.
- **God does things we may not fully understand, but He grows our understanding as we continue in faithfulness to His commands.**

### DON'T HINDER GOD

In each step, Peter immediately responded to God's call. He received confirmation after he completed each step.

- In his closing statement, Peter declared that he would not and could not hinder God's work.
- They conceded that God was at work among the Gentiles, and they became silent...for now.
- **It is ok to ask questions, but there is a line between questioning people and questioning what God is doing in a way that hinders.**

### DISCIPLESHIP (ACTS 11:19-26) SCATTERED TO ANTIOCH

As a result of the persecution following Stephen's execution, Believers were traveling all over Judea and the Roman empire.

- Peter wasn't the only one sharing the gospel with Gentiles. God was using other Believers to reach Antioch and beyond. These new Believers were real, authentic disciples of Jesus, even though they were not Jews.
- **God will send His message. Are we going to be the ones He uses to send it? YES.**

### THE NEWS REACHED JERUSALEM

The gospel was spreading because ordinary disciples were being faithful to share.

- When the church leaders in Jerusalem heard of the new Believers, they sent Barnabas on a 300-mile journey to observe and disciple the new church in Antioch.
- **Sharing the gospel is the beginning. Being a disciple of Christ means that we will also teach what we know.**

### GLAD AND ENCOURAGED

When Barnabas arrived in Antioch, he saw the grace of God had changed their hearts.

- It thrilled his heart to see the Gentiles following Christ, so he encouraged them to stay strong.
- Barnabas didn't judge who was a Jew or Gentile. He was full of the Holy Spirit, and his faith recognized other authentic Believers.
- **When God's hand is at work, do we evaluate backgrounds or futures?**

### BRINGING SAUL TO ANTIOCH

Seeing the need for discipleship, Barnabas traveled 150 miles to search for Saul.

- He recognized that Saul was a gifted teacher and could impact the maturity of the church.
- It was the second time he served as a bridge to help Saul get connected to other Believers.
- Discipleship also means connecting others to the process of growth. Are we inviting others to grow with us?

### MINISTRY (ACTS 11:27-30) A NEW KIND OF CHURCH

The church in Antioch was born from effective evangelism and dynamic discipleship. It was the first church made up of both Jewish and Gentile Believers, and they were called Christians.

- Their hearts had been changed, and it would soon be obvious even to the doubters in Jerusalem.
- **God is building His church, and we get to be part of it. If we try to decide who is worthy, it would be our church and not His.**

### A NEW CHALLENGE FOR THE CHURCH

After a prophetic word from Agabus, the new church would have an opportunity to show support for those in Jerusalem.

- The church that had doubts would soon have its needs met by the very ones they doubted.
- Traditions and cultural boundaries had been crossed for the sake of salvation and community. The church chose ministry.
- **How important are others' needs to us?**

### ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITY

The forecasted famine was severe and lasted about four years.

- Each disciple chose to give to the needs of their brothers and sisters in Judea.
- Even though the famine affected Antioch, they gave as much as they could. It was significant enough that they sent it with Barnabas and Saul.
- **Regardless of past divisions, they saw people with needs and acted accordingly. Do we?**

### MISSION

- Everyone has a mission.
- **We may have several, and completing them is how we judge our success.**
- **As Believers who are the church, we have a mission to make authentic disciples of Christ. This isn't just a church mission; it's the individual mission of each Believer. How are we doing? Are we seeing progress?**

### VISION

- We tend to see what we want to see.
- **Vision is more that what we see; it is where we focus on going.**
- **If our vision is to continue our mission through authentic worship, community, and service, what steps are we taking to get there?**

### WORK

- Mission and vision require work.
- **God guides us and gives opportunities to work.**
- **The problem is the church has decided that since "God does all the work," we can just let the future unravel as it may. God does His work through the church! We can't stop God, but we get to be a part of His work or a hindrance. The mission and vision are good and effective, but the real questions are "Are we?" and "What will we do next?"**