



<b>SERIES:</b>	44 Acts – 2017
<b>MESSAGE:</b>	Acts 11
<b>SPEAKER:</b>	Skip Heitzig
<b>SCRIPTURE:</b>	Acts 11

## MESSAGE SUMMARY

We all need some encouragement from time to time as we grow in our walk with the Lord. Barnabas had the gift of encouraging those around him. In this message, we see how he encouraged Saul, who would later become Paul the apostle, to begin in his ministry.

## DETAILED NOTES

- I. Introduction
  - A. Preaching the gospel is our family business (see Mark 16:15; Ephesians 3:15)
    1. Paul saw it as a partnership (see Philippians 1:5)
    2. This is the theme of the book of Acts (see Acts 1:8)
  - B. Acts 10
    1. Peter took the gospel to Joppa and Caesarea
    2. Beginning in Acts 13, the focus of the book is on Paul the apostle
  - C. The second most important city in the New Testament after Jerusalem was Antioch
    1. It became the place that the displaced Christians from Jerusalem gathered and were sent out from
    2. Paul and Barnabas and then Paul and Silas were dispatched from Antioch
    3. Called Antioch of Syria
      - a. Just over the border of Syria in Turkey
      - b. Today, in the cradle where Christianity began, most Christians have been put to death or forced out
- II. Acts 11:1-18
  - A. The Gentiles received the Word of God
    1. Many Jewish believers did not like this and saw the Gentiles as a nuisance
      - a. God originally intended Israel to be a light to the world
      - b. Instead, the Jews became closed off from the Gentiles
      - c. We are all products of our traditions
    2. They didn't have the benefit of the New Testament
      - a. Many of the new believers were priests
      - b. They had the background in what was considered clean and unclean
  - B. The Jews contended with Peter
    1. *Diakrinó* = to distinguish, to judge
    2. They made a difference between people because of their ethnicity

- C. Peter recounted how God spoke to Him in a vision and all the things that happened after that
  - 1. Peter's name
    - a. *Simon* was his given Hebrew name, meaning *to hear*
    - b. Jesus renamed him *Peter (Petros, meaning a stone)* (see John 1:42)
  - 2. The Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles Peter witnessed to when they became saved
    - a. Just as the Spirit came to them at Pentecost
    - b. Acts 2:1-4
- D. Three lines of evidence that Gentiles can be saved
  - 1. His own witness: the vision from God (see vv. 5-11)
  - 2. The witness of the Holy Spirit (see v. 15)
  - 3. The witness of the Word (see v. 16)
- E. In hearing the evidence, they accepted God's gift of salvation to the Gentiles
  - 1. This was a shocking admission
  - 2. It was God's plan all around
    - a. He didn't create them to hoard their blessings
    - b. He wanted them to be a light to the Gentiles (see Isaiah 42:6; 49:6)
    - c. God's purpose in calling Abraham was to bless all families (nations) of the earth (see Genesis 12:1-3)
    - d. Speaks to the promise of salvation through Jesus

### III. Acts 11:19-24

- A. Persecution of the church
  - 1. If you chose to follow the instruction in Acts 1:8, the result will be Acts 8:1 (persecution)
  - 2. If you spread the gospel, be prepared for the consequences (see 2 Timothy 3:12)
  - 3. Persecution only caused the gospel to spread further
- B. There were two cities named *Antioch*
  - 1. Antioch in Syria
    - a. Named by one of Alexander the Great's generals, Seleucus, after his father Antiochus
    - b. Good trade route
    - c. Very metropolitan city
    - d. Greek, Roman, and Jewish
  - 2. Antioch of Pisidia
- C. They preached to the Hellenists
  - 1. *Hellenistés*
    - a. Refers to a Greek-speaking Jew
    - b. Is also used to refer to non-Jewish Greeks
  - 2. It appears that Luke was referring to non-Jewish Greeks (Gentiles)
- D. They sent Barnabas to Antioch
  - 1. He was not an apostle
  - 2. His given name was *Joses*, but the church named him *Barnabas*, which means *son of encouragement*
    - a. He encouraged the church with his finances (see Acts 4:36-37)
    - b. He encouraged Saul of Tarsus with his friendship (see Acts 9:27)
    - c. He now encouraged the church with follow-up

- E. Any relationship, even with the Lord, can have difficulties
  - 1. A relationship with the Lord is similar to the relationship between a married couple
    - a. Don't be surprised if you don't always feel excited about your relationship with the Lord
    - b. You won't always be in that peak emotional state
    - c. When you live by commitment, the feelings will follow
  - 2. This is when you need encouragement
    - a. We desperately need those with the gift of encouragement
    - b. We need others to lift us up and encourage us not to give up in our walk with the Lord

#### IV. Acts 11:25-26

- A. Saul was the waiting man at Tarsus; Barnabas was the thinking man at Antioch
  - 1. It had been ten years since Saul was given the prophecy about his ministry (see Acts 9)
  - 2. Barnabas was considering who would be the best person to lead the believers in Antioch (Jews, Greeks, and Romans)
  - 3. Saul was the ideal candidate
    - a. He was a Hebrew who knew all the rituals and traditions of rabbinical Judaism
    - b. He was Greek by culture—a Hellenistic Jew
    - c. He was a Roman citizen
  - 4. Barnabas brought Saul to Antioch for a year
    - a. Had he not done this, half of the New Testament would not have been written
    - b. The power of applause is powerful when it is appropriate
- B. The disciples were called *Christians*
  - 1. Not a friendly term
    - a. Used by unbelievers in Antioch
    - b. Acts 26:26-29
  - 2. Jesus called His followers *disciples*, *friends*, and *My children*
  - 3. The early church referred to its members as *believers*, *saints*, and *beloved*
  - 4. The Jews never used the term *Christian*
    - a. *Christ* means *Messiah*
    - b. They did not believe Jesus was the Messiah
  - 5. Antioch was famous for coming up with nicknames for people
    - a. Nicknamed Emperor Julian "The Goat"
    - b. I Peter 4:14-16
  - 6. *Christianos* = a Christian
    - a. The suffix *ianos* was commonly used to refer to a slave or a follower of a political party
    - b. Are you a slave and follower of Jesus?
    - c. He is the Lord; you are not

#### V. Acts 11:27-30

- A. Prophet
  - 1. Either a *forth-teller* of future events or a *foreteller* of God's Word
  - 2. Agabus predicted a famine, which history tells us came to pass

3. The problem with prophets was that because they were unattached to a particular assembly, they lacked accountability
  4. Because of this, the Didache was written around AD 100 on church order, including what constituted a true prophet
- B. They sent relief to those in Judea
1. Barnabas mentioned first
  2. Saul mentioned second
  3. This will change

VI. Closing

- A. When we think of great people, we often fail to think of those who stood behind them
- B. In God's sovereignty, the gift of encouragement is so needed (see Ephesians 4:32)

**Figures referenced:** Alexander the Great, Antiochus, Aratus of Soli, Winston Churchill, Epimenides, Billy Graham, Emperor Julian, Charles Lindbergh, Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, Claude Ryan, Seleucus, Deborah Shouse, Grady Wilson, T.W. Wilson

**Works referenced:** The Didache

**Greek words:** Christianos, diakrinó, Hellénistés, Petros

**Cross references:** Genesis 12:1-3; Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; Mark 16:15; John 1:42; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; 4:36-37; 8:1; 9; 10; 13; 26:26-29; Ephesians 3:15; 4:32; Philippians 1:5; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:14-16

**Topic:** Encouragement

**Keywords:** gospel, Gentiles, Jews, salvation, discrimination, persecution, Hellenists, apostle, encouragement, generosity, Christian, prophet