

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide SB 11.15.2020

A NEW STREAM OF MINISTRY – Acts 11:1-26

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

The word "Christian" is used only three times in the New Testament (Acts 11:26, 26:28, 1 Pet 4:16). Early followers of Christ were originally called disciples, followers, brethren, and saints. Followers of Christ were first called Christians in the midst of the growing church in Antioch. The term meant "Christ-one" or "little Christ"; however, critics of Christianity often used the term with a negative connotation. They might say, "There go those Christ-people, those Christ ones, those Christians". Over the years, Christianity has expanded rapidly across the world's population. Just in the last 100 years, the number of Christians in the world has quadrupled from about 600 million in 1910 to well past 2 billion or 31.2% of the world's population. Today, particularly in America, we can almost assimilate Christianity as part of our culture. Even those who do not abide in Christ might still call themselves a Christian. In this week's study, we will take a closer look at the Acts of the Holy Spirit through the disciples who were first called Christians in Antioch. As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What stood out to you during this week's study?
2. What do you think it means today to be a Christian?

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 11:1-18

When Peter came to Jerusalem, he found it necessary to explain everything that happened in Caesarea. The fact that Luke records this, repeating much of what was said in Chapter 10, shows how important these events were. From this passage, the church learned that God would accept the Gentiles without circumcision, without adhering the old covenant law, and without becoming Jews. Gentiles could come directly under the new covenant without coming first under the old covenant.

1. After the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles, Peter met some opposition back in Jerusalem. After a powerful move of God, the enemy will always attack. Describe a time when the Holy Spirit fell afresh upon on you, then the enemy attacked. Explain how opposition could be considered encouragement? (2 Tim 3:12, 1 Pet 4:13)
2. Peter told the believers how he was praying, then he fell in a trance and had a vision of a large sheet coming from heaven. Have you ever experienced a dream or vision you would like to share? Why is it important to pay attention to dreams and visions? (Joel 2:28)
3. Tradition said that a Gentile had to "become a Jew" in order to be accepted, but now Jews and Gentiles were united in the church through faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:26-28). Unity was our Word of the Year for 2019. Why is unity important in the church? (Eph. 4:4-6, Phil 2:2)

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 11:19-26

When the saints were scattered abroad during Saul's persecution of the Church (Acts 8:1), some of them ended up in Antioch, the capital of Syria, three hundred miles north of Jerusalem. Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman empire with a population of half a million. It was a busy and wicked center for luxury and culture. "Antioch was to the Roman world what New York City is to ours" (Kelso). However, here was an opportunity to preach the Gospel to the whole world. An effective church was built in Antioch who later sent Paul out to win Gentiles for Christ.

Visitation/Restoration in 2021

1. Antioch was a city where sin abounded. Where sin abounds, grace abounds (Romans 5:20). Grace and Mercy are God's love language to mankind. What is the difference between grace and mercy? (Ephesians 2:4-5)
2. God created a new stream of ministry from the city of Antioch. Pastor Ray equated this new ministry as new wine requiring new wine skins. Sometimes, the need for reform is so great that the fresh work of God cannot be contained in old or expected forms. Who are the new wine skins in this new stream ministry in Antioch? (1 Corinthians 12:13)
3. Our love language to God is obedience, to keep his commands (1 John 5:3). What does it mean to obey God? (Matt 22:37-39)
4. Once you are born again; the next step is to become a disciple. What does it mean to be a Disciple of Christ? (Luke 9:23-24)
5. An effective church grew in Antioch (Acts 13:1-3). What does an effective church look like today? How might growth groups play an important role in this effectiveness? (Reference Appendix)

Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

The church of Antioch was a light unto the world. Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14). You are the light of the world. That's how God intends to get his work done on earth today: through you! It's not just pastors and missionaries who are the light; it's the born-again believer.

1. God takes an ordinary person and uses them to share His message to people who needed Him. When we share our faith, we spread His light. You were saved to shine! Who might you share the good news of Christ with this week?
2. Jesus describes what we are in this passage - the light of the world, not the light of the church. That means we have to get beyond the church walls and take the light out to where it is dark. What might this look like for you?
3. Jesus also talked of the strength of collective light. Each house in a city with its lights on cast a glow across the sky. As Christians come together, there is a glow for the Lord that we cannot create individually. We shine brightest when we shine together. What are some opportunities we can shine together as a group?

PRAYER

God, with you there is no darkness. Your character has no shadows, and you are pure and good. Yet in our broken world, we see so much darkness around us. Pain, sickness, and disease are in our community and in many of our homes.

Reveal your light and restoring presence in the dark places in our lives. Bring your hope to hearts that feel defeated. Bring your love and compassion to those in pain.

Give us faith to say with the psalmist, "Lord, you light my lamp; my God illuminates my darkness." May your light of hope shine in the darkness for families today. Show us glimpses of your presence with us and the comfort you bring.

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14).

The “One Another” Passages

The phrase "one another" is derived from the Greek word *allelon* which means "one another, each other; mutually, reciprocally." It occurs 100 times in the New Testament. Approximately 59 of those occurrences are specific commands teaching us how (and how not) to relate to one another. Obedience to those commands is imperative and has a direct impact on our witness to the world (John 13:35). Let's look at some "one another" statements.

- Love one another (John 13:34 - This command occurs at least 16 times)
- Be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10)
- Honor one another above yourselves (Romans 12:10)
- Live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16)
- Build up one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- Be likeminded towards one another (Romans 15:5)
- Accept one another (Romans 15:7)
- Admonish one another (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16) Greet one another (Romans 16:16)
- Care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25)
- Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
- Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- Forgive one another (Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13)
- Be patient with one another (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13)
- Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15, 25)
- Be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32)
- Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19)
- Submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5)
- Consider others better than yourselves (Philippians 2:3)
- Look to the interests of one another (Philippians 2:4)
- Bear with one another (Colossians 3:13)
- Teach one another (Colossians 3:16)
- Comfort one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
- Encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- Exhort one another (Hebrews 3:13)
- Stir up [provoke, stimulate] one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24)
- Show hospitality to one another (1 Peter 4:9)
- Employ the gifts that God has given us for the benefit of one another (1 Peter 4:10)
- Clothe yourselves with humility towards one another (1 Peter 5:5)
- Pray for one another (James 5:16)
- Confess your faults to one another (James 5:16)

NEGATIVE COMMANDS (how not to treat one another)

Do not lie to one another (Colossians 3:9) Stop passing judgment on one another (Romans 14:13) If you keep on biting and devouring each other...you'll be destroyed by each other (Galatians 5:15) Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other (Galatians 5:26) Do not slander one another (James 4:11) Don't grumble against each other (James 5:9)