
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES



- I. Sermon Recap
- II. Study Guide

SESSION 7

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
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SERMON RECAP

Pastor Gary walked us through a turning point in the book of Acts: the gospel moves powerfully into Antioch, a strategic, influential, and deeply immoral city. What began with scattered believers preaching to Jews soon expanded to Gentiles, ordinary people opening their mouths to share Jesus, and “a great number believed and turned to the Lord.” Antioch became a picture of what happens when the hand of the Lord is present: people are not merely drawn to a personality, a church program, or a social environment, they are turned to Christ in faith and repentance.

A major pastoral emphasis was the beauty of visible grace. When Barnabas arrived in Antioch, he “saw the grace of God” and was glad. Grace was not just a doctrine they affirmed; it was something seen in how believers treated one another, carried burdens, encouraged, gave generously, and lived out the “one another” commands of Scripture. Pastor Gary pressed us to ask: Can people see the grace of God in our church, our homes, our relationships, and our lives?

The message also called us to a deeper life of prayer. In Acts 12, Peter is imprisoned, James has been killed, and the church responds with constant, desperate prayer. Yet when God answers, they are astonished. Pastor Gary challenged us to pray with compassion, urgency, and expectancy. The same God who opened Peter’s prison gate can still carry His people through danger, suffering, and uncertainty. We are called to rest in His sovereignty, pray with faith, and live so clearly under the lordship of Jesus that “Christian” is the first and truest thing people see in us.

2. STUDY GUIDE

Key Points

- The gospel is meant to move outward.

The believers scattered by persecution carried the gospel from Jerusalem toward Antioch, and God used ordinary witnesses to reach people who had never heard the good news.

- Antioch shows God's strategy for reaching cities.

Antioch was influential, commercial, immoral, and strategic. God brought gospel awakening there because what happened in Antioch would spread far beyond Antioch.

- True conversion turns people to the Lord.

The hand of the Lord does not merely attract people to a preacher, ministry, church personality, or social environment. God turns hearts to Jesus in faith and repentance.

- Grace should be visible.

Barnabas saw the grace of God in Antioch. The church should be a place where grace can be seen in forgiveness, generosity, burden-bearing, encouragement, patience, and love.

- Spiritual depth often grows in obscurity.

Saul spent years being prepared before stepping into broader ministry. Pastor Gary reminded us: start small, go deep, and think big. Faithfulness in hidden places matters.

- Prayer should be compassionate, constant, and expectant.

The church prayed earnestly for Peter, but was surprised when God answered. We are called to pray with urgency and expectation while trusting God with the outcome.

Key Scripture

Primary Sermon Text

- Acts 11:19-30 – The gospel spreads to Antioch; Barnabas sees the grace of God; Saul is brought to Antioch; believers are first called Christians; the church sends famine relief.
- Acts 12:1-25 – Herod persecutes the church; James is killed; Peter is imprisoned and miraculously delivered; the church prays; Herod dies; the word of God grows and multiplies.

Verses Mentioned or Directly Alluded to by Pastor Gary

- Acts 1:8 – The gospel moves from Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria toward the ends of the earth. Pastor Gary connected Antioch to this expanding mission.
- Acts 11:19-21 – Scattered believers preach the Lord Jesus in Antioch, and “a great number believed and turned to the Lord.”
- Acts 11:22-24 – Barnabas is sent from Jerusalem, sees the grace of God, rejoices, and encourages the believers to continue with the Lord.
- Acts 11:25-26 – Barnabas seeks Saul, brings him to Antioch, and the disciples are first called Christians there.
- Acts 11:27-30 – Agabus prophesies a famine, and the disciples send relief to the believers in Judea.
- Acts 12:1-5 – Herod kills James, imprisons Peter, and the church offers constant prayer to God.
- Acts 12:6-11 – An angel delivers Peter from prison; his chains fall off, and the gate opens.
- Acts 12:12-17 – Peter comes to Mary’s house where believers are praying; Rhoda recognizes him, and the church is astonished.
- Acts 12:18-19 – Herod searches for Peter and orders the guards to be put to death.

- Acts 12:20-23 — Herod receives praise as though he were a god and is struck down because he does not give glory to God.
- Acts 12:24-25 — The word of God grows and multiplies; Barnabas and Saul continue the work.
- Romans 1:16 — “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God...” Pastor Gary used this to show the gospel’s power for Jews and Greeks/Gentiles.
- Romans 8:26-27 — Pastor Gary referenced Romans 8 in connection with the Spirit helping and directing believers in prayer.
- Psalm 127:2 — “He gives His beloved sleep.” Pastor Gary connected this to Peter sleeping peacefully in prison.
- 1 Peter 5:7 — “Cast all your cares on Him, because He cares for you.” Pastor Gary noted that Peter could write this from lived experience.
- Philippians 4:8 — Pastor Gary echoed the language of what is true, noble, admirable, and praiseworthy while describing Saul’s years of preparation.
- Genesis 15:12-18 — Pastor Gary alluded to Abram being put into a deep sleep while God cut covenant with him, connecting it to God acting when His people are helpless.
- Luke 22:39-46 / Matthew 26:36-46 — Pastor Gary alluded to Jesus’ agonizing prayer in Gethsemane as an example of earnest, stretching prayer.
- Mark 5:21-43 / Luke 8:40-56 — Pastor Gary referenced Jesus healing Jairus’ daughter and bringing Peter, James, and John with Him.
- Matthew 2:16-18 — Pastor Gary referenced Herod’s family legacy, including the slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem.
- Ephesians 2:8-9 — Pastor Gary closed by emphasizing salvation received by grace through faith.

Other Relevant Verses

- John 13:34-35 – General thematic tie.

Jesus says His disciples will be known by their love for one another. This reinforces the sermon's emphasis on "visible grace" in the life of the church.

- Colossians 1:28-29 – General thematic tie.

Paul describes proclaiming Christ, warning and teaching everyone with the goal of maturity. This connects with Barnabas and Saul teaching many in Antioch and the need for deep discipleship.

- James 5:16 – General thematic tie.

"The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." This supports the sermon's call to earnest, expectant, compassionate prayer.