

**Opening Questions:** Describe a time when you felt the Spirit leading you to do some unorthodox thing? Did you respond? What was the outcome?

**Review Peter's Experience:** Peter has just seen a vision. God followed it up with confirmation from others who were seeking him out. As a result of those circumstances Peter leads the whole household of Cornelius to faith in Jesus Christ.

There is a lot in the following 2 chapters (11 & 12) Buckle up... Here we go!

**READ** Acts 11:19 to the group...

19 Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews.

How was the church being treated by the Jewish leaders? What happened to the church?

- Persecution meant... "shut up in prison... &... put to death"

**READ** Acts 26:9-11, Acts 8:1-3. Describe the way Paul himself treated the church.

**ASK Does such persecution still take place today?** According to the publication (Voice of the Martyrs) More Christians have been martyred in the last 100 years than in the preceding 1,900 years!

When is the last time you were persecuted for your faith in Christ?

- Not merely mis understood. But really persecuted BECAUSE of your faith!
- Does the ANSWER to that question tell you anything about your FAITH?

The church in ANTIOCH was exploding with those coming to faith in Christ.

- It had 2 things going for them... (1) it was the 3rd largest city in the Roman Empire... (2) It was known as a very wicked city.
- Christians were invading Satan's stronghold as Jesus had commanded.
- DO NOT BE DISCOURAGED. Light shines in the Darkness! (**TALK ABOUT THIS**)

**READ** Acts 11:21-23 to the group...

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. 22 The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23 When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, 24 for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

vs. 23: What Barnabas saw made him GLAD! And how did he encourage the church?

**Look** at how the church responded to a need that people had...

**READ** Acts 11:27-30 to the group...

27 Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius) 29 So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. 30 And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

**ASK** what is one way we as a church can serve others better? How can THIS Journey Group plan for a day or night of serving this holiday season? **(TALK ABOUT THIS)**

**READ** Acts 12 as the group... Now take the rest of our time to talk about what stuck out!

**Bottom Line is this...**

The church today is facing persecution! Are you?

How have you experienced some of God's miraculous works in your life?

**Next Week** we will be reading and discussing ACTS 13-14.

Bring your Bibles and invite someone to church.

**PRAYER:** God help me to listen and be aware when your Holy Spirit is not only leading me and giving me the ability to respond in miraculous ways. Help me to know who to serve and how to serve them!