

THINKING BEYOND THEMSELVES | ANTIOCH

INTRO

ANTIOCH: PURPOSE FILLED CHURCH

- A church where everyone shared the Gospel
- Everyday, ordinary Joes took the Gospel to their Gentile neighbors.

OUR TEXT TODAY REVEALS THAT THEY WERE A CHURCH THAT SAW/THOUGHT BEYOND THEIR OWN NEEDS

Acts 11:27-30 ESV

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.

1: OPENNESS TO THE PROPHETIC WORD

PROPHETS CAME DOWN

- NT describes 'offices' of ministry:

Ephesians 4:11-12 ESV

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

- Antioch church embraced and received this ministry.
- There's a humility required to acknowledge outside help and voices – they didn't assume they had it all figured out.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 ESV

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good.

- Ultimately, they had to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit in confirming this message – 'test the spirits'

AGABUS FORETOLD A FAMINE WOULD COME

- Note: There's two types of prophetic words
 - Forttelling: proclaiming and applying God's word to people today
 - Foretelling: Spirit-born message about what is to come
- Agabus' message:

THINKING BEYOND THEMSELVES | ANTIOCH

- Foretelling: There's a famine coming
- Forthtelling: (Would've been) We should give to help them out
- Historical note:
 - Claudius was emperor from 41-54 AD
 - His reign was marked by a long series of crop failures in Rome, Egypt, Judea, and Greece
 - Egyptian documents reveal a major famine there (Judea) in A.D. 45-46 due to flooding.
 - Most likely Paul and Barnabas trip to Jerusalem was in 46 AD with their offering/benevolence

THEY DETERMINED TO GIVE

- Note: Agabus doesn't tell them to give, they made the determination to.
- This reveals the attitude and condition of their heart.
- They were willing and desiring to be a blessing to others
- Particularly their brothers and sisters in the faith.

2: THINKING BEYOND THEIR OWN NEEDS

Philippians 2:4-8 ESV

⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

THE HEART AND MIND OF CHRIST IS TO EMPTY OURSELVES

- In obedience to God
- In service to others

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH HAD THIS HEART

- They heard about a coming calamity/crisis and they acted.
- They didn't just focus on their own wants and needs, but considered what was also in the interest of others

THINKING BEYOND THEMSELVES | ANTIOCH

NOTICE THAT LOVE FOR CHRIST SPILLS OVER INTO LOVE FOR BROTHER

1 John 3:14 ESV

¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.

PARTNERING TO MEET A NEED

- STL & BGMC are partnering with World Serve to provide clean water
- They are strategically placing those wells in coordination with local churches
- SO THAT the GOSPEL & Water can be provided
- **WATCH VIDEO**

CLF HAS OUR OWN NEEDS TOO

- We're saving up and gearing up for a parking lot renewal (likely next year).
- I've got dreams of a new sanctuary and foyer space to help accommodate growth and invest in CLF's future
- We've got kids and students to help get to camps and retreats each year

BUT WE MUST EMBRACE THIS SACRIFICIAL MISSIONS HEART

- I believe God meets our needs as we commit to meeting others

Philippians 4:19 ESV

¹⁹ And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

- Our experience has been that you can't out give God.
 - (first \$10k donation to camp years ago)

3: EVERYONE GAVE ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITY

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TITHES & OFFERINGS (MISSIONS GIVING)

- Tithes = 10% of income and given to your local church to fund the ministry
 - I always say, if everyone tithed we would have more than enough to meet the needs all around.
- Offerings = free will
 - Whatever the Lord puts on your heart, according to your ability.

2 Corinthians 9:7-10 ESV

THINKING BEYOND THEMSELVES | ANTIOCH

⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." ¹⁰ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

- Paul again receiving and offering for the saints in Jerusalem

EQUAL SACRIFICE, NOT EQUAL GIVING

- Recognize that we all won't be able to give the same amounts.
- Jesus honored the poor widow who gave her last two cents in comparison to the wealthy who gave out of their abundance.
- The challenge for us is to:
 - Consider others needs beyond my own
 - Determine how I can help contribute to meeting a need
 - Do so, unto the Lord with a cheerful heart - in love for him.
 - In part, we show our love for the Lord, in the way we love His people

ONE STEP FURTHER

- Lets not limit the application of this passage to just financial giving
- Let's be generous with our time, talents, and abilities
- Let's serve one another

RESPONSE