

Restore Small Group Questions - Acts (Week 20) — “Be the Church” — 6/22/2025**Scripture (NIV) - Acts 11:19-29**

INTRODUCTION - Do we as a church (Restore) proclaim a message worth hearing: a hope worth spreading; a pathway to purpose in life? Other related questions— —

- What happens when I die?
- What is my purpose on earth?
- Why is there suffering and pain?

The answer to all these questions are ultimately rooted in Jesus Gospel; His death for our sin and resurrection.....and our response. Jesus paved our way to heaven when we die....we are to work with Him to expand His kingdom....Jesus provided a way to heal our brokenness. This is supremely good news and worth sharing. A great example of how to share the good news is the lifestyle of the early church. This begs the question: What could Restore be like if we followed their example? Below are 4 things that we are doing purposely or instinctively to spread the gospel.

KEY POINTS and SCRIPTURE**I. Be outward focused:**

- A. Acts 11:19-20** - *Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. 20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.*
- B. Acts 8:1-4** - *On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. 2 Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. 3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison. 4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.*
- C.** Those that were scattered by persecution preached the word among the Jews wherever they went but then, began spreading the good news about Jesus to the Greeks (Gentiles) in Antioch [a strategic location for trade and business]. God chose this location to maximize impact of His plan for the world. God wants us to focus outward and not inward...we too live at a strategic crossroads for commerce and trade [Interstates 35 and 40].

II. Be Encouraging:

- A. Acts 9:26-27** - *When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.*
- B. Acts 11:22-23** - *News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23 When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.*
- C.** Barnabas was a risk taker as he teamed up with Paul and caused the disciples to have a change of heart about Paul. Barnabas told them to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. Antioch hosted diverse world-wide religious practices which required Barnabas and Paul to stay true and remain encouraged. Today, we have similar cultural

ideologies that impact our faith. Standing firm in Jesus Gospel requires overcoming constant temptation to sync up with cultural norms. We need to encourage one another!

III. Be Filled with the Holy Spirit and Faith:

- A. **Acts 11: 24-26** - *He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. 25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26 and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.*
- B. Barnabas was a good man - full of the holy Spirit - pursued Paul and taught great numbers of people. Great resume'!!! Good character is reflected in competency in intentional discipleship and biblical teaching which leads to action, not just knowledge.

IV. Be Generous:

- A. **Acts 11: 27-30** - *During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 29 The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.*
- B. Along with teaching and discipleship, the early church was generous. They had an active prophetic ministry which led them to prepare for an upcoming famine. They proactively saw needs and met needs...greeks and Jews alike. This character trait should be our calling card; individually and collectively.

CONCLUSION - Be the Church - for those committed to following Jesus! We have message, a hope, and a pathway to purpose everyone's needs! We need to be outward focused, encouraging, filled with the Holy Spirit and Faith and be generous!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe how, in various ways, God orchestrated the expansion of the church in Antioch. Consider all the moving pieces, Paul, Barnabas, the prophets from Jerusalem, the famine, and the movement of the Holy Spirit in Cornelius and Peter and the Gentiles.
2. What are your thoughts on whether Restore Church has a message worth hearing, hope worth spreading, and a pathway to purpose our lives. Are these traits relevant to our culture and our neighborhoods? Do they answer the tough questions that we ask of God and life?
3. Discuss what we would need and the steps needed to develop a life style like the early church.
4. What does it look like to be outward focused? How far out? To whom? How often? Are you convinced that it is important?
5. What do you think God's strategic world-view is for our churches today? Are we inward focused or outward focused or somewhere in the middle. What if anything needs changing?
6. Barnabas was called "The son of encouragement". In what areas do we need encouragement today? What role does cultural ideology play in the temptation to water down the Gospel?
7. The Holy Spirit was very busy in the early church. Do you think he is busy today? If yes, in what ways? Are we listening?
8. It is interesting to see the Gentiles being generous with the Jews in the early church especially considering how the Jews marginalized them. In our society, everyone complains about being marginalized! How should we view our roles as generous Christian people with our time, energy, resources and prayers? How are we spreading the message, bringing Hope, and being a light to a pathway to purpose for EVERYONE?