

**An Open Door to Mission Part 3– A Church-wide Mission**  
**Acts 10 & 11 – Key: 11:19-26**

1. Review of last two weeks
  - a. A Personal Mission – Assignment from God
    - i. People need the Lord – every people
    - ii. We are called individually to be mission minded
  - b. A Family Mission
    - i. Leading a household to know the Lord is Family Focused
    - ii. Setting a Godly example is our missionary testimony
  
2. In acts 11 the narrative of Scripture re-focuses on the persecution that scatters the church.
  - a. Luke is merging the significance of the two story lines
    - i. Persecution (beginning in Acts 8) is scattering believers to every nation of the earth
    - ii. The Gentiles being saved when they hear the message of Jesus crucified and resurrected.
      1. This was an unexpected shift – unexpected by the Jews and the Gentiles
  - b. Even amid persecution, the early church still limited the message to Jews only (vs. 19)
    - i. This was a time of transition and great change in the life of the church. Vs. 20
      1. The early church was all about change. If you do not change you die!
        - a. I changed my summer clothes for winter clothes or I might have frozen to death last winter!
    - ii. “Men from Cyprus and Cyrene”... came to Antioch and preached Jesus to the Hellenists.
      1. Cyprus – an island in the Eastern Mediterranean.
      2. Cyrene – a North African port
      3. Hellenists – Greek speaking non-Jewish residents of Antioch; or non-Greeks who had adopted Greek practices but did not know Jesus as Christ.
        - a. No one is left out of the message of Jesus Christ – to the Jews a stumbling block and foolishness to the Greeks
        - b. But when the Greeks heard they believed and were saved!
    - iii. God was implementing Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
  
3. They were first called Christians at Antioch (vs. 26). Names are important!
  - a. Likely a slur or slander term at the time.
  - b. Latin term meaning “partisan of Christ.” A follower, devotee, disciple.
    - i. The term gained in popularity and acceptance
      1. Acts 26:28 “almost you persuade me to become a Christian
      2. 1 Peter 4:16 “If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God...”
  - c. Today we hold the title clear of being a Christian!
    - i. The early church knew nothing of the idea of being a “sinner saved by grace” as a title for a saved person.

1. New Testament uses the term “saints” but we have adulterated that term
  2. The idea behind the term is to humble ourselves and not to esteem ourselves more highly than we ought to think
    - a. But acceptance of the term, I think, causes us to live below our privilege and subjects us to diminish the work of grace in life!
  - ii. I once was a sinner – now I am a Christian, saved by grace. (I once was blind but now I see!) A blind man who receives sight is no longer a blind man – in the same manner, a sinner who gets saved does not remain a sinner!
    1. As a Christian, we no longer live under the dominion or power of sin – we live in the dominion and power of the King of Kings with victory over sin.
    2. We are still capable of sin, but the bent to sin, the want to sin, is changed by the saving grace of God.
4. Antioch aids Jerusalem believers (the same “circumcised believers” that scolded Peter for associating with Gentiles)
- a. In this instance, however, they celebrate the Gentile’s acceptance of Jesus
    - i. They sent Barnabas – the encourager – “to encourage them all.”
    - ii. Saul and Barnabas came back to Antioch and many people were saved, taught, and added to the Lord.
    - iii. This was now a church-wide mission!
  - b. The Gentile Christians adopt mission minded attitude by helping the church in Jerusalem
    - i. Sort of a reversal of fortune.
      1. The Jerusalem church sent missionaries to them – they then send monetary help back to Jerusalem when they are in need.
      2. Our foreign missions are now sending missionaries to the United States.
      3. The Church of God is stronger overseas than in the United States.
  - c. The Gentile Church set the example of seeing beyond themselves to the needs of others.
    - i. Mission-mindedness causes us to look beyond ourselves to our community, region, nation and world.
  - d. Our challenge is to work without delay – not to await a famine before sending forth!
  - e. This is our church-wide mission!