

Community Group Discussion Questions

“Message and Mission”

Acts 11:1-4, 15-30

Sermon Series Title: “Church Beginnings”

Sermon Series Summary: From now until around Easter, we will be in the book of Acts, covering chapters 1-12. After the Ascension of Jesus Christ, we see the NT church being born by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through this series, we see the church being built, the kingdom going forth, and the gospel being proclaimed.

Setting: The book of Acts is a transitional book between the resurrection of Jesus and the established local churches of the epistles. With Jesus’ call to the church in Acts 1, we see how the gospel spreads to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth..

Summary: The circumcision party criticizes Peter for dwelling among the Gentiles, being unclean. Peter shares the testimony of what transpired in ch. 10, leading the people to worship God for the salvation of the Gentiles. We see the work of Gentile Christians in Antioch as the church is planted there and is on mission through mercy. This chapter helps us to examine ourselves: our salvation, testimony, witness, and mission.

Main Point: *Jesus is our missional and merciful Savior through His obedience unto death.*

Sermon Points:

1. The Message
2. The Mission
3. The Mercy
4. The Messiah

After the Gentiles officially receive the gospel and the Holy Spirit, there are people who criticize Peter’s actions. Peter addresses their criticisms, and we see the diverse church in Antioch thrive and be on mission.

Read Acts 11:1-4, 15-30

Community Group Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of people are the hardest to share the gospel with, for you personally?

(Answers may vary.)

The circumcision party criticizes Peter at the beginning of our passage. They accuse him of dwelling with the uncircumcised, breaking not the law of God but the tradition of man. They do not want to see people who do not follow the law, especially through circumcision, come to believe in Christ and be saved. We see this party cause issues later in this book and in the epistles of Paul.

Who are the people that we despise the most? Who are the people that we don't want to see saved? How does this passage humble us?)

2. How do you discern the will of God?

(Peter gives us an example of how to discern the will of God. This is not a formula but a posture of the heart. Peter first is praying and seeking the Lord. Second, we see that He receives and trusts in God's word. Third, the circumstances line up for him to see that the Lord is leading him in a certain direction. Fourth, there are people around to confirm what God is doing (witnesses he brings). Fifth, we see God's blessing Peter's obedience. Sixth, this is a repetition of the second, but we see that all his actions are in line with and confirmed by Scripture. Peter quotes Jesus' words at the end.

Theologically, we have two wills of God. First, we have the revealed will of God in the Scriptures. We see what God desires in man and in this world through the Bible. Second, we have the hidden will of God where we see God working all things for His purposes. Even when this world and his church are in disarray because of sin, God is sovereign over all things and using it for His glory and our ultimate good.)

3. How do you feel when you see other people growing in their faith and flourishing?

(Answers may vary.)

In our passage, we see two kinds of people. We see the circumcision party who are criticizing the work of the Lord in Gentiles. They felt superior to the Gentiles because of

Community Group Discussion Questions

their law and heritage. They doubted the work of God in them because of their pride and hypocrisy. They could not accept God's work in people different from them.

On the other hand, we see Barnabas who visits the Gentile church in Antioch to confirm the work of the Lord in their faith and life. After seeing what is going on, we see that Barnabas is glad. He takes joy in what the Lord is doing, and he participates in it. He even brings Saul to further the work the Lord is doing in Antioch.)

4. What name would you receive based on your life, passions, and goals?

(Answers may vary.)

The church in Antioch received the name Christians, meaning "Christ-ones." The Jews would not give the church this name, because they would not dare to include Christ in any name of any man. The church would not give themselves this name, because they were already called "The Way" along with others. It was the Gentiles in the metropolitan city that gave the church this name. Their faith, actions, heart, and lifestyle were all about Jesus the Christ. They confessed Him, loved Him, shared the message about Him, and were set apart by His humility and love.)

Final Thoughts: *In our passage, we see Peter's report about Cornelius' salvation and the work of the Lord in the church of Antioch. Through it, we are challenged about the prejudices we may have against others, reminded about the way God reveals His will, humbled by the call for mission and mercy through the example of the Antioch church, and drawn near to the great Missionary and Merciful One in Jesus Christ.*