

Acts 11:1-30

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 May 2023

Preacher: Pastor Jared Bromka

[0 : 00] Turn to Acts chapter 11, where we'll be tonight. Hey, Nat, you got an extra one of those? Can I have one? Thanks.

So if you look on the handout we have, there's a lot going on there, so I didn't put it up for a slide. But we're at Acts chapter 11, where the Gentiles are coming into the church.

Paul is kind of about to come into his own, in his calling. And we will hear a little bit more about Peter in the next couple chapters, and then he kind of tails off out of the picture, and we go to the wider world with the gospel and the church.

So it puts us, what, about almost 20 years into the book of Acts, is where we're at. And if you remember, at the end of chapter 10, Peter had just finished visiting Cornelius, and spent a couple days there, had a sleepover, and taught them, the Gentiles, further in the word.

So, Lord willing, we will get through all of chapter 11. So let's pray and dive in. Lord, we thank you again. Just thank you for your word. Thank you for this time to be together.

[1 : 23] Thank you that you are here, Lord. And Lord, we want to hear what the Spirit has to say to the churches tonight. Lord, we don't know what tomorrow brings, but Lord, we know that you said you'll never leave us or forsake us.

And so I pray that you would instruct us, you'd edify us, you'd build us up, and you'd prepare us, Lord, for things we don't even know is coming. We thank you for your word. We thank you that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word.

And again, Lord, through the silly means that you've made of all of us gathering together and just reading your word, talking about your word, giving the sense of it, we can trust that the Holy Spirit will, through that, give us life.

And we thank you, and in Jesus' name, amen. All right, so as we jump into chapter 11, Peter and the boys, he took, what, three guys with him and went to, three or four guys, and went to Caesarea to visit Cornelius and to go into his house and to bring the gospel to the Gentiles.

And they were amazed that the Holy Spirit was poured out in the Gentiles in the same way that the Holy Spirit was poured out in the Jews. And so now Peter's coming back. He spent a few days there, and he's coming back.

[2 : 28] He was at Joppa, you remember, went to Caesarea. He didn't go back to Joppa. This was some pretty important stuff, and he needed to get back to Jerusalem. But unfortunately, the word had gone before him.

He wasn't the first to get back and tell the news, and that happens a lot. It happens in my life quite a bit. When I plan out, well, I'm going to tell this person at this time, it never fails.

The news gets to them first, and then they feel like they're left out or they weren't told on time or whatever. So poor Peter, he gets back, and verse 1 of chapter 11 says, And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

And so they find out, they hear this. It's not firsthand account. It's just something they've heard. But that they've received the word of God. And it's funny because we're going to see some of these guys kind of be upset by that.

And I had someone recently say to me when I was telling them that we were planting a church. And they said to me, Oh, like we need another church in this area. And it's kind of like, really?

[3 : 34] And the person's a believer. I mean, if every church in this area, and there's a lot of churches in Mount Holly and in the south, if everyone taught the word and was spirit-filled, wouldn't that be a good thing?

And then there's more of them and more? It's like, well, one's enough. I don't know. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him.

So when we see in Scripture, they that were of the circumcision, it's those Jews that had become Christians. They're in the faith, but they're holding to the law. And they're holding to what I look at it and think, what validates them?

They're holding to something that said, well, this is my identity. This is what made me feel valuable. And I'm just too afraid to let go of that. And they cause a lot of trouble throughout the New Testament with Paul and Peter because they won't let go of what God had already moved on from.

They're still holding on to. I think they were stewing. They're just kind of stewing in this and waiting for Peter to get there. And they contended with him, saying, thou wentest in to men uncircumcised and did eat with them.

[4 : 46] But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning and expounded it by order unto them, saying, now we've just gone through, you know, last time, the entire account of Peter bringing the gospel to the Gentiles.

So he's going to rehearse it. We'll see a few things different, but I promise we're not going to break down the whole thing all over again. We're going to see some interesting things in the way Peter responds to these men. But let's just read through his account real quick here.

Verse five. And he said, I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. A certain vessel descend as if it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners.

And it came even to me, upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered and saw four-footed beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air.

And I heard a voice saying unto me, arise, Peter, slay and eat. And I said, not so, Lord, for nothing common or unclean has at any time entered into my mouth.

[5 : 51] But the voice answered me again from heaven, while God is cleansed, that call not thou common. And this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven.

And behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house. That's a little bit of new information. You know, what we heard before was the Holy Spirit says to Peter, go down, there are men at the door looking for you.

So Peter's saying here, as this vision is happening, these men are already there. They've come unto the house, where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting.

Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house. Okay, so he had six guys with him, sorry. It was three men that Cornelius had sent to Peter. Peter takes six.

He's doubling up, just to make sure. And he showed us, Cornelius this is, how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter, who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

[7 : 00] And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

For as much then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, God validated them. Us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand them?

What was I that I would not validate them as well? And so Peter rehearses, almost word for word, and event by event, what happened. He leaves out a few things, like he doesn't tell us that, tell them that it was the Holy Spirit said to him, go down, the men are at the door, but he gives some important information.

And I like where he says, in verse 17, where he said with them to go, nothing doubting. And that he's rehearsing to them, this whole thing again.

So if we go back again to the first part of the chapter there, with these circumcised men, with the Jews who are trying to keep the law, the ones contending with Peter, what we see is, we do not jump to a conclusion without first conversing.

[8 : 10] They had jumped to a conclusion right away about what had happened with Peter, and they began to contend with him. And I don't think it was along the lines of, you know, well, what was the proper order of the Gentiles receiving the word?

I think it was probably along the lines of, you should have never done this. What have you done, Peter? You shouldn't have gone into that house. And they began to contend without first even hearing.

Proverbs 18, 13 says, he that answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame unto him. I've done that, and I've had it done to me.

But let's just focus on how it was done to me. But you think you know what's going on. You think you have an answer. And then you answer, and you realize, whoops, I usually do it to my kids, is where I think I know.

And I'm like, ready for them. And I'm like, what's up with this? And then they'll be like, explain it. And I'm like, oh, oops. So I've tried to really be careful not to jump on them as much, and just, kind of just ask, what's going on?

[9 : 14] And then be like, oh wow, I was totally off base with that. And I've had it done to me, where there was just no desire really to converse, as much as just the judge and jury had already been, you know, taken care of, and we're just going straight to the execution.

So we're going to look at a few things as we dive into this text. And I think what we see here is Peter's response is very instructive to us in how to deal with hearsay and false accusations.

The way Peter goes through this is really instructive. And then we're going to see how to hear, on both sides, how to hear with humility, and then how also to deal with people who would bring false accusations and hearsay.

So Peter begins to speak to these men, and Proverbs 12, 18 says, there is that that speaks like the piercing of a sword, but the tongue of the wise is health.

And so as Peter begins to speak to them, that word's going to cut and it pierces them. And they're going to either respond in a way that's going to bring health, or they're going to respond where they're going to reject that.

[10 : 27] Proverbs 15, 18, A wrathful man stirs up strife, but he that is slow to anger, appeases strife. And we're going to see here in Peter's kind of response. So we're going to go through a few of these and just kind of talk about this a little.

So how to deal with hearsay and false accusations. First, do not respond to inflammatory remarks. Right away, these guys say to Peter, you went to men uncircumcised and did eat with them. So what's their contention?

Is it anything to do with the gospel? Guys, they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Yeah, but you went in and you ate with them. That doesn't work. I mean, you went to a Christian concert. We don't do that.

Right? Or something like that. Or, you know, you, I can't believe that you, you went there to reach them. And so Peter, he didn't respond to the inflammatory remarks. He just let them pass.

You don't see him at all respond to these guys. Do not discuss accusations based on half-truths. He doesn't even discuss that. He doesn't deal with the half-truths.

[11 : 25] Did he go in and eat with them? Sure did. Were they uncircumcised? Yes, they were. Did Peter start there? No, he did not. He started at the beginning and worked towards the end. And then as he did that, he recited without interruption.

And you can always tell if somebody has a heart to receive what you're saying to them, if they let you talk. If they interrupt all the time, then most likely they're not really having a heart to receive.

They just want to tell you what's what. And so Peter, he recited without interruption to the end. Next, expound and explain without going into too much detail.

And that's what we see. We went through, you know, all of Acts chapter 10, and there's a lot there that took place. And Peter just breaks this thing down. You know, this is what happened. He gives some highlights where the Lord stepped in and he laid it out there before them.

And then be able to honestly show your actions were anchored in the word. Peter does that in verse 16 when he says, Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

[12 : 29] Peter validated his spiritual experience by the word. And so he has something to back that up. Now, whether these men received that or not isn't the point. Peter was able to say that my actions were based in the word.

And all of our actions should be from the simple to the great. We should be able to look at the life we live and the actions we choose and be like, Well, I don't see anything contrary to the word there.

This is something that the Holy Spirit is giving witness to that I have not violated scripture. I haven't grieved the spirit. And so there we kind of have a little synopsis and Peter's dealing with these men of how we can deal with hearsay and false accusations.

And I think the big ones are just don't respond on the ground that is brought to you because it will always be brought to you on a ground where the high ground is already on the side of those that want to bring the false accusations.

You're not going to make that ground up. You're just not. And the last thing is, if they're not willing to listen and you're trying to talk, it's probably not going to be fruitful. You're probably going to have a point where you're just going to be better off exiting that conversation.

[13 : 35] Even a fool is considered wise when he holds his peace. And all through the New Testament, as Paul's going to deal with these guys, like every place Paul, poor Paul, that he's going to go, these men will follow him.

And they're never willing to listen. They just want to create trouble. And then we're going to look at, as we continue on now, in verse 18, what does it say?

When they heard these things, who's they? Probably not those that are accusing him. This is probably the rest of the brethren that are in Judea at this time, in Jerusalem, the other apostles.

When they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, then has God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

And so Peter had told them that God had chosen him to take this message. And we're not to second guess God's evident choice. It's very clear God chose Peter.

[14 : 35] It's very clear God poured out his spirit on the Gentiles. So when they heard, they held their peace, they glorified God, and they spoke forth what they knew was true.

And so with the response, we can also see on the other side, when someone comes to us, how do we hear with humility? How do we give that person a place to speak? Proverbs 18.2 says, a fool has no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.

It kind of means like that he has no delight in understanding. All this person is worried about is just validating themselves and their point in their side. So how do we not be that?

How do we respond in humility and not just be all about, well, it's about my viewpoint. Proverbs 12.15 says, the way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he that hearkens unto counsel is wise.

Now, the way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but even those that aren't fools, us, Lord willing, usually our own ways is the right way in our own eyes.

[15 : 41] I don't think many of us walk around all day going, well, this is totally the wrong thing to do, but I don't get any other option. I'm going to do it. You know, in those moments, I think the Holy Spirit witnesses and says, don't do that.

And then like a fool, I press through and do what I think is wise in my own eyes. So how to hear with humility. Listen to what is actually said, not what you think you hear.

So these men, they had already taken up a mindset of what they thought they were going to hear. And then as Peter presents it to them, that is the filter they will hear it through.

So in humility, when someone comes to speak to us, we need to listen to what they're actually saying, not what we think they're saying. Be willing to surrender your viewpoint when a better is presented.

And in verse 18, you know, it says they held their peace. That's that first part, listening to what actually is said. And they glorified God, saying, then has God also to the Gentiles granted repentance to life.

[16 : 41] They were willing to surrender their viewpoint when a better one was presented. Their viewpoint was the Gentiles will never come into the kingdom, Jews only. And then, they had to accept, they had to be able to recognize God's hand.

And when God's hand was on the Gentiles, bringing them into the kingdom, they had to be willing to change their view just as the Lord directed them and they clearly saw his hand.

Because are they going to stand against God? And then I liked where no unnecessary responses. They didn't go into some long dialogue about, well, this is why I thought this. And this is just, they realized the truth, they accepted it, and they didn't have any long, unnecessary talk back.

And then, do not let pride hold you back from speaking forth the truth that you may have once denied. and they right away, they glorify God and said, God has also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

It wasn't like, well, okay, I'll accept that, but, you know, right away, they didn't let pride hold them back. And in humility, they responded to this.

[17 : 50] And as I was going through this, just things I've been going through and the Lord just kind of was, as I saw how Peter responded, how he didn't respond and how he did respond, and then this quick section of how these men just accepted it and moved right into, like, well, this is what the Lord's doing.

I want to be a part of it. You know, they weren't suspicious. You had those that were, the circumcision. So, a few things to note as we go through Peter's account briefly.

In verse 6, where he says, upon the witch, when I fastened my eyes, I considered and saw four-footed beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air.

But 1 Corinthians 14, 30 to 33 says, if anything be revealed to another that sits by, let the first hold his peace. For you may all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be comforted.

And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. And so, when Peter sees this thing and he's wondering, what is it?

[18 : 59] The point is not to confuse him, it's not to mess him up, that God has a purpose in this, that he wants Peter to know what this is. God's visions are never abstract. It's never just some random reason that God's going to give a vision.

He had a purpose in this, and it was to edify, as we saw at the end of that scripture in Corinthians, but of peace, that all the churches may be edified. That is the desire that he has here when he brings this vision to Peter.

Jumping down to verse 12, where it says, and the spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house.

So what's the whole hang-up, these circumcised men, the Jews, the religious law keepers, what's their whole hang-up with Peter? Well, you went and ate with him. Woo! And Peter's saying here, the spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting.

And then Romans 14, 23 says, and he that doubts is damned if he eat, because he eats not of faith. For whatever is not of faith is sin.

[20 : 05] And so right away, the Holy Spirit is assuring Peter, you can do this, Peter. So Peter's conscience is not violated. There are times where our conscience will be in direct conflict to the Holy Spirit.

And we think, well, wait a minute. You know, we live by conscience. That's one of the things we have in this nation, that we are people of conscience, that each man in America, in the United States of America, can pursue his own life, his own path, and live by his own conscience.

Well, at one time. That's what our country was founded upon. But there are times where conscience, which is part of our own natural makeup, part of our soul, will be in violation to the Word of God and in direct conflict with the Holy Spirit.

A lot of times that comes in with sin. I sin and my conscience is troubled. My conscience will tell me I need to do something to rectify that and make it up. The Spirit says, come to the cross and receive grace freely.

Freely be forgiven. Freely have your sin taken away. And then you walk away scot-free. My conscience says, whoa, we can't do that. We got to make sure that we feel good about this, that we feel good about ourselves.

[21 : 15] Where the cross says, come and die. So there are times where our conscience is in direct conflict with our faith. At this point, Peter's conscience would be telling him, like he said to the Lord, nothing uncommon is coming in my mouth.

I'm not going to sin and I never have in this area. The Holy Spirit's telling him, this isn't a sin, Peter. Verse 17, for as much then as God gave them the like gift, Peter saying this, as unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God?

Never choose the familiar over faith. Peter was very familiar with the Gentiles being on the outside, the Jews being on the inside. He was very familiar with not eating unclean animals.

But now faith was telling him to step into an area that God had clearly led him into. I think that's the key. Clearly led him into. We don't go into new areas, especially those areas that may violate and trouble us in our conscience unless we know very clearly as Peter did that the Lord is leading him into them.

So we are never to choose the familiar over faith. And then lastly, verse 18 in Peter's account.

[22 : 33] When they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, Romans 8.16 says, The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

They held their peace and glorified God because God had given witness by his Spirit. And God will give witness to us as children of God in the direction that he wants us to move and in the things he's doing in the world around us.

So we kind of sunset there for a moment with Peter. He will come back. We'll get back to him again. He's not gone for long in verse 12.

We'll get one more chapter with Peter and then we kind of firmly move into life with Paul. And we won't have too much with Peter as our main focus anymore.

But now we're going to shift gears a little. We've looked at Peter in Jerusalem going from Joppa to Caesarea. He's at Jerusalem. The church is satisfied that the Gentiles have been welcomed in.

[23 : 38] I like what this paper says. Church embraces Gentiles. Well, it's more like Gentiles embrace church. They embrace the Lord and they're part of the church whether they embrace it or not.

Whether the church embraces the Gentiles or not. It doesn't matter. The Lord's embraced them. And that's what Peter's saying. Guys, the Lord's embraced these people. So, there's not really much we can do about this.

In verse 19, now, as we shift gears a little. Now, they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, I don't need that, traveled as far as Phenix and Cyprus and Antioch preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

Stephen, look at how long we are going with this guy. Way back in chapter 7, he gives his defense of the gospel and the effect of Stephen's life just continues to ripple, ripple, ripple his life and his martyrdom.

Could Stephen have done more in life than he did in death? I don't think so. I don't think so. He has one of the greatest effects on the Apostle Paul, the greatest witness, and then we see that not only that but this persecution and the persecution here is simply the method God chose to move people.

[24 : 54] God can move his people any way he chooses to. We've been talking about in our home lately just how God moved the children of Israel into Egypt and out of Egypt. He brought them in by Joseph, a good thing, and he brought them out by Pharaoh, a very hard thing.

But God still moved his people whether he uses Joseph or Pharaoh. And I think in those instances because I've been thinking of the Joseph and Pharaohs, Pharaoh could have been a Joseph. God was going to use Pharaoh to get his people out of Egypt and Pharaoh could have said yes, let's do this.

You know, Joseph could have been a Pharaoh, but God was going to use Joseph to protect his people. And God will use and move people as he sees fit. It's how we respond and what part do we want to be in that.

These poor Judaizers, unfortunately, they're going to be scattered all through this book of Acts and God's going to use them. But it's not the way you want God to use you.

And so here these people have been scattered. The word there, persecution, means pressing. And then Antioch means to be driven against. So here they've come to Antioch, they've been pressed out of Jerusalem, driven into Antioch, and this is where they are now.

[26 : 06] Antioch was a pretty happening place back in the day. It was one of the most well-known cities of Rome in this area.

It had its temples, it had its hippodrome, it had a theater, and had, I don't know how many millions of people there. So it was a very compact, populated area.

And this is where Paul is going to eventually end up. And his home base, his home church, will be here. And this is where these believers have been driven to, whether they are wanting to be there or not.

And they went to Antioch preaching the word to none but only the Jews. And the word preaching literally means, it's translated most other places as speaking.

They went speaking the word. And don't you? I do. It just comes out. You just speak the word. You're in different situations and you think, that makes me think of that scripture or that makes me think of that.

[27 : 03] You just speak the word wherever you go. Sometimes people bite on it and a lot of times they don't. Sometimes they just don't. We had a man recently come and inspect something in the house we're purchasing and we kind of were speaking the word, you know, talking about, I think, the youth retreat or something.

And he's like, what camp? And we told him and he's like, I've been there. And that it gave us an opportunity to just kind of talk with him. And we're like, what church do you go to? Oh, well, it was just some Methodist camp or something sometime we went, you know.

He didn't go to church. But it was an opportunity. We got to pray with him and just kind of talk with him because we speak the word. It's just who we are. These were not trained missionaries. These were just people who are in hard times, but what came out is still the word.

And some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians preaching the Lord Jesus Christ. And so they're from Cyprus and Cyrene. They're already kind of Greeks.

And who do they go to? They go to the Greek Jews. This is the Grecian Jews, the Hellenists at the time. Now to some, this would have been a huge step of faith. We just saw back here where they were on Peter because he dared to go to the Gentiles.

[28 : 16] So for some people, some of these believers, it would be huge to talk to a Jew who was a Hellenist, who was of the Greek mindset, and to share the gospel with them.

It's like, whoa, that's kind of getting out there. You know, that'd be like going to a different church than a Calvary Chapel or something. And, you know, we're not quite outside of the church yet, but there's some, that's a big step.

And they went preaching the word. Now, I wanted to take a slight detour. I was thinking about this, how these men, to some, would look like wolves, but they were sheep.

They looked like Gentiles, but they weren't. They were Jews, or in this case, they were also believers. Matthew 7, 16 to 18 says, you shall know them by their fruits.

Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree brings forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

[29 : 19] Peter essentially used that argument with these men in Jerusalem. Guys, look at the fruit. And so here, in Antioch, some would look at these men that are receiving the gospel and going, they're wolves.

Well, they look like wolves, but inwardly, they're sheep. Right? We're told to look out for those that would come as sheep, or wolves in sheep's clothing.

Well, sometimes, there's that which looks like a wolf, and it's just a scruffy sheep, and we're to receive them. Sometimes, there are sheep who act like wolves, and we're to distance ourselves from them.

2 Thessalonians 3, 6. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

If you look at the verses preceding this, the tradition which he received of us is to walk in the love of Christ. So he's saying, hey, withdraw yourself from a brother that's walking disorderly.

[30 : 21] So there are wolves that look like sheep, there are sheep that look like wolves, and then there are sheep that act like wolves. And those are the sheep that we're to distance ourselves from. They're not going to be healthy.

In this instance, these men, these Gentiles, and then even these Hellenists, they would look to many like people to distance yourself from. There are people in our lives that we might distance ourselves from.

But it's amazing then when we are in Christ, the unity that we have, right? I mean, y'all are my best friends. Some of you are old enough to be my parents.

Right? But, but I, the value is not in our common affinities, or do we play golf together, or do we have the same backgrounds and life?

It's not that. It's Jesus. And it's, and I desire Jesus. You desire Jesus. And then we see the fruit that comes from one another's lives. And it's like, ooh, I like that fruit. Yes.

[31 : 21] Right? Well, then there's people that it's like, that was some terrible fruit. What was that? That was so sour and bitter. You know, maybe I'll try again in a week. And so, back to that Matthew verse.

A good tree brings forth good fruit. And that was, has been speaking to me where it says, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Neither can a good tree bring forth corrupt fruit. Am I bringing forth corruption?

Is there areas in my life where it's like, it's kind of corrupt. That ought not to be. So with these men that are being, having the word preached to them, to some, this is a pretty big step of faith.

But in verse 21, and the hand of the Lord was with them. Again, the spirit ratifying this. And a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.

What are the two things we have there? Belief and action. Belief plus action equals faith. Faith without works is dead.

[32 : 21] Faith is not a work. Remember, we are saved by grace through faith. And that not of, and that not of yourself is a gift of God. I put you that. We are saved by grace through faith, not of works, for it is the gift of God.

So God clearly says, faith and grace, neither of them are a work. So faith is also a gift from God. But faith results in an action. Always results in an action.

That's James' point when he tells us that faith without works is dead. And so here we see that. They believed and they turned. And if we remember back in Acts chapter 3, verse 19, many months ago when we were there, we read, repent you therefore, this is Peter, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

Repent and be converted. These actions. John the Baptist came preaching saying, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent you and believe the gospel.

The repenting is the action part. And the believing is added to that equaling faith. We don't just believe. That's why Jesus says, look, even the demons believe.

[33 : 31] There's an assent there that I am who I say I am. But there's no action. And so these men, they have this response. And then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem.

Uh-oh. Now they're okay. Now they're starting to accept this. Okay. This is a little different. It's a little outside the box. Isn't it neat how the Lord brings Peter to the Gentiles.

Peter comes back and tells the church. And the next thing on the horizon isn't like every Gentile in the world is coming into the church. God takes a step back and graciously brings the church along. He brings these Grecian Hellenist Jews in now.

They are becoming part of the faith. Instead of just throwing them right into this new movement, he walks them into it slowly. And we've been seeing that as we've been planting this church.

God is just walking us through things. You know, we started. I was ready for a thousand people. They haven't come yet, but that's all right because God's been building our soul, the soul of the church.

[34 : 31] And it's been great. We were just saying like this last week, man, I went a whole week without seeing you guys. That was hard. That was weird. It was like, oh, it's been so long. But that's good.

That's good. And so then when God brings people, he's going to bring them in this body where they're going to be like, wow, there's some love and fellowship and koinonia here. This is nice.

I like this. Just as it's happening with these guys. And so tidings came back to them and they sent forth Barnabas that he should go as far as Antioch.

So faithfulness always verifies. It will always verify. It will never just take hearsay. Faithfulness will verify. So they're like, we are going to send Barnabas and we are going to make sure this is what we think it is going to be.

Who when he came had seen the grace of God. He was glad and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. Who when he came and had seen the grace of God.

[35 : 32] Grace never hides. Grace is very visible. We do not light a lamp and put it under a bushel. And exhorted them all. The word exhort is like where we get paracletus like the Holy Spirit.

This is paracaleo. Same kind of thing. Same word used there. He'd exhorted them all. The word all there means each and every one. That he took his time to exhort each and every one.

Make sure they understood where they stood in the faith now. That with purpose or openness of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. If any man abide in me in John 15 Jesus says to abide in the vine.

So he's saying abide in the Lord with an open heart for he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith and much people was added unto the church.

He might have also been a redneck and much people was added unto the church or unto the Lord. Sorry. I think it would be more proper to say and many people were added unto the Lord and much people was added unto the Lord.

[36 : 36] Interesting. It says unto the Lord and not unto the church but unto the Lord. Jesus in Matthew 9 36 says but when he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion on them because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd.

Then said he unto his disciples the harvest truly is plenteous but the laborers are few. Pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest that you send forth laborers into his harvest. We'd go out into the harvest to bring people to the Lord.

The harvest goes to the Lord. It's his harvest is to be brought to him and this is where Barnabas now brings these men to the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus for to seek Saul and that word there seek is diligent to diligently search him out.

He was going to find Saul. Pretty interesting man this Barnabas. He had a humility about him. He was picked and chosen to go to Antioch to run this ministry and to do to do the task there of instructing the Hellenists and he realized this is too big for me.

This isn't my calling. I need to go find the next guy. I need to go find this guy and bring him. It's also a lot of faith because the last time we saw Saul they were kicking him out of Jerusalem and then had the church's rest.

[37 : 58] So there's something that's been going on. If you remember at this time Saul has been out in the wilderness region of Damascus and then he's been also out in Syria and Cilicia possibly 10 years he's been away and now Barnabas is going to find him.

The last time we saw in Acts chapter 9 what they did with Saul the brethren brought him down to Caesarea and sent him forth to Tarsus. In Galatians Paul tells us what he was doing that afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

And so this is now where our buddy Saul is and Barnabas goes to get him. And when he had found him he brought him unto Antioch and it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church and taught much people.

And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. The word there assembled means synagogue like synagogue so it's to assemble they synagogued together essentially is what it is.

when he found Saul that is like he searched hard until it was found. This is when you find something at the end of a hard search he found him and then he brought him unto Antioch.

[39 : 14] Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 28 19 and 20 he said to go and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you and lo I'm with you always even unto the end of the world to go and make disciples go and teach well this is what Saul and Barnabas are going to do for a year but first Barnabas did this with Saul this is what he's doing he's going and getting him and discipling him we think of it as evangelism like go and bring people in go and save get people saved Barnabas is recognizing that Saul needed to be discipled and so they spend a year with the two of them working with these people I think Barnabas was working with Saul and Saul was working with the people hey Saul that was great great message but boy you harped real hard on that one part you know you know or I don't know Saul if that's the way I picture Saul very cut and dried like just kind of like you know when he's Paul just like this is how it is now do it you know

Alexander the coppersmith God will get him oh it's like wow Paul so Barnabas with his humility and gentleness and Saul with his determination and faith and when he had found him he brought him to Antioch and it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church and taught much people and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch and in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch and there stood up one of them named Agabus and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar what is that in the middle of all this all of a sudden comes Agabus who's Agabus Agabus his name means locust oh here comes that locust well you see this picture where it says in the days of Claudius Caesar Claudius means lame and Caesar means severed and here comes a man whose name means locust there's some hard times coming and the Lord is bringing this word faithfully bringing it to these believers

Jesus said remember take no anxious thought for tomorrow for tomorrow shall take care of the things of itself your father knows that you have need of these things then he says what to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added so he's got it all planned out already so this gift of prophecy we won't go into that but it's for edification we're told in Ephesians 11 in verse 12 that God gave some apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastor teachers for the perfecting of the work sorry for the perfecting of the saints the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ and while it seems like he's bringing bad news it's going to turn really good for these men then the disciples every man according to his ability determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwell in Judea the word determined there they were determined it means boundaries or limits they weren't just like throwing money at them it wasn't thought out that there is a determined method by which they're going to do this the word relief is where we get our word deacon it's deokanea it's the same kind of root that deacon comes from that they are going to send deacon deacons unto them unto the brethren which are in Jerusalem or in Judea we talked about this before when we saw in the beginning of Acts when it said that they had all things in common that I

I don't think at this point in time that they're sending back help to Jerusalem because they tried to live a communal life and it didn't work and it fell apart like they did in the 70s I don't think that's it at all as we've talked about before in Jerusalem and in Judea if you were not part of the synagogue part of the temple you were out of society you were out of your families you were out of work you were out of welfare you were done so there was a beautiful understanding that their faith originated back here in Jerusalem with these people and they didn't forget them and so they sent back to them which also they did and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul they didn't just send it to whoever they recognized that they were under authority they placed this under authority and they sent it by the hands of who?

Barnabas and Saul Barnabas the son of consolation and our buddy Saul Saul was able to return with a blessing I thought that was pretty cool that he sent out and kind of like get out of here Saul just go and now God's able to bring him back and he's coming with a blessing this idea of giving this is one of my favorite scriptures on giving but I like Paul when he says he says that God loves a cheerful giver and then he says this in verse 12 of 2 Corinthians 8 for if there be first a willing mind it is accepted according to that a man has and not according to that he has not God doesn't look and go well you could have given this much because this guy over here was that 10% I don't know he says hey God looks first and says was there a willing mind is there a desire to give then give according to what a man has give according to what you have God doesn't judge he accepts it he accepts what you bring according to what you have he doesn't look at what you don't have and think oh I look at what I don't have and go man

[44 : 59] I think I might have told you this before but the one time we had that missionary visiting from Africa at Riverbend there that church up there and I'm like yeah I'm gonna you know give to help him and he also brought t-shirts he was selling and they were like 20 bucks or something and I knew I had like 40 dollars in my wallet and I thought I'm gonna give Lord you know whether we can afford to do that or not right I opened my wallet and I had one dollar because my children had taken the money to go buy t-shirts which is okay I told him sure and I thought one dollar and I just felt the Lord speaking to me going just give your dollar that's not what I'm calling you to do and he hasn't I've not been in a situation where I've been you know in a place to financially give largely it's more I give of my time in life and that's what I enjoy and that's what I have and God says

I accept what you have and I'll take it I got a dollar he says I'll take it but that was just and that's this verse I came across and it helped ease my mind over the kind of put upon me as a kid like if you don't do it according to the system God won't do it according to his system I'm like ah so I thought of this scripture he that goes forth and weeps bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him I just picture Saul doing that you know it's probably hard for him to be kicked out of Jerusalem as nicely as they did it hey we love you we don't want you anymore you know and so it's a hard thing for 10 plus years he's been out in the wilderness doing his thing and now he's able to come again rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him as we looked at those different things tonight that applies as well in relationships with dealing with people who bring false accusations with being the people who need to listen and respond in humility there's times where it just seems like lord this is heavy and hard and he's like hey that's precious seed that's gonna bear fruit in the future you will have an opportunity to return bearing with you sheaves and fruitfulness we journey into

Saul's life Saul and Barnabas they are there in Antioch they've come back to Jerusalem the next time we see them they're gonna be back at Antioch we don't get their journey back we don't get much information about that but for a bit now they're gonna be hanging out in Jerusalem with the brethren and then next time we'll end up kind of sun setting here with Peter and his primary focus and shifting to the Gentiles and to Paul you see how graciously the Lord does it even as he's structured acts we're kind of Peter and Paul Peter and Saul Peter and Saul and slowly moving into Saul God's just so gracious with how he does things and so father we thank you so much for how gracious you've been to us Lord Lord I've gone out weeping many times Lord if not outwardly inwardly Lord just grieving over what seems like a situation that I'm having to leave and I would have expected and hoped for a better departure but Lord you look at that and you go oh but there is fruit that's going to come for that right now that's a seed and it's being watered by those tears and eventually

I'm going to give you an opportunity to come back to bring fruitfulness Lord and Lord we want to bring fruitfulness into the kingdom Lord we want to bring fruitfulness to relationships Lord help us in those relationships where we have wolfish sheep and you want us to love them Lord help us to listen with humility Lord and Lord help us also to be that iron that sharpens iron Lord for iron to sharpen iron it has to be a hard sharp edge it can't be wishy-washy or soft so help us like Peter to present the truth to present it firmly and true and truthfully and honestly and not to take up an offense or not to even take up issue or discussion in those areas that are clearly just meant to inflame and to arouse an argument Lord give us discernment in these last days help us to see the people that are hurting and minister to them fill us with your spirit and Lord may we live out the book of Acts as you continue through the

Holy Spirit to do the acts of the Holy Spirit into our day in Jesus name Amen