

IGNITE

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

Be an Encourager, You Might Just Help Change the World

Sunday, July 23, 2023

Acts 11:19-30

As we continue our study in the book of Acts, we now come to a major transition in chapter 11. The gospel continues spreading and many Gentiles are now coming to faith in Jesus. The city of Antioch becomes ground zero for the spread of the gospel in the early days of the church. William Barclay describes Antioch as follows:

“Antioch was the third greatest city in the world next to Rome and Alexandria. She stood near the mouth of the river Orontes, fifteen miles from the Mediterranean Sea. She was lovely and cosmopolitan; but she was a byword for luxurious immorality. She was famous for her chariot-racing and for a kind of deliberate pursuit of pleasure which went on literally night and day; but most of all she was famous for the worship of Daphne whose temple stood five miles out of the town amidst its laurel groves. The legend was that Daphne was a mortal maid with whom Apollo fell in love. He pursued her and for her safety Daphne was changed into a laurel bush. The priestesses of the Temple of Daphne were sacred prostitutes and nightly in the laurel groves the pursuit was re-enacted by the worshippers and the priestesses. “The morals of Daphne” was a phrase that all the world knew for loose living. It seems incredible but non-the-less it is true that it was in a city like this that Christianity took the great stride forward to becoming the religion of the world.”

What an unlikely place for the gospel to have such an impact! In the establishment of the church in Antioch, God used Barnabas to strengthen the new believers and establish a mission outpost. Don't miss the significance of verse 23, “Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and **began to encourage** them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord.” Today I challenge you to be an encourager, you might just help change the world!

4 Things We Learn About Encouragers

“But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” Hebrews 3:13 (NASB95)

1. Encouragers see God at work.

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2. Encouragers strengthen and encourage others! (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
3. Encouragers identify and enlist others!
4. Encouragers invest and deploy others.

“And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” Hebrews 10:24-25 (NASB95)