A IISE Q

impacting our culture





NORTHSHORE'S COMPELLING STATEMENT

Hope changes everything.

ICE BREAKER

Can you recall an instance when you fully believed something was true but later found that you were wrong?

BACKGROUND

In the first 18 verses of Acts chapter 11, Peter recounts his vision in Joppa from God, his experience in the home of Cornelius, a Gentile, and how the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles, just as it fell upon the Jews in Jerusalem. Hearing this, the critics of Gentiles becoming part of the Church were silenced and they glorified God, acknowledging that His salvation extended to the Gentiles.

The narrative then shifted to how the Jewish believers, scattered after Stephen's persecution, spread the Gospel to only the Jews. However, some believers from Cyprus and Cyrene shared the Gospel with Gentiles in Antioch, leading many to the Lord. News of these Gentile converts reached the Jerusalem church. The elders sent Barnabas to Antioch to support their growth.

Upon arriving, Barnabas rejoiced at God's grace upon the believers and their continued growth. Barnabas, recognizing his need for help, traveled to Tarsus to find Saul (later known as Paul). Barnabas and Saul met with the Antioch church for a year, teaching a growing number of believers. Prophets periodically journeyed from Jerusalem to Antioch during this year.

It was in Antioch that believers were first called "Christians". One of them, named Agabus, prophesies a severe famine throughout the Roman empire. The Antioch church decided to take up a collection to provide help and relief to their brothers and sisters in Judea, each according to their ability. This gift was delivered by Barnabas and Saul.

REVIEW

What was meaningful from the above context or the sermon from last Sunday?





KEY VERSES: Acts 11:23

When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose

READ: Acts 11:19-30



HEAD LEVEL: What does it say? These help us to examine what the Word tells us.

- 1. What are the similarities and differences in the Jerusalem Church's two actions in Acts 8:14-16 and Acts 11:22-24?
- 2. How did Barnabas' respond to Antioch's early growth benefit the church?
- 3. What knowledge did Barnabas have about Saul that would cause him to seek Saul for help with the church in Antioch?



HEART LEVEL: What does it mean? These questions help us shape our beliefs around the objective truth of God's word.

- How does the narrative of the Antioch church and the reception of Gentile believers by the early Christian community inspire us to inclusivity and acceptance today?
- 2. What does the phrase each according to his ability (v. 29) tell us about individual responsibility within a community? How might Jesus' comments about the sheep on His right apply here (Matthew 25:31-46)?

DEEPER DISCOVERY

- 1. Before chapter 11 Jewish believers were known as *belonging to the Way* (v. 9:2). Why was the word Christian applied to believers in verse 26 for the first of only three times in the New Testament?
- 2. Today, calling one a Christian can be both a compliment and a derision. What do these Scriptures tell us: James 2:19; Romans 3:23; John 3:16-21; 1 John 5:1-3? Who is a Christian, according to the Bible? How can we discern that they are?





HANDS LEVEL: What does it mean to me? These questions help us commit to live out the truth in our everyday lives and commit to potential next steps.

- 1. How can we apply the spirit of unity, acceptance, and proactive response displayed in these verses to our present-day Christian community?
- 2. How do these verses challenge our attitudes toward sharing the Gospel with those who are culturally or ethnically different than us?



MEMORY VERSE: Acts 12:24

But the word of God increased and multiplied.

PRAYER REQUESTS

(Please remember that these requests are confidential and need to stay within the group.)