



Do Others Know You Follow Christ?

Acts 11:19-30

Main Idea: As disciples of Jesus, we are called to share the good news, make disciples and demonstrate biblical love for fellow believers.

Others will know you follow Christ because you share the good news about the Lord Jesus (19-21).

We know that after the martyrdom of Stephen there was a great scattering of the church often referred to as the Diaspora. Acts 8:4 states, “Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.” It is important to note that those who were scattered were not the twelve, but ordinary church members who fled the persecution of Saul. But as they went and wherever they went they preached the word of God, and shared the good news about Jesus. In Acts 8 we can read the story of Philip going to the Samaritans, and then sharing the good news with the Ethiopian Eunuch. In Acts 10 we see God instructing Peter to go with the men who Cornelius sent, to share the Gospel with the gentiles. But here in chapter 11 we begin the turning point of the book of Acts away from Peter to Paul, and from the church in Jerusalem to the gentile church. We see these disciples going to Antioch which was a true melting pot, there were over ½ million people in the city from all walks of life, Jews, Greeks, Romans, Asians. There were major trade routes going north, south and east from the city, so it was a thriving metropolis full of false gods and all kinds of debauchery. But as these disciples went to Antioch they preached the good news of the Lord Jesus, giving us an example of what we are to do as disciples of Christ.

1. Why do you think most of the people who dispersed after Stephen’s death preached only to Jews? What happened in the first half of Chapter 11 that might have changed people’s perspective on who should hear the Gospel?
2. Verse 20 tells us they preached the Lord Jesus. Use the Blue letter bible app and find out what the word Lord means. Compare this to what the word Christ means. Why would preaching the Lord Jesus be more effective in Antioch than preaching about “the Christ”?
3. According to verse 21, what made their preaching effective? What will make our sharing the good news effective? What does Acts 1:8 remind us about being Christ’s witnesses?

Others will know you follow Christ because you disciple others to follow the Lord Jesus (22-26).

- *Discipling others requires us to encourage others in the faith (23).*
- *Discipling others requires us to teach sound theology and doctrine (25-26).*
- *Discipling others requires us to be full of the Holy Spirit and Faith (24)*

Much like when the Jerusalem church sent Peter and John to endorse the evangelistic work in Samaria in Acts 8, this time the church sends Barnabas to check out things in Antioch. This was basically an effort at quality control for a lack of better term. The church wanted to evaluate what was going on in Antioch, it was an attempt at accountability. The church in Antioch had no apostolic leadership, it was filled with new believers from all around the world, they needed accountability and discipleship so the church sent Barnabas. He was the perfect person for this mission. He was a



Hellenistic Jew from Cyprus. Because of his background and where he grew up, he could relate to the Gentiles better than a Jewish Palestinian could. He also loved people, he was known to be a real encourager of his fellow brothers. He didn't go in looking to make the gentiles follow the Jewish law, he went in looking to see if the Spirit of God was moving among the people, and he rejoiced when he saw it to be true. Then Barnabas set out to carry out the mission of Christ, to share the Gospel and make disciples. And the church grew under his leadership, to the point he needed help and he went and brought Paul to help teach and lead the church. For true discipleship to take place three things were needed, first the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives, second sound theology and doctrine, and third, encouragement to live out their faith. This is what made Antioch the mission sending center of the Gentile world.

1. The goal of missions and discipling is not to impress one culture upon another, but to apply the gospel within a culture. What are some examples of how we sometimes try to impress our culture on another? Why is this bad? What does it mean to apply the gospel within a culture?
2. What role does the Holy Spirit play in making disciples? Can we make disciples of Jesus apart from the Holy Spirit?
3. What role does sound doctrine and theology play in making disciples? What do you consider the most important doctrines or theologies to a sound Christian faith?
4. When discipling someone, why is it so important to have someone who encourages you to continue in your faith? Who is someone who has done that for you? How can you do it for someone else?

Others will know you follow Christ because you demonstrate compassion and care for fellow followers of the Lord Jesus (27-30).

In John 13 Jesus said that others would know that we were his by our love for one another. This love is not one that comes naturally to us but rather is shown to us by God. Then after we have repented and surrendered ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, his Spirit dwells in us and this love that has been poured into us now flows out of us as well. We see this love in the lives of the multi-ethnic international church in Antioch. When they heard the message of the prophet Agabus, they took it upon themselves to demonstrate care and concern for their brothers and sisters in Christ, whom they had never seen before. They did an amazing thing, they raised money to support the church in Jerusalem for the coming famine. They did so selflessly, generously, and corporately. Each doing what they could for the good of those who might have need. This is the ministry of the church, to care for others within the body of Christ.

1. There is a difference between ministry and missions when it comes to the work of the church. Missions deals with it the element of evangelism with the gospel to the lost, and ministry in the church focuses on caring for and meeting the needs of the church. How do we see both in Acts 11:19-30? Why are both important?
2. What are some practical ways that we can demonstrate compassion and care for fellow believers? What is it about our small group ministries that make it one of the most effective ways of carrying out this ministry of love? How does it make you feel when your small group demonstrates this kind of love and compassion for you?