

"Caring Enough to Give"

Acts 11.27-30

Series: "Church in Antioch: The Church God Can Use"

LOOKING AT LUKE'S SNAPSHOT OF THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH
FIRST INTER-RACIAL / INTERNATIONAL CHURCH / MISSIONARY CHURCH
CHURCH GOD COULD USE

1) Not Afraid of Change 2) Place of Encouragement
3) Gossiping the Gospel 4) Filled with FATSOS
Faithful Available Teachable Sound Outgoing Spirit-led

LITTLE GIRL WAS GIVEN 2 DOLLARS BY HER FATHER
FATHER "one dollar is for God, other you can spend as you like"
Girl runs to store - very excited - trips and falls on sidewalk
AS SHE FALLS - ONE DOLLAR FLEW AWAY INTO THE WIND
GIRL "Oh God, I am so sorry your dollar blew away!"

GOD TOOK CHURCH AT ANTIOCH THROUGH SUCH A TEST OF FAITH

1. Bad Report

a. Think Globally

v. 28 a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 41 to 54 AD

F.F. BRUCE "period marked by a succession of bad harvests and serious famines in various parts of the empire"

JOSEPHUS "during the reign of Claudius many people died from want of what was necessary to procure food"

LONG BEFORE SATELLITE TV, E-MAIL, SUPERSONIC TRAVEL
STILL CONCERNED FOR THE WORLD AND ITS NEEDS

THEY WERE GOD'S PEOPLE - IT IS HIS PLANET - not Reebok's
Psalms 24:1 The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;

JESUS HAD SENT THEM ON A GLOBAL MISSION
Acts 1:8 you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth."

PAUL GAVE THIS AS WORLD STANDARD OF EQUITY
2 Corinth 8:13 Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality.

VERY DIFFICULT TO THINK GLOBALLY WHEN "World News Tonight"
ALL THE STORIES ARE ABOUT THE U.S.A.

MAKE EFFORT TO READ PERIODICALS - see world, secular & Xtian

b. Act Locally

v. 27 During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. {28} One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted

AS THE BIBLE WAS FORMING - GOD SENT LIVING MESSENGERS
they heard God's voice - IMMEDIATELY through a living messenger
now God's voice -MEDIATELY- living message / Spirit & Scriptures

TODAY IF SOMEONE CLAIMS TO SPEAK GOD'S WORD - ask chapter & verse

EARLY EXAMPLE OF POPULAR PHILOSOPHY "think globally, act locally"

THEY COULD NOT FEED WORLD - BUT THEY COULD HELP FEW IN ONE CITY

GOD BY HIS MESSENGER - AGABUS - CALLING THEM TO PARTICULAR NEED
MAY NOT HAVE A PROPHET OF GOD - but is God silent??

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - gov't vested in members led by the Lord

HOW DOES HE LEAD EACH MEMBER - time for Word and prayer DAILY
ONE GOD SPEAKING TO EACH ONE - guided by His Spirit
GOD DOES NOT SPEAK TO PROXIES - HE SPEAKS TO PEOPLE

Acts 15:28 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us

IMPORTANCE OF BEING TOGETHER IN PRAYER AND FELLOWSHIP

1:8 Be my witnesses in Jerusalem, & in all Judea & Samaria

THEY HAD TO BEGIN SOMEWHERE / STARTED RIGHT WHERE THEY WERE

1982 SENT OUT BY THIS CHURCH TO UGANDA - OTHER SIDE OF GLOBE
ENDS OF THE EARTH

WHILE THERE - UGANDA WAS OUR JERUSALEM - HAWAII "ends of earth"

GOD IS NOT CALLING US TO PRIMARY OBEDIENCE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.
OR HONOLULU - THEY WE ARE TO PRAY AND BE CONCERNED FOR THEM

OUR PRIMARY OBEDIENCE IS RIGHT HERE- HILO, FAMILY, HAILI CHURCH

NEED FOR HILO CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING - REACH OUR OWN AREA
ONE OF FEW PLACES IN ENTIRE USA - CANNOT HEAR XTIAN RADIO
WE IN HILO SHOULD NOT BE CONTENT TO LET THIS CONTINUE - GIVE \$\$

HERE IS WHAT JESUS SAW WHEN HE LOOKED AT HIS JERUSALEM

Luke 13:34-35 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! {35} Look , your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

WHEN WE LOOK AT HILO WHAT DO YOU SEE -

POLITICIANS= VOTES/ BUSINESSMAN= CUSTOMERS/ TRAVEL AGENT= TOURIST

WHAT JESUS SAW IN HIS CITY WAS LOST PEOPLE WHO NEEDED TO BE SAVED
TO THEMSELVES THEY WERE FULL / TO JESUS THEY WERE DESOLATE

2. Blessed Response

LUKE'S FOCUS NOT ON THE REALITY OF THE FAMINE - CHURCH'S RESPONSE

SAW AS OPPORTUNITY - NOT AN OBSTACLE // WAY TO TRUST GOD & GROW

PEOPLE TOO OFTEN RUN AWAY FROM PROBLEMS - NOT SEEK TO MAKE RIGHT
CHANGE CHURCHES, SCHOOLS, SPOUSES, JOBS / RUN NOT RECONCILE

a. Gladly Gave v.29b decided to provide help

GOOD EXAMPLE OF THEIR AVAILABILITY

THE PEOPLE OF ANTIOCH CALLED THEM CHRISTIANS - NOT HYPOCRITES
demonstrated sacrificial giving of Christ their Lord

MANY GOOD REASONS WHY THEY SHOULD NOT BOTHER

- 1) They were just trying to get their own ministry started
- 2) Had no building or regular meeting place of their own
- 3) Big task of trying to reach Antioch - city of 1/2 million
- 4) Famine was to be global - they would go without

MORMONS BELIEVE IN A COMING TIME OF FAMINE

GOOD MORMON HAVE OWN FAMILY FOOD PANTRY - YEARS WORTH OF FOOD
EVER HAPPENED?? - 1 FAMILY ON BLOCK W/ FOOD - robbed or killed

2 Corinthians 9:7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not
reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

BLESSING OF GOD IS NOT ON A SAD GIVER, OR MAD GIVER - GLAD GIVER

IF YOU WISH YOU COULD TAKE IT OUT OF PLATE - DON'T PUT IT IN!

FAILED TO LEARN SECRET OF GOD'S BLESSING - WE GET WHEN WE GIVE

2 Corinthians 9:8-10 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at
all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Ecclesiastes 11:1 Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again.

b. Grass Roots v. 29a The disciples MADE THEIR OWN DECISION

NOT DOWN BECAUSE OF COMMAND FROM ABOVE / DESIRE FROM WITHIN

EVIDENCE OF GOD'S WORKING IN THEIR HEARTS

Acts 2:44-45 All the believers were together and had everything in common. {45} Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

Acts 4:34-35 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales {35} and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

MANY READ THESE ACCOUNTS OF THE EARLIEST CHURCH IN JERUSALEM
THEY CRITICIZE OR THEY LAUGH AT THEIR FOOLISHNESS
IMAGINE THESE PEOPLE GIVING AWAY THEIR HOMES, SAVINGS, FUTURE
SOME CRITICS CALL THEM EARLY COMMUNISTS - vs. quoted by Karl Marx

KARL MARX's Critique of the Gotha Programme - Germany 1875
described the 2 wings of German socialism "inscribe on its banners: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"

BOTH PHRASES RIGHT OUT OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

ANTIOCHANS DID NOT CALL THEM COMMUNISTS - CALLED THEM CHRISTIANS

IN THEIR FOOLISH, UNCALCULATING OBEDIENCE THEY WERE BLESSED

Acts 2:43-47 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles...{46} Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, {47} praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

4:33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.

ARE WE EXPERIENCING THIS POWER - JOY - DEPTH OF SHARING - LOVE
DIRECT CONNECTION BETWEEN THEIR GIVING

3 TYPES OF GIVERS - Flint, Sponge, and Honeycomb

- 1) FLINT - must hit with hammer, then only get sparks & chips
- 2) SPONGE - must squeeze it harder and harder to get something
- 3) HONEYCOMB - simply overflows with its own sweetness

MICHAEL GREEN "Churches that put themselves out to meet social needs grow. Churches that live for themselves, die by them- selves...But once a church's members begin to get released from the bonds of materialism, once they learn to tithe their income and sense the joy of giving to the Lord's work, then the whole spirit of the church changes. It becomes open to need. It begins to see with the eyes of Christ, to care, and to do something about it. God can use a church like that. And He does."

JERUSALEM CHRISTIANS WERE ALSO PROVIDED FOR BY GOD

WHEN THEY GAVE FREELY TO GOD - NEVER THOUGHT NEEDS SUPPLIED BY GENTILES FROM ANTIOCH - LATER ALL OVER ROMAN WORLD - BY SAUL!!

Romans 15:25-28 I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. {26} For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

PIG AND CHICKEN WALKING DOWN THE ROAD ONE DAY
CAME TO A ROADSIDE DINNER - Sign "Breakfast: Ham and Eggs"
CHICKEN SAID "that sounds good"
PIG "Good! that's terrible, for you it's just an offering, for me it is a total sacrifice"

LIKE THE GENEROUS CHRISTIANS OF MACEDONIA DESCRIBED BY PAUL
2 Corinthians 8:3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, {4} they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. {5} And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

3. Biblical Reasons

a. Family v. 29b the brothers living in Judea

NOT 2 SEPARATE CHURCHES - 2 SEGREGATED RACES - ONE TRUE CHURCH
Jew and Gentile United in Christ

Ephesians 2:13-16 now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. {14} For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, {15} by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, {16} and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

MUST MAKE SPECIAL EFFORT TO HELP FELLOW BELIEVERS / here & abroad

Matthew 25:40 JESUS SAID: whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

WARREN WIERSBE "The church at Antioch is a splendid example of how we as believers ought to show gratitude in a practical way to those who have helped us in our Christian life. Philips Brooks was asked what he would do to revive a dead church, and he replied, "I would take up a missionary offering"

BROTHER OF OURS WITH REAL NEED - DANNY GRANT-JOHNSON - \$ 300 VAN

b. Freedom v. 29 each according to his ability

TITHING IS NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED IN NEW TESTAMENT

OLD TESTAMENT STANDARD NOT BEEN REVOKED
SOME NEED TO WORK THEIR WAY UP TO IT - OTHERS NEED TO GIVE MORE

Romans 14:1,4 Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters...Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls.

"Give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving"

OUR MONEY IS FROM GOD - YET HE LEAVES US RESPONSIBLE FOR IT
PETER TOLD SAPHIRA AS SHE GAZED ON HER DEAD HUSBAND ANNANIAS
Acts 5:4 Didn't (YOUR FIELD) belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal?

NOT JUST A MATTER OF GIVING MONEY - GIVE OURSELVES FIRST TO GOD

GIVE OURSELVES TO PRAYER

GIVE OURSELVES TO CARING FOR THE LONELY, STREET PEOPLE, NEEDY

BEING A HOSPICE VOLUNTEER / HELPING IN THE CHURCH NURSERY

TEACHING SOMEONE TO READ / ADOPTING AN UNWANTED CHILD

WHEN THE WORLD SEES US LIVING OUT OUR FAITH IN CHRIST LIKE THIS
WE WILL BE CALLED "CHRISTIANS" - THEY WILL LISTEN TO OUR MESSAGE

FOR YEARS THE MAASAI WARRIORS IN KENYA REJECTED THE GOSPEL OF X
UNTIL LONG TIME ENEMIES - THE KIKUYU - BROUGHT FOOD IN DROUGHT

THE PROSTITUTES ON STREETS OF SEOUL, KOREA HAD NO TIME FOR CHURCH
UNTIL CHRISTIANS OPENED HOMES, GOT THEM JOBS, & CARED FOR KIDS

WORSHIP SERVICE IS NOT AN HOUR ON SUNDAYS - IT IS ALL WEEK LONG

c. Faithful RESPONSIBLE AND CAREFUL HANDLING OF ALL FUNDS

v. 30 sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

FIRST USE OF WORD "elders" OF CHURCH -
mature believers who had spiritual oversight of the ministry

CHURCHES WHERE PASTORS SIGN THE CHECKS - VERY BIBLICAL WAY

CHURCH IN JERUSALEM HAD SENT BARNABAS TO ANTIOCH
NOW CHURCH IN ANTIOCH SENDS HIM BACK TO JERUSALEM w/ gifts

FAMILY WENT TO CHURCH AND CAME HOME TO SUNDAY LUNCH

Son "I just about fell asleep today during that boring sermon"
Mom "Did you hear that reader mess up on that Bible passage"
Daughter "I almost bust up laughing when the soloist sang"
Dad "Hey, what did you guys expect for a quarter!?!"

CHURCH IN ANTIOCH LIKE A CHILD WHO HAS GROWN UP -
GIVING BACK TO THEIR PARENTS
SIGN OF THE MATURITY OF CHURCH AT ANTIOCH - CHURCH GOD CAN USE
Jerusalem - Center of Authority & Tradition
Antioch - became Center of Mission & World Evangelization

IT WAS NOT EASY TO PART WITH THEIR 2 TOP LEADERS - BEST TEACHERS

JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM WOULD BE DIFFICULT - 300 MILES DUE SOUTH

EVENT WHICH PAUL NARRATES IN GALATIANS - chapter 2
Galatians 2:1,2,10 Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas...I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles...All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

NOT JUST FAITHFUL STEWARDS - FAITHFUL TO THE WORD OF GOD

THEY NOT ONLY NEEDED MATERIAL HELP - NEEDED THE MESSAGE

Matt 4:4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'"

IF YOU ARE GIVING TO A SOCIAL PROGRAM - DOES NOT PRESENT JESUS
GIVE CLEAR MESSAGE OF SALVATION - NOT HONORING GOD WITH YOUR GIFT

GOD SENT HIS SON TO DIE FOR OUR SALVATION - NOT JUST OUR SURVIVAL

NOT SURPRISING THAT GOD GAVE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH - FINANCIAL TEST

WANTED TO SEE IF THIS WAS A CHURCH HE COULD USE

DURING MIDDLE AGES ENTIRE ARMIES OF THE FRANKS WERE BAPTIZED
HELD RIGHT HANDS HIGH OUT OF WATERS OF BAPTISM - wield sword
SOME CHRISTIANS WERE BAPTIZED HOLDING WALLET OUT OF THE WATERS!

WHEN GOD HAS YOUR WALLET HE HAS YOUR ATTENTION - AND YOUR HEART

HOW DID ANTIOCH CONTINUE TO GROW - ANTIOCH WAS GENEROUS

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."