

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

GOAL - God will use us all/ Individuals, Families, Church

WHAT WILL IT TAKE FOR US TO BE USED BY GOD AS A CHURCH??

EMBRACE GOD DIRECTED CHANGE / SENT BY CHANGELESS GOD / NO FEAR
LOOKED AT STEPHEN- MARTYR MESSENGER - God worked thru OT Changes
Stephen was CATALYST or SPARK of MISSIONARY MOVEMENT to Antioch

ANOTHER IMPORTANT REQUIREMENT FOR HAILI TO BE USED BY GOD
NEED TO BECOME A CHURCH WHERE WE ALL ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER

ONE OF WINNINGEST COLLEGE FOOTBALL COACHES - Paul "Bear" Bryant
PHILOSOPHY OF HOW TO BE WINNING COACH

"If anything goes bad, then I did it"

"If anything goes semi-good then we did it"

"If anything goes real good, then you did it"

"That's all it takes to get people to win football games for you. I can do that better than anybody."

Only 2 cities LARGER than Antioch in Ancient World -
Rome & Alexandria

Antioch the Golden

ANTIOCH was CAPITAL CITY of Syria - "The Queen of the East"
Ancient City has been WELL EXCAVATED- we know much about it today

Busy Port Center - Military Stronghold
Home of Large Jewish population / held fell citizenship in Rome

Devoted to Business and Commerce and Political Power
Main Street over 4 Miles Long/ Paved in Marble / Marble Colonnades on both sides
Only City in Ancient World with Streets Lighted at Night

Dedicated to Sex / Swathed in Superstition
NEW YORK CITY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD / CHALLENGE TO GOSPEL

ESTABLISHING OF THRIVING CHURCH OF CHURCH IN ANTIOCH
not result of well-thought out plan / or intensive research
not an evangelistic crusade of the Apostles

Handful of wandering Christians who shared their contagious faith
BURDEN THAT CHRIST WOULD BE EXALTED OVER THIS PAGAN CITY

1. Evidences of God's Presence

NEWS REACHED THE APOSTLES IN JERUSALEM - H.Q. of new Movement

UNITY of Church VERY IMPORTANT / not scattered & diverse
ONE TRUE CHURCH OF JESUS / BODY OF CHRIST / IN MANY PLACES

UNITY SEEN WHEN JEWISH APOSTLES LAID HANDS ON SAMARITAN XTIANs
there was one church / not many fragmented ethnic churches

THERE WAS Apostolic Oversight / Standards
NICENE CREED I believe in one holy, catholic, & apostolic church
stands on the New Testament - Message given the Apostles by Jesus

SENT OUT A FIELD REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE HOME OFFICE
TO SEE THIS NEWLY FORMED CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

WHAT WAS HE LOOKING FOR??

a. Sovereign WHO'S IN CHARGE OF THIS BRANCH OFFICE -CALLS SHOTS?

v. 20 telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.

{21} The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

{23} When he arrived... he...encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord

IT IS THE LORD JESUS WHO IS SOVEREIGN - UNSEEN LEADER OF ANTIOCH

TOPIC OF MESSAGE / HIS HAND ON THEM / PEOPLE TURNING TO HIM
PEOPLE REMAIN TRUE IN HIM

v. 26 The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.
LATIN SUFFIX "ian" = "Belonging to the Party of"

HIGHEST ALLEGIANCE FOR THE CHRISTIAN

NOT TO BELONG TO PARTY OF LINCOLN, F.D.R., OR KEIKO BONK
CALLED TO BELONG TO THE BEST PARTY - NOT FRANK'S - JESUS' PARTY

SEPARATION OF CHURCH IN STATE - by popular definition today
GET GOD & THE BIBLE OUT OF GOVERNMENT - tolerate Pele not Jesus
MEANING - state must not dictate people's religion
UPHOLD THE FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE - STATE NOT LORD OF THE HEART

JESUS IS SOVEREIGN OVER ALL GOV'T - even thou people left free
TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR FREEDOM - CAN REJECT ONLY SAVIOR

TERRIBLE DAY COMING FOR ALL LEADERS WHO REJECT CHRIST
Revelation 6:15-16 Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty,
and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. {16}
They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who
sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!

NAME XTIAN HAS LOST ITS PUNCH TODAY / FIRST SPOKEN W/ CONTEMPT

GOD WILL NOT USE A CHURCH RUN BY THE PASTOR, TRUSTEES, LEADERS

GOD WILL BLESS A CHURCH WHERE THE UNRIVALED
AND ACKNOWLEDGED LEADER IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Ephesians 1:22-23 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, {23} which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in • every way.

b. Scriptures HOW CAN LEADERSHIP OF JESUS BE SEEN / OR MEASURED??

BY HOW CHURCH, MEMBERS, PLANS, PRIORITIES MEASURE TO SCRIPTURE

GOD HAS GIVEN A VITAL DOCUMENT TO MEASURE AND MOLD CHURCH
let me give you a clue - it is not the By-Laws!!

AT THIS TIME THERE WAS OLD TESTAMENT AND NEWLY FORMING N.T.
STANDARDIZED DOCTRINES WERE BEING FORMULATED

WORD "CANON" IS A MEASURING ROD / MEASURE ALL AGAINST BIBLE

"THE FAITH" WAS TERM USED AS A NOUN TO DESCRIBE BODY OF TEACHING
Acts 6:7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Acts 14:22 PAUL AND BARNABAS RETURNED TO ANTIOCH strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith

DESCRIPTION OF THE NEWLY PLANTED APOSTOLIC CHURCHES

Acts 16:5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

MAY GOD BRING THE DAY THAT HAILI GROWS DAILY IN NUMBERS

WE NEED TO BE MORE ACTIVE AND DISCERNING IN THE SCRIPTURES

Acts 17:11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

CHURCH AT ANTIOCH GREW STRONG UNDER APOSTOLIC TEACHING

v. 26 So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people.

Christian community and churches militate against maturity TODAY

Xtian bookstores - more T-shirts, videos, and trinkets than books

INTER - Church Gatherings downplay DOCTRINE as Divisive

CHURCHES do not want to "bore" or "turnoff" with long sermons

ONE OF THE MOST MATURE CHURCHES - EPHESUS - deepest teaching

Acts 19:9,10 Paul...had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

TYPICAL OF THAT DAY - TEACHING WOULD BE 5 HOURS A DAY

EQUIVALENT OF 50 YEARS OF 3 40 MINUTE SERMONS A WEEK

SINCLAIR FERGUSON "In the presence of true preaching the mind is wonderfully concentrated by the Spirit, a searching and exposing takes place within our hearts; our deadened affections are awakened into newness of life and we know the powerful influence of God's word which is able to deliver us from sin and uncleanness"

c. Spirit EVIDENCE OF THE HAND OF GOD IS NOT JUST STATIC

NOT JUST LEARNING OF VERSES - MEMORIZING OF CREEDS

DYNAMIC, PERSONAL ENCOUNTER WITH THE LORD OF THE WORD
CHURCH WAS BORN BY THE SPIRIT OF RISEN JESUS

Act 1:8 you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you
TELLS THEM TO WAIT FOR THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT

IF REMOVED HOLY SPIRIT FROM APOSTOLIC CHURCH - crashing down
IF HE WAS REMOVED FROM MANY OF TODAY'S CHURCH - keep on going

SPIRIT'S PRESENCE WAS EVIDENCE OF THAT GOD REACHED GENTILES

Acts 11:1-4 The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. {2} So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him {3} and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them." {4} Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened:

Acts 11:15-18 "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. {16} Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' {17} So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?" {18} When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life."

THEY COULD AFFIRM HIS PRESENCE - BECAUSE HE WAS AT WORK IN THEM!

1 Corinthians 12:3 no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

NOT SURPRISING HOW MAN SENT ON THIS EXPLORATORY MISSION DESCRIBED
{24} He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit

SO A CHURCH GOD CAN USE HAS:
THE SAVIOR AS ITS SOVEREIGN
THE SCRIPTURES AS ITS STANDARD
AND THE SPIRIT AS ITS SOURCE OF LIFE AND POWER

2. Encouragement of God's People

CHURCH AT ANTIOCH WAS UNDER-CONSTRUCTION // NEWLY FORMED

"I saw them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a dusty town.
With a 'yo heave ho' and a lusty yell,
They swung a beam and the side wall fell.

I asked the foreman if these men were as skilled
As the men he'd hire, if he were to build.
He laughed and said, 'Oh, no indeed.
Common labor is all I need.'

For those men can wreck in a day or two,
What builders had taken years to do.
I asked myself as I went on my way,
Which kind of role am I to play?

Am I the builder who builds with care,
Measuring life by the rule and square?
Or am I the wrecker who walks the town,
Content with the role of tearing down?"

APOSTLES SENT JUST THE RIGHT MAN TO ANTIOCH
REAL NAME Acts 4:36 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus,

KNOWN MORE BY HIS NICKNAME
the apostles called Barnabas which means Son of Encouragement

NAME WHICH EVIDENCED HIS TRUE CHARACTER // EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

DID NOT COME TO BREAK DOWN THE WORK AT ANTIOCH / BUILD IT UP

W. Barclay - Barnabas "man with the biggest heart in the Church"

a. Glad about Grace

WHAT DOES THE GRACE OF GOD LOOK LIKE
IN CITY OF SOPHISTICATED SINNERS?

people trying to break free of slavish passions

liberation from sexual bondages, addictions, and perversions

THESE ARE NOT REALLY NICE PEOPLE WHO GREW UP IN SUNDAY SCHOOL

HE DID NOT SEE SINLESS PERFECTIONISM / SINNERS IN PROCESS
PEOPLE WHO WERE A NEW CREATION / WORKING OUT THEIR SALVATION

PEOPLE WHO MAY HAVE TAKEN AS MANY STEPS BACKWARD AS FORWARD
BUT WHO WERE ON THE ROYAL HIGHWAY OF SALVATION FOREVER

Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God that brings salvation has •
appeared to all men. {12} It teaches us to say "No" to •
ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, •
upright and godly lives in this present age

THEIR FAITH IS LIKE A TENDER YOUNG SHOOT / FRAGILE AND SMALL

NEEDS TO BE ENCOURAGED AND CULTIVATED / CAN BE EASILY KILLED

SEVERAL YEARS AGO EVANGELIST BILL GLASS SPOKE TO 1000 PRISONERS
Asked them "How many of you had parents who told you that you •
would end up in prison one day?" ALMOST ALL OF THEM RAISED HANDS

ENCOURAGEMENT OF SPIRITUAL PARENTS AND NATURAL PARENTS MEANS
ALOT

SERVANT - FACT THAT HE WAS WILLING TO COME - DIFFICULT TRAVEL
WHY DID APOSTLES NOT COME?? gave him their grunt work??

GREAT PAINTER BENJAMIN WEST -

young boy wanted to paint picture of his sister

No one was home - got out bottles of ink - made an awful mess

Mother came home - picked up canvass globed with ink

SAID TO FEARFUL SON "this is a great picture of your sister"

AND GAVE HIM A KISS

BENJAMIN WEST REFLECTED YEARS LATER:

"with that kiss I became a painter"

Acts 11:23 When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace •
of God, he was glad

MANY PASTORS WOULD NOT SHOW SUCH ENTHUSIASM FOR THIS CHURCH

They were a different culture, ethnic groups, denomination

They did many things differently

MANY OTHER PASTORS LOOK AT SOMEONE ELSE'S SUCCESS NOT GLAD - MAD!
OR SAD WITH JEALOUSY AND COMPARISON

NOT ONLY IS HE REJOICING - HE ADMITS HE'S NOT RIGHT MAN FOR JOB
NOT LIKE AL HAIG WHEN PRES. REAGAN SHOT "I'm in charge here!"

Acts 11:25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul,

GOD USES THIS KIND OF A SERVANT - GREATEST JOY IS GOD'S GLORY
FILLED WITH JOY TO SEE ANOTHER EXCEED AND GO BEYOND HIS OWN WORK

2 ASPECTS OF ENCOURAGEMENT - appreciation & affirmation

- 1) Appreciate - someone's accomplishments - MUST EARN IT
- 2) Affirm - someone as a person - GIVEN FREELY, UNDESERVED

GOD GRACIOUSLY AFFIRMS US EVEN WHEN WE FAIL - MERCY
WE NEED TO BE A CHURCH WHICH AFFIRMS AND APPRECIATES
WHERE ENCOURAGEMENT IS FREELY AND FREQUENTLY GIVEN

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. {25} Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

ONE CHURCH HAS ENCOURAGEMENT CARDS IN THE PEW
TIME TAKEN DURING SERVICE TO WRITE SHORT NOTE TO SOMEONE
PUT IN COLLECTION PLATE AND MAILED OUT BY OFFICE STAFF - MONDAYS

THEY'VE BEEN DOING IT EVERY SUNDAY FOR MORE THAN 10 YEARS
CHURCH IS THRIVING WITH LOVE, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND GROWING RAPIDLY

CHARLES SWINDOL "I am absolutely convinced that there are many thousands of people who are drying up on the vine simply because of the lack of encouragement. Lonely, forgotten missionaries, military service men and women far away from home, collegians and seminarians, the sick and dying, the divorced and the grieving, those who serve faithfully behind the scenes with scarcely a glance or a comment from anyone."

b. True in Heart

COMMON DENOMINATOR BETWEEN ANTIOCHANS & BARNABAS WAS JESUS
IT WAS NOT THEIR FORMS OR STYLE OF WORSHIP

THEY HAD DIFFERENT TRADITIONS, HERITAGE, AND CULTURE
THEY MET IN DIFFERENT LOCATIONS, TIMES, AND PERSONALITY

LIKE GOING TO CHURCH ON THE MISSION FIELD / OR OTHER SIDE OF TOWN

WE CANNOT EXPECT THEM TO REMAIN TRUE TO OUR STYLE, TRADITIONS,
THEOLOGICAL SYSTEM, BUILDINGS, OR OUR DENOMINATIONS

Acts 11:23 HE encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.

EXHORTATION TO BOTH PERSEVERANCE AND TO WHOLE-HEARTEDNESS

IF THEY ARE TRUE TO GOD IN HEART THAT IS WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT

EACH BELIEVER, EACH CHURCH, EACH FELLOWSHIP IS DIFFERENT
WE CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT HOLD THEM TO OUR STANDARD / BUT GOD'S

WE CANNOT SEE THEIR HEARTS - ENTRUST THEM TO GOD WHO SEE'S ALL

Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM IS THE PROBLEM OF THE HEART

Mark 7:15 it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean'

TO ENCOURAGE SOMEONE IS NOT TO MOLD THEM IN OUR OWN IMAGE
BUT PRAY THAT CHRIST WILL BE UNIQUELY FORMED IN THEM

Romans 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

MICHAEL GREEN "Love is the most attractive quality in the world. And it lies at the heart of Christianity. Without it a church is nothing at all. And clearly love flourished in Antioch. The fellowship among the Christians at Antioch was something very special and very attractive. But it is not always thus. Many churches have a very low level of love flowing through them. There is politeness, yes. But deep caring, no. People meet together for an hour on Sundays but feel no deep need to get together during the week. There is not a lot of laughter together, prayer for each other, eating in each other's homes, and so on. But there could be. And where there is, where love reigns, then churches grow."

c. Fruitful in Witness

"a great number of people were brought to the Lord."

"BROUGHT TO THE LORD" / SAME WORD USED IN ACTS - "added"

Acts 2:41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

2:47 the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved

GREEK WORD USED HERE FOR "ADDED" - "prostethemi" = PROSTHETICS
surgical replacement of limbs and organs

GOD ADDS MEMBERS TO HIS BODY- Great Physician performs Prosthetics

JOHN STOTT "When we see the Lord adding to the Lord, so that he is both subject and object, source and goal, of evangelism, we have to repent of all self-centered, self-confident concepts of the Christian mission."

WHAT WAS IT THAT ADDED - OF COURSE THE GOSPEL / WORD AND SPIRIT

BUT IN THIS CASE EMPHASIS WAS ON WORD MADE FLESH
IMPRINT OF CHRIST'S CHARACTER ON LIFE OF BARNABAS

PEOPLE SAW HIS LIFE & HEARD HIS MESSAGE - SAVING POWER UNLEASHED

{24} He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

BARNABAS - SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT - A MAN THAT GOD USED
TO BUILD UP A CHURCH THAT GOD USED- WHO WILL BE HAILI'S BARNABAS?

Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.