

September 18th, 2016
Pinecrest Baptist Church
p.m.

Sermon Series: Acts Men
Sermon #15 Title: When Converts Are Called Christians!
Sermon #15 Text: (Acts 11:19-26)

I. The Lord Uses His People – vs 19-20 – “Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch spake unto Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.”

*Note – Now when we look at these two verses, the good Dr. Luke wants us to know two things about these people . . .

A. Where They Came From

1.) Jews from Jerusalem that fled because of the persecution of Stephen.

a.) But not all the Jews from Jerusalem were from Jerusalem, and Luke records that for us.

b.) Some “were” from Jerusalem – some were from Cyprus and Cyrene.

(1.) Cyprus – was a Greek island country in the northern Mediterranean.

(2.) Cyrene – was a port city on the North African continent.

*Note – Now both had pockets of Jewish populations from all the previous dispersions.

*Note – These men mentioned here, at one time obviously had some level of devotion to the Jewish faith, or Jewish festivities, for the fact that they were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

- the one from Cyrene had travelled a great distance – between 800 and 850 miles one way – depending on how he travelled.

*Note – These men obviously had been converted through the preaching of the gospel by Peter on that glorious day.

*Note – Now very likely these men were among the “Hellenistic” Jews, due to the cultures they came from. (now we learn a lot about them when we look at where they came from, but learn even more from them when we look at where they are going!)

B. Where They Went

1.) Phenice

2.) Cyprus

3.) Antioch

a.) Now note who went to Antioch – some of the men who were from Cyrene, and some of the men who were from Cyprus.

The first thing that ought to stand out to you is what these men didn’t do, when persecution came . . . They did not go Home! – They embraced the mission!

b.) Cyrene would have been safe place to go – as far as it was, and as little as anyone knew of the gospel preaching Jews.

c.) Cyprus was a safe place to go,
because we find that's where many of
the persecuted went.

*Note – Yet when Persecution hit it did not send these men
home packing, it sent these men forward Preaching!

- Their conversion was a once and only and total
conversion – from Judaism to Jesus.

- they left home and belongings
- they left businesses and beliefs
- they gave themselves to the cause of the
gospel, the use of the Lord, and the work of the
ministry.

(Now mind you these weren't apostles, nor were they men
who had spent 3 years in the Messiah's Baptist Seminary) –
They had heard the gospel, believed the gospel, obeyed the
gospel, wrote off their lives, and gave themselves to spreading
the gospel.) – The Lord uses His People.

II. The Lord Uses His Preaching

*note – The Lord uses His people, the Lord uses His preaching,
and the Lord uses His people to do His preaching!

(When preaching is as it should be, the preacher can never be
blamed for the substance of the message – he is merely saying
what he was told to say in the Bible)

A. As Instructed By the Lord – vs 19 – “....they which
were scattered abroad....travelled...preaching the
word to none but unto the Jews only.”

- 1.) When the people first began to preach,
they not only preached what He had said, but
in their unfinished knowledge, preached it to
who he had said preach it to. – “the Jews only.”

*Note – One of the very first dilemma's the early church faced
was whether or not the gospel was for the Gentiles as well as
them. – There was a sort of conundrum among them.

- the whole first part of chapter 11 deals with the
controversy among the Jews about Peter preaching to
Cornelius.

- why did they have this problem? – very simple – they
had a Faithful loyalty to the Word, but an Unfinished
Understanding.

Matthew 10:5-6 – “These twelve Jesus sent forth, and
commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the
Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But
go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye
go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

- The conundrum for many of the believing Jews from Israel
was how to reconcile that with “Ye shall be my witnesses unto
the uttermost parts of the world ...”

- At worst – these preaching Jewish believers
still held on to their fleshly prejudices.

- At best – when they weren't sure of what to
do, they did what they knew to do, which was
to preach to the Jews only.

(That being said, not only did they get their message from the
Word of the Lord, they got there Method from their
understanding of the Word of the Lord)

B. As Enlightened by the Lord – while some of them
had an unfinished understanding of what the Lord
said, some had an enlightened inspiration of what the
Lord had said.

- 1.) “...some of them spake unto the Grecians
preaching the Lord Jesus.” – verse 20

2.) These were the Cyrenians, and the Cyprians who had come from the other cultures outside of Jewry.

- they had lived among the Gentiles – no doubt had developed a love for the Gentiles. – through friendships, and businesses, and social relationships.

They had understood these people were spiritually like them
– Lost and in the same need of Salvation they stood in.

3.) But more than that – they had heard Peter’s sermon on Pentecost.

- 2:39 – Peter proclaimed of this Salvation that “...the Promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

- translation – “Gentiles too”

Peter’s second sermon

- 3:25 – “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.” – translation – “Gentiles too.”

C. As Inspired by the Lord

- 1.) verse 19 – they went “preaching the word”
- 2.) verse 20 – they spake unto the Grecians “preaching the Lord Jesus.”

*Note – Now here is one of the most interesting contrasts and insights that Luke gives us here.

- In verse 19 – you have Jews, preaching the word only to Jews.

- In verse 20 – you have Jews preaching Jesus to Gentiles.

- In verse 19 – the word for “preaching” is the word “Lahleho” which means to speak, talk, or proclaim – or to simply “utter words” – It can be passionate, or it can be dispassionate.

(As one Jew convincing another Jew of the truth of Jesus, passionately, or dispassionately)

- In verse 20 – the word for preaching is the word “yooangelidzo” – where we get our word “evangelist” from. – To evangelize. – to Proclaim and announce GOOD NEWS

- When these Jews went to the Gentiles, Luke tells us they were not Dispassionate – They were Passionate in their Preaching! – They preached for Persuasion and with Pleading seems to be the implication.

- In short the Lord’s uses his preaching – to “utter words” in explanation, and He uses His preaching to “Persuade people in Proclamation.”

- Now who was doing all of this? – Converts!

III. The Lord Uses His Power

Verse 21 – “And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.”

- An older and wiser preacher used to always say, “I can preach the truth, but only the Lord can impart the truth.”

When you put the Lord’s people, the Lord’s preaching, and the Lord’s power together note the result . . .

A. A great number Believed the Lord.

- 1.) Not every single person that was preached to, but a large number of them were.

a.) They “believed” the Lord

*Note – Now don’t get the idea that is the same as “faith.” – Certainly faith requires belief, but one can have belief without faith.

(Now this is the word that is translated faith – Pistueo) and it has a number of translations that mean “faith” or “committing oneself to.”) – but 239 times it is merely translated to “believe”)

- Believe means to accept something as true!

a.) When the hand of the Lord accompanied the people of the Lord doing the preaching of the Lord became convinced that what they were saying was the truth!

But merely to accept something as true, does not necessarily change anything.

(Many people accept the truth that abusing drugs is bad and wrong . . . they believe that it is wrong and bad . . . but still do it.

(Many people accept the truth that eating right, exercising right, and proper health care and proper hygiene are good and right . . . but they still don’t do it.)

- To be convinced that something is true, or to believe that something is true is wonderful evidence of the hand of God!

- But it didn’t end there . . .

B. A great number Turned to the Lord.

1.) The responded to what they accepted to be true . . .

a.) It was belief that lead to repentance
b.) It was convincing that lead to conversion.

Now that is the harmony of God’s People, God’s Preaching, and God’s Power . . .

IV. The Lord Uses His Plan

*note – Now here is a wonderful example of a doctrinal plan.

Vs 22-23 – Read

A. There is a Church Sent man to Gather the new believers.

1.) Now these people had Jesus, witnesses, and the Word of the Lord – what more did they need?

Whether they knew they needed it or not, the church at Jerusalem understood two things:

#1 – They need to hear from US

#2 – We need to speak to them!

In other words, where the gospel is being preached and received, needs to be connected to us, the church!

Note what he did:

a.) He had seen the grace of God and was glad.

What if something had been wrong . . . Barnabas was there to straight it out!

- Someone might say, “what business was it of the church at Jerusalem?”

- these preachers had come out from them

- these preachers had been trained from them

- these preachers were traceable back to them

- We are going to make sure that they were preaching what they ought to preach, the people were believing what they ought to believe, and if not – Barnabas would either

straighten them out, or make a public disconnect from them disassociating with them.

b.) He exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave to the Lord.

- He taught them to be in our language – in covenant together – or With purpose of heart – “all of them” were to have purpose of heart, and the same purpose of heart.

- They were to with that covenant, with that purpose cling or remain, stay further, adhere in place together with the Lord.

- verse 26 – they are called a “church” – the people had heard the word, turned to the Lord, and that could not have been said were they not baptized – one who fully turns to the Lord, will obey Him in baptism.

B. There was a God-Called man to Teach the new believers.

1.) Barnabas left to go and get Saul

a.) Barnabas had been the first disciple to accept Saul’s conversion, to act as a go-between for Saul with others, to be Saul’s advocate. – Outside of Saul probably no one was more acquainted with God’s call on Saul’s life than Barnabas

2.) vs 26 – “When he found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people.”

Those new believers needed to be gathered, in covenant with each other, and indoctrinated by a God-Called teacher, preacher.

- And what happened? – “And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”

- All that goes in a name.

