

11/24/24; Brett Gleason—Superintendent EFCA Great Lakes District—Acts 11:19-30

Main Idea: “God does extraordinary things with ordinary people”.

Sermon Summary: God did not have to use ordinary people to spread the good news about Jesus Christ—but He chose to. The book of Acts recounts how the gospel spread—after Jesus gave His Great Commission in Matt. 28:16-20. In Acts 1:8, Jesus promised his disciples they would receive power when the Holy Spirit comes—the same Spirit that is available to us today. And Jesus’ promise in Matt. 28:20 that He would be with us forever—still holds today. Acts shows us that the gospel spread most effectively during periods of persecution. God accomplishes great things thru our simple acts of obedience.

Sermon Outline:

- **Ordinary Christians are to share Christ with neighbors and others**
 - Acts 1:8 the gospel is to be shared in Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Up until Acts 11, the gospel was primarily shared with Jews. But then the gospel went out to Phoenicia, Cypress, Antioch and the ends of the earth.
 - When apostles/disciples came to Antioch (a large, metropolitan city with many similarities to Chicago), they had many reasons/excuses to not share Christ (egs; they were already kicked out of one city, it was a new city and they were getting their bearings, fear, etc). But they did share and God moved mightily. Many believed and repented.
- **Ordinary Christians are known for following Jesus**
 - Acts 11:26; Early believers were so “sold out” to Christ, they became known as “Christians” for the first time. They called each other brother / sister because they’re family—just as Jesus taught who His family was (anyone who does the will of God).
 - These early Christians were living the paradox of the Christian life: deny yourselves, take up your cross daily, and by losing your life you will gain it in Christ. A true Christian’s life—today as then-- is marked by joyous sacrifice and trials.
- **Ordinary Christians are generous to others**
 - Acts 11:27-30; A famine was prophesied—and occurred--and Jesus’ disciples in Antioch gathered money to send to Christians in Judea. These were Gentiles helping Jews (previously divided) they had never met. This generosity and compassion is the work of the Spirit.

Discussion Questions (select several to discuss):

- Christians are to be different--salt and light in an evil, dark world (Matt. 5:13-16). What are some practical ways we can do this today?
- Does God still accomplish great things thru Christian obedience? Do you sense God is calling you to obedience in a particular area of life?
- Brett Gleason brought out the major theme that ordinary hospitality goes a long way to build relationships. Sharing a meal builds meaningful bonds quickly. What action steps of faith can you take to show hospitality to others in your life?
- Do all your neighbors know you are a Christian? Can you create an intentional, prayerful plan to meet and get to know them and allow them to see you are a Christian in the ordinary rhythms of life?
- The Thanksgiving/Christmas season is a natural time to invite folks over—and talk about the true meaning of Christmas and what you’re thankful for (or take them a gift, cookies, etc). Prayerfully consider what you can do? Use FRANC: Friends, Relatives, Acquaintances, Neighbors, Co-workers.
- Brett noted Mark 12:44—the widow’s offering. She gave quietly out of her poverty—the wealthy gave loudly out of their abundance. In God’s eyes, she gave much more than them. Using God’s viewpoint, are you a generous person—or not so much? How hard would it be for you to change? Do you want to? What step can you take to show generosity this week?