

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH: LESSON FOR MISSIONS

Acts 11:19-30, 13:1-3 (ESV)

Acts 11:19-30

¹⁹ Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. ²⁰ But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. ²¹ And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. ²² The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, ²⁴ for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. ²⁵ So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶ and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

²⁷ Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). ²⁹ So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. ³⁰ And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

Acts 13:1-3

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

INTRODUCTION:

The Church in Antioch stands as a powerful model of a Spirit-led, mission-minded community. Born out of persecution, it became the first church to intentionally launch **cross-cultural missions**, sending workers beyond their boundaries. In these passages, we see how God used a diverse, generous, and Spirit-sensitive church to advance His kingdom across cultures and nations. As we reflect on their example, may we be stirred to embrace our calling in missions, both locally and globally, with the same courage and obedience.

DISCUSS:

1. A Cross-Cultural Church

The Antioch church was born out of ordinary believers who crossed cultural boundaries to share Christ. They didn't wait for perfect conditions, they simply spoke of Jesus wherever they went. The Gospel broke barriers, and the Spirit brought fruit.

Are we willing to go across the cultural barrier to reach out to the least reached people from a different cultural background?

2. A God-Gifted Church

The Antioch church was not only evangelistic, it was deeply disciplined and generous. God gifted them with teachers, prophets, and encouragers like Barnabas. Their gifts were exercised for building up the body and blessing others. Their generosity flowed from Spirit-led compassion, and meeting needs beyond their own community.

How can we use the different gifts which God has given us individually and corporately in CCR for cross-cultural missions?

3. A Spirit-Led Discipled Church

The Antioch church was marked by worship, fasting, and attentiveness to the Spirit. They didn't cling to their best leaders, they released them for mission. This shows a disciplined community: listening, obeying, and sending. Their strength was not in keeping, but in giving.

How may God be challenging us to move out of our comfort zone to make disciples cross-culturally, both in and out of Singapore? Are we willing to obey when God calls?

Pray:

1. Pray for boldness and sensitivity to share the Gospel across cultures and generations, asking God to equip us to communicate His love in ways that honor different backgrounds and open hearts to Him.
2. Pray for our church to grow in spiritual maturity and joyful generosity, stewarding God's gifts for missions and ministry.
3. Pray for a posture of worship and surrender, that we may hear God's call clearly and respond with obedience, whether to go, give, or send.