

Theme: The Lord does extraordinary work through ordinary saints to establish, secure and unite His one true church.

Introduction and Background: There was a time, when if you weren't a Jew or an atheist in this country you were probably called a Christian. If you were a church-goer - then you were a Christian, Right??

Antioch – 300 miles north of Jerusalem, 3rd largest city behind Rome, Alexandria.

The Lord chooses to plant a church Here!

I. A Gentile Congregation - Established

A. The Fruit of Persecution!

1. They travel to: Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch
2. They share with: Jews and Gentiles alike
3. Ordinary believers share their faith.
4. It bears much fruit!

B. Word gets to Jerusalem

1. What's Going On
2. Send Barnabas!

C. The Final Frontier? A Gentile Church is born.

II. A Gentile Mission - Prepared & Strengthened

A. Barnabas – a “good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith”

- Finds “the grace of God” at work.

B. Too much for him alone

- Seeks the help of Saul (of Tarsus) – goes personally

C. Ministering together

- Spend a whole year – teaching, preaching, encouraging

III. A Gentile Blessing - Gifts for the Church

A. Church Unity

1. Melting pot
2. Not the church in Jerusalem
3. The Pagans Notice!
 - Christ is proclaimed wherever they went.
 - Therefore, given the name “Christians”.
4. Caring for Others
 - The fruit of unity

B. A Church United - The *Church* in Antioch sends gifts to Jerusalem

1. The Prophet speaks
2. One Universal Church
3. The blessing comes full Circle!
 - Jerusalem brings blessing to the nations – Gen.12:3 / Gal.3:8
 - The “nations” bless Israel (Jerusalem) – Isaiah 2:2; 60:5

Conclusion/Application:

1. The church will *grow* as we live and breathe the gospel of grace.
2. Will those who come into our midst find “the grace of God” at work??
 - Will you pray to that end??
 - What is one area where you know you can stand out more faithfully, openly, boldly for Christ?
3. We are *united* to God’s church around the world!
 - It’s why we are engaged in world missions
4. We are *united* to God’s people in this community.