

The First Gentile Church

Acts 11:19-30

Introduction

- I. The Congregation of the Church – vv19-21;
- II. The Confirmation of the Church – vv22-24;
- III. The Cultivation of the Church – vv25-26;
- IV. The Collection from the Church – vv27-30

I. The Congregation of the Church – vv19-21 (the church is *gathered*)

“speaking the word to no one except the Jews”

Phoenicia

Antioch,

“men of Cyprus and Cyrene” (v20)

“Hellenists” = Gk speaking Jews (cf 6:1; 9:29).

“And the hand of the Lord was with them” (v21)

“and a great number who believed turned to the Lord” (v21)

II. The Confirmation of the Church – vv22-24 (the church is *galvanized*)

“Barnabas”

“When he came and saw the grace of God” (v23)

“he was glad”

“he exhorted them all”

“remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose”

Joshua 22:5

Barnabas, an encourager, was also *“a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.”*

What is a “good man”?

1. A Christian who generously and sacrificially gives to the cause of Christ.
2. A Christian who exhorts and encourages other believers.

3. A Christian who obeys the Word of God daily, striving for a life that is above reproach.
4. A Christian whose life energy and direction comes from the Holy Spirit.
5. A Christian whose faith is evidenced by unwavering trust in the Lord.
6. A Christian who is humble, self-effacing, not drawing attention to himself.
7. A Christian whose love for Jesus Christ is so strong that he cannot hold it back.

The strongest Christian virtues are quiet and unnoticed.

As God's love is given to the unlovable, so too His undivided attention is given to the unnoticeable.

III. The Cultivation of the Church – vv25-26 (the church is *growing*)

"Tarsus"

"For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people"

"the disciples were first called Christians"

Believers in the early church suffered because they were Christians (1 Peter 4:16).

"If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" Dr. David Otis Fuller

IV. The Collection from the Church – vv27-30 (the church is *giving*)

Claudius was emperor in A.D. 41-54.

FAMINE

"sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul"

"elders" marks a transition in leadership.

The Word of God is to them who possess the love of Christ in their hearts, *a fire in their bones*:

Jeremiah 20:7-12

If we continue to resist the call to proclaim Christ, we risk pouring water on what fire remains in us.

Amos 8:11-12