

Recap of 10/3/21 message (Joe Ricchuiti – Acts 11:19-23):

1. Antioch in Syria becomes the center of the missionary effort of the early church. Believers are first called “Christians” there, establishing the church as a separate entity from Judaism. The rift with Judaism becomes wider.
2. “It seems incredible but nonetheless it is true that it was in a city like this that Christianity took the great stride forward to becoming the religion of the world. We need only think of that to be reminded that no situation is hopeless.” (Barclay)
3. There are several features of the early church that we see in Acts 11. They ministered effectively in a hostile environment; they were all involved in evangelism, sharing their faith; and the teaching of the Word of God was a priority.
4. Hearing of the great work going on in Antioch, converted Jews and uncircumcised Gentiles are meeting for worship and fellowship. The Jerusalem church sends Barnabas to investigate. Barnabas was chosen because he was from Cyprus the home of some of the church leaders. Also he had the gift of encouragement (though his name was Joseph, they called him Barnabas which means “son of encouragement”). True to his name he encouraged them to remain true, faithful, loyal to the Lord with all their hearts.
- 5 “What Barnabas did do is again a model for us to follow. He simply ‘encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts’ (v. 23). God doesn’t need or want cookie-cutter Christians, all stamped out on the model you and I provide. He wants Christians who are true to Him with all their hearts. If we help others be true to Him, they will reject sin. And they will be responsive to God, who is better able to shape their convictions and their lifestyle than we are.” (Richards)
6. “All life is unfinished. Nothing we do is complete in itself. Only by becoming part of the work of god do we find a proper beginning and a satisfying ending to our existence. When we participate in the great themes and continuities of God Himself, our lives make sense. Prayer: ‘Take, Lord, all my parts—whatever years and whatever acts you can salvage out of my sin—and build a new life.’” (Peterson)