

Expanding Horizons

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Acts 11:19-30.

B. When the Holy Spirit moves, it is like a great river.

C. This often makes Christians uncomfortable.

D. Every now and then, the Spirit breaks out in a new and fresh way, but God expects to move this way all the time if we are ready to move with Him.

II. The gospel began to penetrate to the Gentile world almost from the beginning.

A. The early believers struggled with the Gentile conversion wondering if it could be real, so they sent Barnabus to investigate it.

B. Barnabus was large-hearted and full of the Holy Spirit—he was not a man-pleaser and he was full of faith believing God and expecting Him to act.

C. Barnabus found a group of Christians and was convinced they were genuine by the grace of God that he saw—the gifts of the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 4, Romans 12, Ephesians 3, Hebrews 2)

D. Barnabus's message.

1. Remain faithful to the Lord. Barnabus did not speak of any second blessing or future crisis.

2. Remain faithful with steadfast purpose—stick to the plan.

a. They had to continue in the knowledge of Jesus Christ through the study of Scriptures.

b. New Christians were to learn the basics like prayer, fellowship and Bible study.

c. The result in Antioch was that a large number of people were added to the Lord.

E. So many came to the Lord in Antioch that Barnabus recruited Paul's help—only dependence upon Jesus Christ counts for anything. (Philippians 3)

F. Those at Antioch were called Christians because they focused on Jesus.

G. The body of Christ knowing of future trial anticipated the famine and prepared for meeting one another's needs. Antioch met the needs of the church at Jerusalem.

Application questions:

1. How does Barnabus model effective ministry? Which characteristics stand out?

2. Why is it important that Barnabus's message was simple? Explain.

3. How did the church at Antioch model inter-church relationship, and how might this principle look today?
