

The Spread of the Gospel

Acts 11:1-30

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The spread of the Gospel requires joyful participation from all believers.

I. The spread of the Gospel can cause misunderstandings when believers associate with “sinners.” (v. 1-3)

When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. (Galatians 2:11-12)

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Matthew 9:9-13)

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her deeds.” (Matthew 11:19)

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. (Luke 19:10)

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners... (1 Timothy 1:15)

II. The spread of the Gospel results in rejoicing when someone unexpected gets saved. (v. 15-18)

They only heard the report: “The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.” And they praised God because of me. (Galatians 1:23-24)

The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. (Acts 15:3)

When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly. The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: “You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. (Acts 21:17-20a)

III. **The spread of the Gospel requires more than just church leaders’ efforts.** (v. 19-21)

...there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. (Acts 2:5)

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service...e (Ephesians 4:11-12a)

...and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. (Ephesians 6:15)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17)

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now... (Philippians 1:4-5)

IV. **The spread of the Gospel requires discipleship training.** (v. 22-26)

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.” (Acts 13:2)

One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. (Acts 18:9-11)

Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard

him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. (Acts 18:24-26)

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you... He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. (Titus 1:5, 9)

He also told them this parable: "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into a pit? The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher. (Luke 6:39-40)

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. (James 3:1)

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. (2 Timothy 2:2)

V. The spread of the Gospel results in genuine care and concern for other believers. (v. 27-30)

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. (John 13:35)

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. (1 Peter 1:22)

A generous person will prosper;
whoever refreshes others will be refreshed. (Proverbs 11:25)

Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (Galatians 6:6-10)

If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (James 2:16-17)