



Sermon Discussion Questions

June 2, 2024

Antioch: A Church On Mission

THE FIRST GREAT COMMISSION CHURCH

Acts 11:19-26

1. Opening Discussion Questions (in a group setting you may only want to do one of these)

- a. Our society is fascinated by “firsts.” From the first woman to fly solo over the Atlantic Ocean to the first man to walk on the moon, we’re fascinated by such milestones in history. Sometimes we also recognize a first just because it is unique, the first man to walk around the world (Dave Kunst in 1974), or because it relates to something we may identify with, the first Starbucks (Seattle in 1971). What are some of the “firsts” you find noteworthy? What is a ‘first’ that has had a profound impact on your life, and why does it hold such meaning for you? Have you ever deliberately gone to visit a location associated with a “first” (like Kitty Hawk, North Carolina)?
- b. Is there or has there ever been something that you wanted to be the first to do? Perhaps you wanted to be the first in your family to do something or the first in your class at school to reach a particular goal. What was the motivation driving you to be first? What were the major obstacles that stood in your way? If you were successful, how did it feel once you had accomplished the goal? If someone else was first, how did you respond to that person’s success?

2. Sermon Outline/Key Points

- a. The First Great Commission Church Was Born in Antioch
 - i. Jesus commissioned His followers to take the Gospel to the ethnic people groups of the world.
 - ii. The Great Commission didn't really happen until God made the church GO!
- b. God Loves and Desires Relationship with People from Every Ethnic Group
 - i. We see God's heart for the nations as He moved powerfully in Antioch.
 - ii. God still has this heart for relationship with every people group - we must share His heart!
- c. Great Commission Discipleship Is Critical to Accomplishing God's Mission
 - i. The Great Commission requires discipleship and teaching.
 - ii. Are you growing in Great Commission discipleship?

3. Study/Discussion Points:

- a. *Sunday Afternoon* – As soon as possible after listening to the sermon set aside some time to ponder these questions prayerfully:
 - i. What one thing most stood out to you in this sermon?
 - ii. What new truth did you learn or of what truth were you reminded?
 - iii. After listening to the sermon, is there a Scripture passage you feel led to meditate on or commit to memory this week?

- iv. What is one specific thing you feel God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
- v. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

b. Monday – The First Great Commission Church Was Born in Antioch.

- i. Before digging into the focal passage for this week’s sermon it will be helpful to consider some background. Since we are considering the “first Great Commission Church” we will start with the Great Commission itself. Although Matthew 28 is most often what is thought of, the Great Commission actually includes five passages. Read each of these passages and summarize in your own words what it says:
 - 1. Matthew 28:18-20
 - 2. Mark 16:15-16 (note: this is most often not considered to actually be part of Mark’s Gospel, but something added later.)
 - 3. Luke 24:45-49
 - 4. John 20:21-23
 - 5. Acts 1:8
- ii. What are some of the common features of the five Great Commission passages? What is the source of power that is mentioned in all except Mark? Why would this be particularly important to a Great Commission church?
- iii. Read Romans 10:14-15. How do you think Paul’s questions apply to the fulfillment of the Great Commission?

c. Tuesday – The First Great Commission Church Was Born in Antioch.

- i. Based on the five passages you read yesterday, write a brief mission statement for the Church.
 - 1. To whom does the Great Commission apply?
 - 2. What are the major activities the Great Commission requires of us (use Matthew 28:19-20 as a guide)? In your view, which is most difficult to obey? Which generally gets the most emphasis?
 - 3. What characteristics would you expect in a local church that is faithfully carrying out the Great Commission?
 - 4. What do the Great Commission passages suggest our attitude should be towards ethnic diversity and the value of people groups around the world?
- ii. The events that led to the founding of the church in Antioch are described in Acts 7:54-8:4.
 - 1. What aspect of the account of Stephen’s stoning brings our attention back to what we are promised in the Great Commission? How important was it to Stephen in his final moments?

2. According to Acts 8:1 what happened as a result of the stoning and how does it appear related to the Great Commission (see especially Acts 1:8)?
 - iii. Consider the implications of verse 4 carefully – who was scattered and who was doing the preaching? Given what you know about the early days of the church how do you think their qualifications, training, and Biblical knowledge might compare with the average Christian attending LRBC?
- d. Wednesday – The First Great Commission Church Was Born in Antioch.*
- i. Start today by reading the focal passage, Acts 11:19-26 several times stopping to meditate on each segment.
 1. What stood out most to you as you read the passage?
 2. Take time to locate Phoenicia, Cyprus, Cyrene, and Antioch on a map in your Bible or online. Note the distances involved.
 - ii. Acts 11:19 seems to pick up where Acts 8:4 ended by saying the “scattered went about preached the word.”
 1. While they preached everywhere, what self-imposed limitation did they place on themselves according to verse 19?
 2. In what way does the way the Jewish Christians shared the gospel look like conditions too often present in churches in America?
 3. If you scan Acts 10 and the first 18 verses of chapter 11 you will see the account of Peter going to the Gentiles and the reaction of the church in Jerusalem. Note Acts 11:18. Why did the scattered Christians not know of this decision? What lesson can we learn about the importance of staying closely connected to the Church (“the body of Christ”)?
 - iii. Reread Acts 11:19-26. What lesson can we learn about God’s love and concern for people other than the Jews? Based on the locations mentioned what ethnic groups may have been involved? How did God signify His approval?
- e. Thursday – God Loves and Desires Relationship with People from Every Ethnic Group.*
- i. Read the focal passage again today paying particular attention and meditating on verses 21-24.
 1. Who is the central figure God seems to be using to establish the new multi-ethnic church in Antioch?
 2. Read these passages and summarize what you learn about Barnabas: Acts 4:34-37 and Acts 9:23-27. Why was he the perfect choice for God to use in this role?
 3. What was Barnabas’ reaction to the situation he found in Antioch? What was the basis for that reaction (verse 23a)?
 - ii. Antioch was a huge city – probably over a half million people – and other than a small Jewish population would have been entirely pagan (worshipping Greek and Roman gods).

1. How does the social condition in Antioch show in Barnabas' initial reaction and response to the church?
 2. Verse 24a is a beautiful commendation of Barnabas. Who do you know that may deserve similar praise?
 3. Read Ephesians 4:11-13. How do you think Barnabas applied this principle so that the results of verse 24b could be accomplished? How do verses 25-26 support the principle? How should it apply today?
- f. **Friday** – *God Loves and Desires Relationship with People from Every Ethnic Group.*
- i. After reading the focal passage read Acts 11:29-30 and 13:1-2 for information about Barnabas' future work, noting in particular how he is listed in relationship to Paul.
 1. What lesson can we learn about our role in the church and in reaching the lost (locally or around the world) from what Barnabas did? Why do you think Barnabas felt it necessary to find Paul and bring him to Antioch?
 2. While it will be pure speculation, how might the church's future have been different if Barnabas had tried to do it all himself instead of relying on God's leading to go get Paul?
 - ii. Think back to the major activities that you identified for the Great Commission on Tuesday. Which are demonstrated by Barnabas and Paul in verse 26? Which appears to have received the highest priority? How does that relate to Paul's position as an apostle and what he taught in Ephesians 4?
- g. **Saturday** – *Great Commission Discipleship Is Critical to Accomplishing God's Mission.*
- i. Read the focal passage and the five Great Commission passages (see list on Monday) one more time.
 - ii. The Great Commission is no less important today than when Christ spoke the words. At that time the world population was about 300 million – all unreached. Today the combined population of unreached and unengaged people groups exceeds 3 billion – ten times greater than when the Great Commission was given. While much has been done, the fields are still very ripe. Read Matthew 9:37-38.
4. **Application:** Spend a good portion of your quiet time this week praying about what role God has set for you in fulfilling the Great Commission and contemplating what you need to do to prepare and accomplish His mission in your life.
5. **Prayer Points:**
- a. Adoration – Psalms 8:1 and 29:1-2
 - b. Confession – Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:8-10
 - c. Thanksgiving – Psalms 95:1-2 and 100:4-5
 - d. Supplications –Matthew 21:22 and John 16:19