

# Sermon Discussion Questions



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

## “THEIR SUFFERING WAS NOT IN VAIN”

**Big Idea:** The Spirit grows the church in the soil of persecution, discipleship, and unity.

### Discuss

As we move through the book of Acts, we are getting to see the Gospel moving forward like the rippling of water that occurs when a stone hits the surface of a lake. At Pentecost, Jesus’ followers were huddled in Jerusalem. After the stoning of Stephen and the great persecution that followed, the church was scattered throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1). The conversion of Cornelius made clear that “God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life.” (see Acts 11:18) Following Cornelius’ conversion, the Gospel traveled further still and was shared not only with Jews but also with Greeks in the city of Antioch, the third-largest city (after Rome and Alexandria) in the Roman Empire. This commercial and cultural hub, filled with people from the East and the West, would serve as the primary gateway for the Gospel’s spread to the ends of the earth.

- 1) When news that a great number of people had “believed and turned to the Lord” reached Jerusalem, the church in Jerusalem sent Barnabus to Antioch. (vv. 21-22)
  - We’re not told exactly why he was sent, but for what reasons would you guess? (see Acts 8:14) What made Barnabus a good choice as an emissary? (see Acts 4:36-37, 9:27)
  - We’re told that when Barnabas “arrived and saw evidence of the grace of God, he was glad.” (v. 23) What would constitute evidence of the grace of God?
  - Barnabus was not only a Jew, but a Levite, one from the tribe of priests, yet he apparently was overjoyed at the sight of the lost being found, regardless of their background. What enabled his response of gladness? What would you say brings the most joy to 21st-century Christians, especially those in the U.S.?
- 2) Barnabus then sought out Saul and brought him to Antioch, where, we are told, they stayed for an entire year, teaching “great numbers of people.” (v. 26)
  - What do you believe should be included in a discipleship program for those who are new to the faith? (Here are some verses you might want to turn to as you consider this question: Acts 11:23, 1 Pet. 1:8-16, 1 Tim. 4:8-9, Matt. 6:33, Heb. 10:24-25.)
  - Is there anything that you think should be avoided or not included in a discipleship program?
- 3) What do we learn about giving from the story of the disciples providing help for the brothers living in Judea? (see vv. 28-30)
  - Is this a pattern for how we should give? Why or why not?

DATE: May 10, 2020

SPEAKER: Aaron

SERIES: Acts

PASSAGE: Acts 11:19-30

### Pray

“Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabus (which means Son of Encouragement). . . . *Acts 4:36*

Lord Jesus, thank you for encouragers, for the people who listen and then speak words that are like life-giving water: cooling our tempers or refreshing our spirits. Thank you for those who are eager to build up rather than tear down, for those who jump to share the joy of others, and for those who weep sympathetically with the sorrowful and broken-hearted.

We praise you for the gift of encouragement given to some of your children so that they are able to serve you and the Kingdom as exceptional encouragers. Even if we don’t have that special gift, Lord, we pray that you would enable each of us to find ways to encourage those around us—our friends, our family members, our neighbors, and our co-workers. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

**PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS**

Covenant Seminary

**PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS**

Mark and Brigitte serving in a sensitive area