

Acts: *The Spirit, the Church and the Spread of God's Word*

Living for What Matters Most

Acts 11:19-26

Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, Sept. 15, 2019

What would it look like to live for what matters most?

I. You're Not Locked into the Comfort of What You Know – But are Willing to Go

Acts 11:21-22 “And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.”

The movement of God necessitates the movement of some of His people, because God uses His people to accomplish His purposes.

Barnabas had not stopped listening and had not settled in. He wasn't locked into comfortable and familiar, but was willing to go to a new place and get in on a new thing God was doing.

II. You Have Spiritual Eyes that Can See Grace in the Midst of People's Mess

Acts 11:23 “When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad...”

He saw the effects of grace in people who were coming to Christ!

People who live for what matters most have the ability to see grace in the midst of people's mess.

III. You Recognize that Life-Change Happens Best at Close Range

Acts 11:23 “[Barnabas]... encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.”

“Encourage” in the original Greek language = “Parakaleo”

Kaleo = to call out, point someone to the truth

Para = to come alongside

This kind of “Parakaleo” ministry means speaking the truth in love at close range.

Acts 11:24 “... And a great many people were added to the Lord.”

IV. You're Looking for Others Who Might Do It Better

Acts 11:24-26 "... And a great many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people..."

Barnabas had a heart that loved people, loved Jesus, and loved the expansion of the Church more than he loved the fame of his own name!

God is the conductor who's orchestrating the song of His Church... and He needs 2nd, 3rd and 4th instruments to serve with as much enthusiasm as first!

V. You're Controlled by the Spirit and Willing to Risk

Acts 11:24 "For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith..."

Ephesians 5:18 "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit"

Being filled with the Spirit is being controlled by the Spirit.
Faith is what we do and how we live when we're controlled by the Spirit.

The Spirit of God and faith at work in you will cause you to take some risks – especially with people.

Acts 9:26-27 "And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles..."

People are the biggest risk, and yet investing in people has the biggest reward... because they're created in the image of God and can do some amazing things by the grace of God at work in them.

The only reason we can do anything for God is because of what Jesus and the Holy Spirit are doing for us.

That word 'Parakaleo' that was translated as the word 'Encouragement' in Acts 11 is translated as the word 'Advocate' in I John 2:1 when it says...

I John 2:1 "If anyone sins, we have an advocate [a 'paraclete'] with the Father: Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."

Just like Jesus speaks *for you* to God, The Holy Spirit speaks *to you* about Him and about who you are because of His grace.