



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 33 Efficient Evangelism
By Pastor Jody May 05/14/2023**

Acts 11:1-21 ESV

11 Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ²So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, ³“You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” ⁴But Peter began and explained it to them in order: ⁵“I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. ⁶Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. ⁷And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ ⁸But I said, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ ⁹But the voice answered a second time from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’ ¹⁰This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. ¹¹And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. ¹²And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. ¹³And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; ¹⁴he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’ ¹⁵As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” ¹⁸When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

The Church in Antioch

¹⁹Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. ²⁰But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. ²¹And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 33 Efficient Evangelism
By Pastor Jody May 05/14/2023**

[INTRODUCTION]

With summer quickly approaching I know that many of us have our **summer vacation plans** already laid out. I also know that for many of us, trying to stay thrifty, means preparing oneself for a multiple hour road trip with people that you love although that is challenged by the trip itself. Isn't it funny how the people you adore can become your worst enemy when you are stuck in a car with them for more than an hour? Some of you don't even want to think about it, because you are still traumatized from your last vacation. But let me just remind you that this too is for your good and will be used to conform you in Jesus' image. 😊

Growing up I remember our vacations driving multiple times from the city of Miami to Shreveport, Louisiana, a 16 hour + trip. The challenge of that long trip was attempting to save money and time in doing so. My dad was meticulous and would pick the best routes and times of day to travel, planning out the premium rate of speed to conserve gas in our car's V8. Mom would pack the best lunch and snacks to ensure that we would only stop once to eat, while on the road, ensuring maximum road time. Of course, of all this matched with this game called, "Lets' see how many miles you can go without stopping for a bathroom break."

We also mastered the art of packing, unlike some of those in my family that believe the minivan is a form of a suitcase on wheels, and all one has to do is throw it in the van to call it packed. But we had to be strategic because our relatives were all expecting fresh Oranges, Grapefruit, Avocados, and Mangos all of which we grew in our backyard. Yes, our whole trek was an exercise in Efficiency as we were preparing to make the best use of gas, time, and resources to bring our family the **most joy we could**.

Would it surprise you to discover that God plans the same way, that He is **Mega-efficient** in all things, that He can do **wonderous works** with just a **small amount**. That before the earth began to revolve, God had a plan to rescue His people, and He would do it **EFFICIENTLY**, so that we can see that the effects of His Salvation and **be in awe!** He would effectively retrieve the lost from the most deprived settings, bringing them maximum joy, with a limited amount of people, bringing



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 33 Efficient Evangelism
By Pastor Jody May 05/14/2023**

Him maximum glory, so that people would know it is God alone that could do His wonderful deeds of redeeming people.

Today we see the launch of the first Gentile church in the most unlikely of places, that would go on and be the Christian epicenter for over a thousand years, instigated by a couple of nobodies. This is a story of **God's Efficiency** in saving the lost, to ensure He is glorified alone, that those destined to be saved are actually saved, and not left up to chance. When God does a thing family, He wants you to know it was Him, and it is done to bring you joy, so that your life is fulfilled.

Psalm 67:4-5 ESV

⁴ Let the **nations be glad** and **sing for joy**,
for you **judge** the peoples with **equity**
and guide the nations upon earth. *Selah*

⁵ Let the peoples **praise you**, O God;
let all the peoples **praise you!**

We are to be **always glad**, not just when our lives are smooth sailing, for God has included the **nations/gentiles** into Salvation. He **judges** people now **by faith** in His Son, not by a cultural birthing and upbringing. We sing songs, we preach His Words, we say Amen and Halleluiah to His revealed Truths, we celebrate and commemorate the Lord's Supper, because it all points to God's intentional, gracious, and efficient Salvation of a people that became **HIS PEOPLE – SO WE PRAISE HIM!** And people who praise God are the people who will live on mission for Him because **WORSHIP IS the Fuel for MISSION** - Piper.¹ We are going to see that over the next three weeks.

First week we are talking about Efficient Evangelism, week 2 Devoted Discipleship, and week 3 Meaningful Mercy. That is the Antioch Church Model.

Now before we get into this model of Efficient Evangelism, we do have to touch base on two elements: the why, and where it took place.

¹ <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/missions-exists-because-worship-doesnt-a-bethlehem-legacy-inherited-and-bequeathed>



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 33 Efficient Evangelism
By Pastor Jody May 05/14/2023**

First, why these two guys, and why not the Apostles? Well, we have to learn that from the text and speculate the best we can. First let's go now to the verses we had skipped this morning to see what happened.

11 Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the **circumcision party criticized** him, saying, ³ “You went to **uncircumcised men** and ate with them.” ⁴ But Peter began and explained it to them in order:

Ok, first of all, we see that **old habits die slowly**. Even though these Jews were now Christians, it is apparent that they have not yet developed a love for people not like themselves. Luke mentions that they were **circumcised**, meaning he's making a reference that these Christians kept and practiced their Jewish customs. It's not like you can undo circumcision, but their **behavior as circumcised people, is what stands out**. If you continue to read the NT from this point you will discover that **prejudices die hard**. Let us not be afraid of people not like us, instead let us be **more afraid of missing giving the Gospel** to those that God is calling out of this world, no matter race, color, or creed.

Then in verses 5-17 Peter tells the story again, making it the **third time (number of completion)** that this same story, of the sending for Peter, his crazy hunger dream on BBQ, the preaching on Jesus, and the descending of the HS, was told. Luke is showing **1st** the importance of this story, as to make clear to Jews and Gentiles alike that in no uncertain terms the **GOSPEL is for ALL MEN, at ALL TIMES**. Luke is also showing how to handle the debate, which is to **just keep telling people the facts**, especially when it comes to explaining why the Gospel needs to go out, untainted, unfiltered, and uninhibited by our prejudices.

Then, it seems that the answer finally gets through:

18 When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

Even though they were ok with the answer it doesn't mean they were experiencing all the warm fuzzies yet, prejudices take a while to get over. Besides that, if they didn't like the fact that Peter was spending time with well disciplined,



Acts – Can I get a Witness? Wk. 33 Efficient Evangelism By Pastor Jody May 05/14/2023

well-mannered Gentiles that were sympathetic to Jews, then they were definitely not going to like what was about to go down in Antioch!

Now let's talk about the **where**: Antioch



Antioch is the third largest city in the world at the time, only behind Rome and Alexandria.

Now Antioch is a very interesting city, 15 miles or so from the mouth of the Orontes River, founded in about 300 B.C. Later it was made a free city, and when it was made a free city under the Roman government in 64 A.D., it has its own self-government. It became the capital of the Province of Syria. It became very famous, grew like crazy. It was the third largest city in the world. First was Rome, then was Alexandria, then was Antioch, had **600,000 people** at least. It was famous for **culture**, it was famous for **business**. – *J.M.*²

² John MacArthur, Sermon, <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/1739/the-first-gentile-church>



Acts – Can I get a Witness? Wk. 33 Efficient Evangelism By Pastor Jody May 05/14/2023

It sits in the middle of the highway of trades, and therefore it had Roman citizens in it from both the North and the South, meaning they had Africans from Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia, the Assyrians (Persians), Jews, and Arabs of Palestine, all the Greek or Hellenistic Gentiles of ancient Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey and all those from the empire from Rome and her neighbors to the north. This was the largest hodgepodge of people/gentiles imaginable. All races, colors and creeds and all their religions all in one city!

The network of Roman roads crisscrossed Antioch so it was a place where all the caravans of the East unloaded their wares in all the wharves and warehouses of Antioch. Cicero said it was a land of most learned men and liberal studies. But with all this good thing, it was **basically known as an evil city**. In fact, Juvenal, a Roman writer said that the Orontes River spilled its garbage into the Tiber, and what he meant was that Antioch corrupted Rome.

Now if Rome was rotten, you can get an idea about how rotten that which corrupted Rome must have been. Antioch was **gross to put it mildly**. The **people lived for their pleasures**. One writer said that life there was a perpetual festival of vice revolving around the baths, brothels, the amphitheater, and the circus. And so it was an evil place. There was a goddess by the name Daphne, who was supposed to be the lover of Apollo and they built a garden that was so big it was 10 miles in circumference and it was populated by prostitutes and you went in and indulged yourself in the garden and the prostitute activity and all kinds of sick immoralities. That was worship in the city of Antioch. When they wanted to extend their religious opportunities, they hired magicians, sorcerers, charlatans, and Babylonian astrologers made a fortune off the people of Antioch. So it was a vile place. But you know God so many times finds that the most lovely rose grows amidst the most ugly weeds, and so he designed to plant the first church in Antioch. He wanted to reach a city with a lot of people and indeed He did. – *J.M.*³

God chose this city on purpose, the Devil's stronghold, and **made it His base** for Gentiles Missions and it was from here that Paul and Barnabas launched their missionary travels into all of Asia. God takes what the Devil works so hard on to make his glory known in the world, and takes from him, what was His from the beginning, the souls of His children, and remakes the capital of Hell into the capital of the church! All to bring Him ultimate Glory and us joy in our God's power!

³ Ibid., J.M.



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 33 Efficient Evangelism
By Pastor Jody May 05/14/2023**

It was into all of this, the gates of Hell that would not be able to withstand the church, that God sends to men, not by a vision, but probably a couple of guys that were going back to work. And they throw the first monkey wrench into the Devil's scheming. What did it take to turn Antioch upside down?

1. Cultural Courage

¹⁹ Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews.

Alright, so back from chapter 8, after the stoning of Stephen, remember that the Christians who had been living in Jerusalem had fled. Saul had begun the persecution of the church. Many of these new converts were Hellenistic Jews, having their hometowns from somewhere outside of Jerusalem. Important to note there was no time for organization, or church planting think tanks to spring up, they escaped the persecution and just took what they had, **the joy of Jesus**, and they went into the world.

As they went into this new realm of missionary living, they incorporated one tactic. Many of these folks went first to the synagogues in the neighboring towns. It's good thinking/strategy, they started with those that knew God, and then they introduced Jesus, Him being their Messiah, and waited on the Spirit to do the rest. But you also notice there in v.19 there was a hesitation on introducing Jesus to the rest of the world. We also know there were prejudices that still needed to be overcome. **God had a plan for that.**

²⁰ But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch **spoke to the Hellenists also,**

1st, we got some guys from Cyprus, a large Island in the Mediterranean not too far from all the sea ports, especially Antioch and the other guys are from Cyrene way on the other side of Egypt, in N. Africa present day Libya. Two groups far from home, from very secularized communities, they are left to decide, do we split up or stick together, and if we stick together, with our new life mission of glorifying



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 33 Efficient Evangelism
By Pastor Jody May 05/14/2023**

Jesus, what shall we do? So, they both take off to the city that would house both their nationalities, helping them procure jobs, giving them opportunities to talk about what happened in Jerusalem in their own tongues.

So, the **efficiency of God's evangelism**, is to get guys not tied down by life, put them in a places where they can find commonality, keep them together to foster support, and set them up where if anything happens only God can receive the glory. Their **cultural courage** came from the preplanning of God to ensure the Gospel stuck and grew in Antioch.

Today let me speak to young people for a moment. The future may be to get married, raise kids, have a good job and be a contributing member of a local church in a God glorifying life and that is a noble and high calling. **BUT** it is a misplaced calling unless in your hearts you don't shoot for the **fame of Jesus first**.

When we shoot for glorifying Jesus first, God will reward you with purpose and joy in service.

When we shoot for glorifying Jesus first, God will reward you with a spouse that enjoys living with the same purpose.

When we shoot for glorifying Jesus first, God will grant you a job and family doing what you love to do first, make much of His Son, no matter where you are at.

When we shoot for glorifying Jesus first EVERYONE, it doesn't matter your predicament, your health, nor your income, God will give you what you need and He will give you immense joy while you do it!

In the end **cultural courage**, is about not being afraid to think **first things first**, **how do I bring glory to Jesus**, wherever I am at, and I promise you, God will fuel your needs with a heart of worship.

2. Gospel Intelligence

²⁰ But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, **preaching the Lord Jesus**.

Ok Gospel Intelligence, **it's not about how much you know but do you know how to wield what you know**. These men were Jews, so they had a basic



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 33 Efficient Evangelism
By Pastor Jody May 05/14/2023**

understanding of the OT, then they were taught by the Apostles how the OT tied into the NT in the life of Jesus the Christ. Then they didn't go to seminary, they went through the school of hard knocks, they took their education, applied their own gifts + nationalities, and **went on the battlefield and learned real time** and were successful. The most **efficient way of spreading the gospel** is to retool the enemy soldier and send him back in as a spy.

“LORD OF ALL” vs. “Mystery Cults”

There must come a time for all of us where we stop waiting to learn just one more thing, before we strike out on our own to bring Jesus to this world. You have what you have right now in your mind because that is what God wanted you to have, you have in your heart your personality, you have a life that incorporates you into this culture, you have a church where you should at least have one friend that has your back, and you have the love of Jesus, **now go engage the enemy...**

Gospel Intelligence is not about learning everything in the classroom or from the pulpit, it is putting what you know into practice and allowing the Lord to receive the credit, because it is His Spirit that changes hearts. Remember from last week, what is the one thing that the HS is waiting for you to say, **Jesus the Lord is risen from the Dead**. He wants to Highlight that guy not you. He is looking to make much of Christ, not your efforts. He wants people to see Jesus not the one speaking for Him. The HS is all about high efficiency in evangelism because HE doesn't waste time glorifying anything or anyone else but Christ!

3. Personal Anonymity

²¹ And the hand of the Lord was with **them**,

So, we find out finally who is behind the birth of the biggest and longest running church in history, you ready, it's **them**. Just a few guys, nobody knows their names, they just were able to relate where they came from. Can you think of Luke writing this all down, years later as he is sitting in Antioch, collecting his story from eyewitnesses, on how Christianity was birthed in Antioch, and come to find out nobody remembers their names. You can't write a better plot for a movie than that.



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 33 Efficient Evangelism
By Pastor Jody May 05/14/2023**

These weren't guys looking to start a podcast, they weren't looking to start talking at the conferences, they didn't want to be known and we know that, because well, they aren't. Their first calling was to glorify Jesus, and **their reward is they decreased, and Jesus increased**. If that is your goal, your target, your bullseye, God will reward you with that.

Fame comes with a cost, and it is usually a slow crippling effect in the soul of the person that has it. There are those that spend a lot of time and effort self-marketing themselves and many times these are the men that suffer burnout that can end in broken families, broken ministries, and broken souls.

The church is full of men and women that the world knows not their names. Unknown people exist so that God can get the glory. Unknown people are protected by God so they can have a sane life. Unknown people are usually less of a target by the enemy, and they get to escape headaches of public leadership. Relish and thank God for your **Anonymity** because it spares you the cost of **Notoriety**.

4. Lord's Sovereignty

²¹And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.

Lastly and most importantly the reason that this first evangelistic push was successful, the reason that any church endeavor can have victory, is that the Lord is the one that changes the hearts of men, He does the work, He has prepared the way, so He should get the Glory.

The **hand of the Lord** means His strength, His focus, and His intent, and it all was to use these men. The Lord was directing their steps, their relationships, their lives in this city, the Lord guides them through all of life.

Proverbs 16:9 ESV

The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 33 Efficient Evangelism
By Pastor Jody May 05/14/2023**

These men had success because as they chose to raise Jesus' name up as **Lord of all**, God was honoring that message.

[CHALLENGE]

Family today I don't know what you are specifically going through, but if you are anything like me, then you could probably create a list of ten things that you could live without right now! I can probably tell you even if we did do that that, and we prayed that God remove them today, that you would have all ten tonight. Why? Because God wants you to learn the power of the Gospel as these men of Cyrene and Cyprus did, that **Jesus is Lord of All**, or as the prophet Nehemiah put it so eloquently the, ***Joy of the Lord is your strength*** (Neh. 8:10), and when you have it, **that is all you need...**

Cultural Courage - take notice where you are at in your life and begin to realize that you are there not to live with blinders on but because God strategically placed you there to be a witness for Him. Make Jesus your goal, to bring Him Glory your priority, and God will bless your endeavors.

Gospel Intelligence – accept that you have knowledge enough for the day, look at people not as hinderances but opportunities, take what you know about Jesus into this world, and remember that the HS blesses our endeavors when we proclaim Jesus as our risen Lord.

Personal Anonymity – Are you seeking to be famous or are you seeking to make Jesus famous. One of those endeavors He blesses and one of those endeavors curses. Remember we must decrease because He must increase!

Lord's Sovereignty – The Lord is our guide and planner of all our earthly travels. He is the one that is so efficient that no endeavor in Gospel proclamation will not have an effect. Some till, some sow, some grow, and some reap let us have faith that God's hand is in it all.



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 33 Efficient Evangelism
By Pastor Jody May 05/14/2023**

[PRAYER]

[COMMUNION]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that has prepared our work in evangelism to be efficient, so as He would receive the most glory.

Go in the name of the Son, that is at the center of our joy fueling our desires to make much of Him.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that will make much of Jesus if we make much of Him in our comings and goings in our everyday lives.