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Acts 11 verse 19. Through 30. Let us offer the way that we hear as an act of worship because these are the words of God. Now those who are scattered after the persecution that arose over, Stephen traveled, as far as Phoenicia Cyprus and Antioch, Preaching the words to no one, but the Jews only, but some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene who, when they had come to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists, preaching, the Lord Jesus, and the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number of believed and turned to the Lord.

The news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch when he came and had seen the grace of God. He was glad and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart. They should continue with the Lord for.

He was a good man full of the Holy Spirit and the faith and a great many people. We're at it 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 and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

And then these days profits came from Jerusalem to Antioch and then one of them named Agabus stood up and showed by the Spirit, that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples each. According to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea this.

They also did and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul So far. The reading of God's inspired and an errant please. We suit it as we come now in faith to worship Him in the preaching and hearing of it preached.

Versus 27 through 30 at the end of our passage. Describe for us a Gentile church who are acting like the Jewish Church had following Pentecost in Jerusalem? They are gathering as each one has ability for their brothers and sisters in need. So that their brothers and sisters will not be in want.

There's a bit of an upgrade. However, and two points One, it's Gentiles for Jews and two. It's Gentiles who've just been told they are going to have one as well. This was a worldwide famine marked by the reign of a particular Caesar and their response to hearing everyone is going to lack, was not to build up their stores, but empty them so that they could send to their brothers in Jerusalem in Judea.

Where Did they get this? Marvelous faith. Where did they? How did they come to such a place of grace So quickly and I know it's not necessarily so quickly. It's a year but it's been some years. And the Those of the circumcision in verse 2 were contending against the inclusion of Gentiles in the church and it took the apostolic testimony at Peter and really witnessing that it was Christ who had very clearly done it from heaven and that Jesus, our God and Savior could not be withstood to keep them out of the church.

And it was at that point in the verse right before our text begins that they heard these things became silent and glorified God saying then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance

unto life. Well, the way we get from the end of verse 18, to the beginning of verse 27 is, of course in verses 19 through 26.

Some of you littlest ones who are good at counting could probably have told me that what's between 18 and 27 as 19 through 26. And some of you slightly older ones can look at versus 19 to 26. And you can see that the material, at least in our English translations has been arranged in three paragraphs.

And each paragraph has a concluding statement about the good work that God had done in his church, in the couple of sentences leading up to it verse 21, a great number believed and turned to the Lord verse 24, a great many people were added to the Lord. And verse 26, the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch and further we can see the means by which happened in verses, 19 to 21.

It was the preaching of the word, which is then described as the preaching of the Lord Jesus by which the Lord Jesus. You by his spirit, turned a great number to himself, in faith, they believed, and they repented. And then in the second section, it was especially the encouragement of Barnabas encouraging them.

All that with purpose of heart, they should continue with the Lord. And then in the third place, it was a year's worth of the teaching of Saul whom we know. Probably more familiarly as Paul for a whole year. They assembled with the church and taught a great many people.

Now one of the great blessings of the Lord Jesus Christ, is that the scripture says the same of him as it does of God more generally for indeed he is God. The Son even in his humanity, He is still God, the Son Just one divine person with the two natures, the human nature of course, in order that he may be our mediator, our sacrifice the Son of David, according to the flesh and so forth.

But the scripture tells us that the Lord Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever. And we want to know that because we too want to know how his church may be multiplied. How can a great many come to to believe and turn to the Lord? How can a great many people be added to the Lord?

How can we be so conformed to Christ that if the name Christian had never been used before. It would be used of those Christ-like once that he had shaped to be like Jesus. And we'll consider the great likeness to Jesus than in verses 27 through 30 as well. But the answer is the preaching and the encouragement.

And the teaching, the Lord, who by his Spirit is those things to do that in our passage is the same Lord today, who by the same spirit holds out to us, the hope of the same work. So in the first place, the spirit from the Lord Jesus or the Lord Jesus, by the Spirit, used preaching to turn a multitude of Gentiles to himself.

Verse 19, now, those who are scattered after the persecution that arose over, Steven traveled. As far as Phoenicia Cyprus and Antioch preaching, the word to no one. But the Jews only, They knew that the gospel had gone to Samaria. In fact, it had gone to Samaria. The We heard just a few chapters, a couple of chapters ago in the same way, that the persecution that arose after, Stephen had driven believers out of Jerusalem and Judea and what did they do when they went to Samaria?

Well, they preached the gospel fill up and particular had that ministry that he had in Samaria and Peter and John come down and and so forth. So, don't forget. Dear Christian that even when the Lord allows you to see a little bit of what he is. Doing persecution that arose over.

Stephen had various benefits. It glorified God in the faithful testimony of Steven, it gave a stamp of approval upon the ministry of the Deacon. Steven being one of the first and Philip going out. Also having a ministry that was much blessed by the Holy Spirit. And and so forth.

But even when the Lord has allowed, you to see a little bit of the good that he has brought out of a heart and painful and grievous providence, You haven't begun to scratch the surface. The Lord is still bringing the fruit of the effects of Steven's martyrdom and the persecution that arose from it.

Even when he is giving much of his Old Testament church, as it will over to hundreds of false preachers who are self-deceived or perhaps willing, but probably self-deceived knowing that they are speaking in the spirit. And yet it's not the Holy Spirit, It's a lying spirit. A demon that was all too.

Happy to teach 400 prophets encouraging sermons that. We're not true faithful to the Word of God. And we hear something like that. We say Now that rings two true for us. How many think they are preaching by the Spirit of God and they preach encouraging things? But there isn't in it.

The truth of God even in something like that. It is the Lord who directs as it were random arrows, to joints between armor. In order to fill word, fulfill words and plans about dogs, licking blood, You see the great scope of his ruling over all things and that my new detail of his ruling over ruling.

All things and he did that with the scattering after the persecution that arose over Stephen. Now they're preaching to the Jews only. But the gospel goes to Cyprus and Cyrene. And some of them when they get to Antioch, they speak to the Hellenists and then some of your translations, it'll say Greeks.

The word used here is the same word for the Hellenists with whom Paul had disputed when he came back to the synagogue of the Freedmen in Jerusalem and they responded to him the way he and the others had responded to Stephen earlier preaching the gospel in the same synagogue with hate and murder.

The difference being the Lord, granted Paul to escape and that's an important connection. Because when they're talking to those of Greek culture, Barnabas recognizes there's someone who's very good at showing people, from this cultural background. The truth about Jesus from the whole Bible and that's why he's going to take off in a couple verses and get Saul from Tarsus that.

And these are Gentiles and Saul had received the calling to be the apostle to the Gentiles. So it was really his gifting and his calling and we have that connection here in the word Hellenists. Now, some some editors recognizing the relation of verse 19 to verse 20 have instead of L&E, Stace have just put Elena's Greeks and so some of your translations will say Greeks there but it's it's Helleness.

We know that it's Gentile Hellenists because of the adversative contrast between to no one but Jews only at the end of verse 19 and then the beginning, but some spoke to Hellenus verse 20. And what, What did they speak? As the Gospel now was not just expanding geographically, but was expanding multi-nationally or multi-ethnically?

They were preaching the Lord Jesus and to verse 20. So what Peter has just discovered in chapter 10? You remember Peter who knew that the gospel was supposed to go to all nations,

right? He was there with the 11, He's one of them in Matthew 28 and he knew that the gospel was going.

Even the Samaritans, those who were really thought of by the southern Jews, as those half-breed, Northerners, who had been messed up ever since the Son of Niebact and things did not get better. When the Assyrians settled the land with a bunch of other ethnicities, and they got mixed in together.

And that's how you end up with Samaritans. But at least, it sounded like the Lord was recovering Jews. But you remember with the vision and the putting away now of that, those the code of the commandments that created the separation. And we took a little bit of time to think about that in Ephesians 2 last week.

Remember that Peter had learned and discovered that it wasn't just going into all the Jew, all the nations and making disciples of Jews from all the nations, But that all men everywhere whom God was bringing to fear Him and to repent. And to believe in Jesus Christ, that it was God who was doing that, because he was determined to reconcile them to himself and to make them acceptable to himself.

So we we know that We know that Peter has has learned that lesson himself in chapter 10. We know that in verse 18, those in Jerusalem, have more generally have learned this. And now we have this dear not just geographical expansion, but we have this national or ethnic expansion and the Lord does it.

The way He always brings people to himself by the preaching of the word verse 19. What do they do as they were persecuted and they ran for their lives. Did they run for their lives? In order to breathe a little longer in this world,

No, They ran in order to serve the Lord. Who had saved them? Yes they were keeping the sixth commandment in the preservation of their lives but they were also keeping the sixth commandment in the loving of their neighbors as themselves with that greatest. Work of love that one of us can do for our neighbors, which is to preach the Lord Jesus, from his word.

And so wherever they went, They preached the word. And what did they preach from the word? Well, preaching, the word is the same as to preach the Lord Jesus. Now I read something recently. It's one of the great disadvantages of the internet and targeted advertising. I get targeted with advertising that they think is Christian and it is theologically and spiritually and scripturally horrible 80% of the time.

And one of these was, you know, it was one of those animated ads for a seminary. God have mercy and it contained the message that the apostolic church didn't have a Bible. Oh no. My dear brothers and sisters. They had two-thirds of the Bible already and when they preached the word They preached the Lord Jesus.

Now if you If you come away from Genesis to Malachi with anything you come away with Yahweh. Yahweh our God. Yahweh is one He alone is God. He shares His glory with no other and then you come to know the Lord Jesus. And you come to know as the apostle says and first Corinthians to that they have crucified the Lord of glory.

And when you preach the Lord Yahweh from Genesis to Malachi, you preach that He is Jesus, You preach all about him in his divinity and you preach all about him in his promised humanity and mediation. That the one who was promised to crush the serpent's head before, even the woman or the man received the curse, the one who was promised as the seed in whom all the families of the earth would be blessed.

The one who was promised, as the great prophet, who had arise and Moses says, don't be like Peter when you get to the man of transfiguration and ask for three. Tabernacles Moses says when he comes when the great prophet comes hear him. Just like the Lord. Jesus says, this is my beloved Son.

Hear him that the one who would be the Son of David, whose throne would be forever. The one who would be the suffering servant? But whose wounds? We would be healed. That's the Lord Himself. It's not just something you preach from the New Testament. Is it What do they do?

Verse 19, as they went to to Phenicia and Cyprus and Antioch. They preached the word. What were they speaking? When they spoke? Not spoke this word, not just to Jews but to Helleness They preached the Lord Jesus. That's what preaching is. So if you come to sermons like the afternoon sermons, these many weeks and or these recent months and we're in the the Ten Commandments the moral law.

Now, we're into the civil law and you've never ever heard preaching in Exodus, 22:16 to the end of the chapter And you say, well, it's weird that we're not hearing Jesus, preached, You're absolutely hearing Jesus preached. He has Yahweh, the Lord, the Creator whose moral law is being applied in the civil law of the people through, whom he would come in the flesh so that he would perfectly keep it.

And we would have hope that there is a king and a society coming in which all will love him from the heart. And there will not need to be penalties for crimes because there won't just be no crimes in the new heavens and the new earth. There will be no sin in the new heavens.

And then you were because the sinless, one took the hell that we deserved and then having removed our guilt, he makes us to be like himself. This is how God builds up His church. The preaching of the Word of God as the preaching of the Lord, Jesus, from cover to cover of a completed Bible.

But you notice that it's not just getting the mechanism right preaching, or the content, right? That Jesus is the Lord and that He, the Lord became a man in order to save his people from their sins and got the name Jesus to at that point. So it's not just the mechanism and the content, But the power that attends it and the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.

On the one hand that can be, That can be a little bit frightening or cause for anxiety, because we're so foolish in our flesh. That when you hear you can do everything correctly, You really can't. But if you do everything correctly on your end, people still might not get saved.

That's how we usually hear it. You know, sometimes you hear it with respect to one or the other of the sacraments or or with the preaching of the Word and we focus on they still might not get saved but that's not the point. The pointed is that it's the Lord who does it and that's why we use the means.

And that is entirely liberating What it does is it constrains us to the means that the Lord uses because he hadn't promised that if we add a bunch of different programs and ideas to the way he has designed in his church, in his word, to gather his church and to grow his church, he hasn't promised that.

His hand would be with that. He hasn't given us example of that.

What he has done. He has said that when they preached the word and when they preached the Lord Jesus, then the hand of the Lord was with them. And so it constrains us and it liberates us a constrains us in what we do. But it liberates us from the pressure as it were of feeling, like we have to be the ones who do it and it should make us expectant and hopeful then that God, who has told us the what to do.

And God who has told us that he's the one who uses it, that he's not done it, that he's done. So in good faith, he's not done it. In order that we may do it and and see a small trickle of people who come to faith in Him and, and be the perpetually discouraged people who, who's response to God's sovereignty and salvation is going to be well.

The Lord is the one who desire, determines whom he's going to save. I guess he just didn't want to save very many people. Is that what we are supposed to do in response to these doctrines? We're all we not rather the excited to do whatever the Lord says and expectant that he will use it and then be prepared to rejoice when he does spirit used preaching to turn a multitude to the Lord.

The Spirit used encouragement and we'll hear in a moment. That's a pretty broad word. It's not like, what the messenger who went in my kaya asked my kaya to do like the other 400. In first Kings, 22, the Spirit used encouragement to continue a multitude with the Lord. And I'm just using the words from the text here.

It was very tempted because you've got continue. And then I use conform to talk about the name. Christian in the third point. You can you can say convert, if you like the alliteration in the in the title, for the first point, those don't matter. The teaching of the text matters.

The spirit used encouragement to continue a multitude with the Lord. The news of these things come to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, And they could have at that point said, can't be real Gentiles aren't supposed to get saved, except God's already, sent Peter to Cornelius. And so now the concern is They really need.

We need to make sure that they are going to that they are going to get this right? And we're going to send Barnabas who is a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and faith and gets things, right? Right? He's the anti-anonias and Sapphira and so they send Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.

And so Barnabas follows wherever the gospel has gone, and he follows up on the initial evangelistic ministry, in which that many had turned to the Lord, in many places. And he gets to Antioch where this great number have believed and turned to the Lord. And says, when he came and had seen the grace of God, what did he see?

Well, He saw the preaching of the word. He saw that the preaching of the Word was the preaching of the Lord Jesus that when they preached the Old Testament scriptures and when they preached the apostolic message, they were preaching Jesus in that he saw people receiving that Jesus is the Lord in who became a man in order to redeem us and who was crucified for our sins and rose again with power and he is the one who is ascended into heaven, and he is the one who sat down on the throne and he is the one who is pouring out his spirit.

Now on all flesh, Joel chapter 2, And so Barnabas comes, and he sees this being preached and this being believed and we want to see that too. We're so grateful whenever the Lord gives us some of that faithful preaching and faithful hearing, you are great encouragements to me, although we we see partially and a man's commendation is from God.

But you tell me how helpful the preaching is to you. And I hope that the Lord has done similarly for you through me, because of how helpful faithful hearing is to me. And yet, what are we really seeing? And we know this and we say this often, you know, immediately after you one recognizes in the other We say.

But it's the it's the grace of God. Do we not want to hear that? There's a multiplication of congregations in which the Word is preached in? Not just faithfulness in the content but with the hand of the Lord and people are receiving it and they're believing and they're being changed.

And Christ is glorified, not only in the forgiveness of their sins, but in conforming them to himself.

But what helps us to respond with gladness and not just the anxiety of how much is left to be done because each one of us can do that about ourselves. Can we There's been a little bit of grace but it's been enough grace to open our eyes as to how much more grace we need.

You have a church that is reforming it in, which you have for more, or maybe less not necessarily talking about. This one are growing. And what do you think about you? You think about the 20% or the one as opposed to the 99, the Lord gives a whole congregation Reformation and revival to some extent.

And how are we tempted, especially to think to focus on all those other conjugations in which it's not happening. At least not that we can see. But if you see what has been done, whether you're talking about your own heart or your own congregation or the church more broadly and you say man cannot do any of this.

Every particle of spiritual life of Reformation or revival has come from God. It's the grace of God Barnabas had to calling or ascending from the church in Judea. Certainly, there were things that they needed that these churches needed instruction in. In fact, I needed it so badly that and the numbers get to be out of hand.

By the time you get to the end of verse 24 says, they've outgrown Barnabas and he runs to get Saul. But when he comes the son of encouragement sees the grace of God, and that's what encourages us to continue with the Lord. When we see it in ourselves and you say, I have so much more that has to be done in me.

In fact, the amount that has remaining to be done, makes me wonder about the reality, or authenticity of what has been done. And the scripture comes and says, whenever anything at all has been done. It is the grace of God continue with the same Lord of the same grace whose hand was with the preaching in the first place.

And so when Barnabas comes, he sees the grace of God and he's glad and it's out of that. Observation that has what God is doing first and foremost and that response of his gladness that the ministry of his encouragement flows.

Probably didn't touch on the previous application. The the one that hits home for many of us parenting and you see a little bit in the child and you're tempted to see all that has to be done. Still. Because partly, it's your job from God. And yet you've already seen so much providential grace.

And then you've also seen haven't, you? And many of your children evidences of gracious. Work in the heart, the awakening of the mind and the conscience, not just sorrow over sin. But

but also now in some or many and God make it all of them, gladness and comfort in the gospel, not just a enjoying pleasing you.

But when you tell them that, that pleases the Lord, that the smile broadens, Then they go out and they're wicked because they're yours. They got it from you and there's so much more to address. We need to be trained by the same spirit who gave the same goodness and the same faith to Barnabas.

According to verse 24, that when we see what the Lord has done, we see the grace of God and our glad not just Calvinistically self-reinforced. Yep. I know that. That's the grace of God, that does this. Now, why is everything so bad with you, which is the way we tend to respond?

If we're not taught by the Spirit from passages like this one, to see the grace of God and be glad. And then when he encourages them and it's it's from that same word that is used for the ministry of the Spirit. When Jesus says, he would send another helper or comforter or encourage her or exhort or rebuke her, and the word is used for all of those things but it's out of gladness over the gracious work that God has begun that.

He has the confidence that he who started the work. Is going to complete it. And so what does a Christian do? If he knows that Jesus started the work in himself. Does he say? Well, Jesus is the one who does the work. I'll just use the means and it'll automatically happen or when he knows that Jesus is the one who started the work in his child.

Well, Jesus is the one who's begun the work and we'll just use the means and it automatically happen. Or when in whether it's the elders ministry shepherding the church generally or the body that is instructed in the Ephesians 4 way. So that all speak the truth and love to one another and all have a reinforcing and strengthening effect on one another so that the whole can be built up into Christ.

You say well, you know, thank God, he sent Calvin, who recovered things from Augustine, who recovered things from Paul. So that, you know, we read the Bible and we see, oh yeah, that's actually how it all fits together. And what it all says, he who began the work in them, is going to complete it in them.

So, we'll just use the means in it automatically work out. Or Do we see that one of the means, especially for sanctification is purposing in our hearts to continue with the Lord? So that Philippians doesn't end at verse 6. It gets to chapter two and verses 12 and 13 and says, work out your own salvation.

Sorry your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you both to will and to work, according to his good pleasure You see Barnabas goes from seeing the grace of God that has begun a work knowing that God will finish the work. But also knowing that part of the work that God does is giving believers purpose of heart to continue with the Lord.

And so the gladness of heart of Barnabas Is that from which flows his ministry to them, urging them to get the, the same work on their hearts from the same. Lord by means of the preaching and the teaching and all of the ministry that he did That word encouragement is very broad.

It's most of the time used in a word connected way in the New Testament. But he encourages them that with purpose of heart, they should continue with the Lord, and the spirit who had made him a good man and gave him a faith. He trusted of course would give them that purpose of art and make then More and more good.

Fill them more and more, give them more and more of a measure of faith. By the way, if the Bible calls those who are united with Christ, good, don't be the, the theological nitpicker who discourages people from union with Christ and they say I'm good and you say no one is good.

But God, you say, well, God became a man in the United himself to me through faith in him. So, I am good. Thank you very much. I have enough water. I'm good. He was telling them to be good, Wasn't he? You take first 23 to in verse 24 together, I think purpose to be good, But of course he described it in terms of union with Christ purpose to continue with the Lord.

And that brings us to the third thing that he uses the work that God was doing included, not just their continuing with the Lord. But the adding of many to their number, at the end, of verse 24. And so Barnabas sees a need for the one who's calling and gifting or gifting and calling.

We already referred to earlier than Barnabas departed for tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And so it was that for a whole year They assembled with the church and taught a great many people. This is just one year but it was a year mentioned to some of your recently.

I think, in one conversation, I said it was three hours. I've been corrected since since then, when it talks about Paul renting out the Hall of Taranas in FSS for probably at least two and a half of his of his three years in FSS, One of the early manuscripts includes a note in in the text.

It's the revised, the text ads, the comment that it was for five hours a day. And also one of one of the second century fathers refers to the same that five hours a day. Now, probably not. I mean we have to live right? And we're not all as affluent as the Ephesians, There was a Ephesus, had a, a break in the middle of the day.

That you work day and then a big long lunch. And but for five hours a day for two and a half years that speaks to the appetite, doesn't it? That speaks to the desire for the Lord. Jesus and for knowing him and being conformed to him, you understand why the letter to Ephesus in, in Ephesians 2, would say you've lost your first love, return to the works that you've done it first.

Well, something similar as implied here for a year. They assembled with the church and taught a great. Many people Now that might be just on Lord's days, that they would take the Lord's day. The Holy convocation and and assemble with the with the church for that. But it sounds very similar to the reason that the deacons were called in the first place that the devotion to the apostles' teaching and the breaking of bread that we saw in in the initial responses of the church that that would be kept up.

That the Apostles could give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word that even overseeing the distribution to the widows wasn't important enough to decrease the apostolic Ministry of Prayer. And the ministry of the word. In Acts chapter 6, one of the reasons is because it's the ministry of the Word that God uses to transform his people into the image of Christ.

So that they'll want to do things like deny themselves. And take care of with us, or Gentile, churches, hearing that they, and their Jewish brethren who up until yesterday hated them. And still, it's probably drew, most of them that they are both going to have a famine. And then, they take whatever, they can spare right now knowing that they're about to not be able to spare in the future and they take whatever they can.

Spare. How does that happen? What happens by conformity to Christ How does conformity to Christ happen? It happens by the Ministry of the Word by the teaching So it was for a whole

year. They assembled with the church and taught a great many people and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

And I've heard so many times and I might have even repeated it that it was probably pejorative. Probably a put-down. Oh, you little Christ.

There's not the sense of that in the passage. And in fact, if the Saul who taught them from a year he and he is the same apostle Paul who of whom we have so many letters in our New Testament is not union with Christ. And the change in the believer, being the outworking of his being joined to the Lord.

Jesus Christ through faith. Isn't that the theme? So what you probably have in verse 26 is a congregation being taught union with Christ and observing in one another the character of Christ and having the same thing that we saw earlier in the passage Seeing the grace of God and being glad.

And speaking of one another as little Christ's It's very unlikely that anyone took that name for himself.

But as a church grows together in the Lord Jesus, that is commendable that we say to one another. This is some of what I have seen Christ do in you and I know it's from him because it looks like him.

And if it was outsiders and certainly those who had had a year-long intensive in union with Christ from the Apostle Paul would be like, that's not a bad name. We'll keep it Christian.

But how are Christians made? Not those with the label. But those are the likeness those who do the Philippians two thing who have in them. The mind that was in Christ. Jesus, who are willing to go without privilege, just as he was willing to add creaturelyness to himself and neediness to himself and subjection to suffering and even to death.

And that on the cross Isn't verses. 27 through 30. An example of the mind of Christ Jesus from Philippians 2. Isn't that then being Christians sacrificing for the sake of their brothers and sisters for whom the Lord. Jesus bore the wrath of God and you and I can't do that for one another, whatever we can do from telling of the Lord Jesus.

From his word. Or that encouragement, that is whatever we are able to do to help one another continue with the Lord even to knowing that you might be hungry or lonely or anxious or sorrowing or struggling with assurance or whatever it is. And saying at cost to me, I am willing to lay out some of myself and what is mind for you because it's then that I really get to experience and express my union with Christ, That's why they would call us Christians.

It's not the label. Is it that verse 26 is so interested in, It's the likeness.

So what the church needs, what your children need and what your family needs, what you need is, the teaching of the Lord, Jesus, from all of his word to see the grace of God and be glad about it, and to continue, and urge others to continue with the Lord.

And to seek to be instructed in Christ and union with Him so that you won't just be conformed to him. But you'll praise him for it. As you think of yourself and others as Christians on a seek the grace of the Lord, by the means that the Lord uses us to give that grace.

Let's pray.

We thank you, Lord. That you are the same yesterday and today and forever and that your spirit is still doing for those from all the nations and those from this nation, what he was doing in this passage when we pray that as you gave Saul Christ likeness. And as you gave Barnabas Christ likeness and as you gave the Christians and antiochrist likeness that you would give us not only to attend upon the means.

But that your hand would be with us that your grace would be sufficient for us and in us, and you would make us more and more to fit the label by the likeness of Christians. Granted we ask and Christ's own name. Amen.