

February 3, 2019 – Elmont Baptist Church
Message Series: Missions Month: Go. Send. Pray.
Week 1: Missions & Passions
Text: Acts 11:19-26

This month will be devoted to highlighting missions. Missions can be defined as crossing a cultural barrier and meeting immediate needs to take the gospel to a people group. Missionaries are set apart by the Holy Spirit and sent by the church. Missions is not simply sharing the gospel, or helping people in need. It will include those things at some level, but in missions, there is a cultural barrier crossed in order to get the gospel to a people group. There are different roles in missions that allow all to be involved. There is GOING, SENDING, and PRAYING. The ones that GO are missionaries, the ones that SEND are churches, and the ones that PRAY are both. As a church we currently use almost 20% of everything that is given to fund mission work all over the world. We want to add to that over time and see more of our people get involved in actively GOING, SENDING, and PRAYING. Each Sunday for the rest of the month we will highlight missionaries or mission organizations that we either support financially already as a church or are building relationships with. As we bring awareness to our personal involvement with missionaries we will also highlight opportunities for you to GO, SEND, and PRAY.

Let's look at one of the earliest missionary movements in Acts 11 and learn how...

Gospel centered mission results in a people-driven passion.

READ TEXT

We have to understand when studying the book of Acts that the writer, Luke, is describing the actions and happenings of the church in its infancy. For that reason not everything we read is prescriptive for the church today. So when we study Acts, we look for principles to apply and learn from, rather than specific prescriptions to follow.

In this passage there are some principles that need to be highlighted as we seek to be a church that is actively and effectively "Proclaiming the Gospel".

We see in this story that...

Gospel-Centered Mission Results in a People-Driven Passion that...

✓ **Is More Powerful than Fear – v 19-20**

Missionaries are willing to risk their lives to reach the unreached. Stats – 255 Christians killed each month – 104 abducted.

✓ **Embraces Diversity – v 20, 26**

The gospel brings together what shouldn't be by the world's standards. Antioch – population = half million. 18 different ethnicities that kept to themselves and didn't intermingle. Then you have this strange phenomenon happening. This group that became known as "Christians" is made up of different ethnicities and they're together. Really together. They're eating together, being seen together, learning from one another, caring for one another like family. So they come up with basically a new ethnicity name for them – Christians. The

difference Jesus makes is noticeable by bringing together what the world tries to keep apart and for too long our churches have fallen for the lie.

✓ **Is Content with Being Unknown – v 20**

We don't know for sure who "them" are other than men from Cyprus and Cyrene. No names, just "them". We are thankful for the phrase, "but there were some of them", because it's their faithfulness that led to the first Gentile (non-Jewish) church recorded in the Scriptures.

✓ **Gives God the Credit – v 21, 23**

V 21 says, "And the hand of the Lord was with them..." This isn't a coincidence. In Matthew 28:20, Jesus made this promise and in Acts 11:21 we see it fulfilled. Barnabas "saw the grace of God and he was glad". Do you see the grace of God? And does it make you glad when you do?

✓ **Teaches for Long-Term Growth – v 23-26**

Mission work and missionaries don't reach them and leave them. The goal of missions is to establish a church where there isn't one. That will only happen through discipleship. Barnabas and Saul (later named Paul) stay for a whole year to teach these new believers how to do what Barnabas had encouraged them to do when he first met them – "remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose."

If we are going to be church that is effective in "Proclaiming the Gospel" then we must take serious the Gospel-centered mission so that it results in a people-driven passion that embodies the principles mentioned here. Over the next 3 weeks open your heart and mind to what God has called or will call you to do in GOING, SENDING, and PRAYING for global impact of the Gospel. A great missionary named William Carey once said, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God", and it's my hope that Elmont will be a church that does just that.