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Partners in Mission sermon outline

HOW CAN I HELP?

Acts 11:19-30

- The Gospel message spread after persecution and the stoning of Stephen (see Acts 7:54 – 8:4) noted again in Acts 11:19.
- The Gospel was received by not only the Jews (v19) but Gentiles as well (v20).
- v21 tells us that *The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.*
- Great things were happening in Antioch.
- Barnabas and Saul spent a year there teaching.
- Then the prophet Agabus predicated that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world.
- There are famines in our world today.
- We must also acknowledge that spiritual famines exist in many countries today.
- In some countries there are great cathedrals, but little worship.
- In other countries, free expressions of faith are suppressed.
- Today there are both physical and spiritual famines taking place in various parts of the world.
- How did the disciples in Antioch respond to the prophetic word from Agabus about the famine?

²⁹ *The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea.* ³⁰ *This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.*

- What can we learn from this response?
- How can we apply some lessons to our lives, to us here in _____ (your town/city) _____?

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- A lot can be learned from verse 29.
- Let's unpack it together.

I The disciples...

- These are disciples of Jesus Christ.
- There are many examples of discipleship in the Bible.
- Let's examine a definition that Jesus set out in John 13:34-35

³⁴ *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."* ³⁵ *By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

- How do we show love?
- By giving gifts, presents, flowers, chocolate?
- The disciples in Antioch showed their love for their Christian brothers and sisters living in Judea by sending them some financial aid.
- We could think of this as the very first Partners in Mission Appeal.

II ...according to their ability...

- This is key – according to their ability, according to what they had. Not according to what they didn't have.
- "Captain, I'd love to give \$10,000 / \$1,000 / \$100 but I haven't got that kind of money."
- Good, then don't give it!
- Give according to your ability: \$10 / \$1 / 10 cents

III ...decided to provide help...

- What is that saying? The road to (hell) is paved with good intentions.
- The idea is that you need to make a decision, you have to decide.

- Not under duress, not because someone else is making such a decision.
- This is between you and God.
- What help can you provide?

²⁹ *The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea.*

- Where is the modern day version of Judea?
- Where are there brothers and sisters in need of our help?
- Where is there spiritual famine?
- Where is there physical hunger?
- Even today, gifts given by disciples in congregations just like ours can help others.
- Gifts given according to ability.
- And these gifts help further the Lord's work.
- As you see in the Partners in Mission promotional material, there is still great need.

So when posed with the question, "How can I help?" The answer is, according to your ability.

Each of us can decide to help your brothers and sisters in a modern day Judea.

- We can send our gifts along to them through the Partners in Mission Appeal of The Salvation Army.
- In so doing, we show that we are disciples of Jesus Christ, expressing practical, loving concern for our brothers and sisters.