

BE A BRINGER

“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....” John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....” I Samuel 12:23a

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ON MISSION TOGETHER



GROWTH GUIDE

Handout: 07/22/18
Study: 07/29/18

Together In Suffering

Our modern church culture seeks false safety at the cost of service to God. We are making an idol of our control at the expense of God’s sovereignty. If God is sovereign, and he controls all, there can be no tragedy or mistake, only the divinely orchestrated rolling out of his perfect will. If we were less focused on comfort in this life and more focused on the kingdom of God, our idol of safety would not infest our decision to serve. In John Piper’s *Desiring God* he tells us, “This is God’s universal purpose for all Christian suffering: more contentment in God and less satisfaction in the world.”

God created us, breathed life into us, and purposed us for his glory. The grace and mercy he gives warrants our love and obedience. Jesus Christ endured an inconceivable persecution and death to pay for our sins. In response, we boldly proclaim his greatness.

Missions is a form of sacrifice in the name of Jesus. However, not only missionaries are called to sacrifice. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who gave his life for Christ in Nazi Germany, said, “A Christian is someone who shares the sufferings of God in the world.” God’s love for us is deeper than any other love we have known. This comfort and joy should defeat all our fear and worry. Paul declares, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1).

The Bible never says missions is safe. In Isaiah 40:9 we are instructed in a single verse to both “herald the good news” and “fear not.” Evangelism and suffering are again joined when Paul says, “As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:5). We are called to make a sacrifice in our lives to help spread the gospel around the world.

Truly submitting to the gospel of Jesus can only result in a heart turned towards saving the lost, feeding the hungry, and healing the sick. Charles Spurgeon, the 19th century British preacher, said, “A man is not far from the gates of heaven when he is fully submissive to the Lord’s will.” Sacrifice in the name of missions is not seeking martyrdom—it is submitting to whatever the Lord wills in our lives.

According to Martin Luther, “A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing, and suffers nothing, is worth nothing.” When we can acknowledge our perceived security is false and that safety is an illusion, we can begin to risk everything and accomplish great things for God’s glory.

If you can manage your own life, you have not sold out for Jesus. The life he wants for you is full of risk and peril and requires relying on him. “God, who foresaw your tribulation, has specially armed you to go through it,” said C. S. Lewis, “not without pain but without stain.” We must trust God’s sufficiency and serve him completely, no matter the cost.

Our life on this earth is only a blip in time. We do not seek false safety and fabricated security. Glorifying God should be our purpose. In the end of life on earth we hope to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master” (Matthew 25:21).

KEY VERSE

Acts 11:21

“And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.” NKJV

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday: Acts 11:19-26

Introduction

1. What do you think of when you hear the word “persecution”?
2. What role did persecution play in forming the church in Antioch?

Tuesday: Acts 11:19; Acts 7:54-8:3

Persecution Spreads the Church Geographically

3. Where did the persecution over Stephen begin? Where did those persecuted move to?
4. What effect did this spreading have on the church’s ability to reach people like them (other Jewish people not living in Jerusalem)?

Wednesday: Acts 11:20-21; Acts 8:4-8

Persecution Grows the Church Ethnically

5. How did persecution put Christians in places to reach people not like them (Gentiles)?
6. Are you able to see a purpose in the early church’s suffering? What was it?

Thursday: Acts 11:22-26; Romans 8:18

Barnabas Joins What God Is Doing

7. What did those in Jerusalem do when they heard about what God was doing in Antioch?
8. When Barnabas saw what happened, what was his reaction?
9. Compare Acts 8:3 and Acts 11:25-26. How was God in control of Saul’s life?
10. What are some things you see God doing in your life or at CBC? How can you join what God is doing?

Friday: I Peter 4:12-19; Romans 5:3-5

Our Suffering

11. In the U.S. we don’t suffer like the early church or like some places in the world today. What types of suffering do we face?
12. What is the purpose of our suffering?
13. How might God be able to use your suffering to bring others to Him?