
Witness Unhindered:
 “The Church for God’s Mission”
 Acts 11: 19–30

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

“Probably more trouble is caused in the Christian life by an inadequate or mistaken view of [the doctrine of justification by grace through faith] than any other. When the child of God loses his sense of peace with God, finds his concern for others dried up, or generally finds his sense of the sheer goodness and grace of God diminished, it is from this fountain that he has ceased to drink. Conversely, if we can gain a solid grounding here, we have the foundation for a life of peace and joy.” – Sinclair Ferguson, *The Christian Life*, p. 80

“It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission – God’s mission . . . The idea of a missional church is far from a new idea . . . If we understand the church from our biblical theology as that community of people chosen and called since Abraham to be the vehicle of God’s blessing to the nations, what else can the church be, but missional? This is who we are and what we are here for. Indeed, as a friend of mine said recently, ‘All this talk of ‘missional church’ sounds to me like talking about a ‘female woman’. If it’s not missional, it’s not church.’” – Christopher Wright

“The church’s great news to a dying world is that there is a living God, whose love for his creation is inexhaustible . . . The church has no other and no better message. This is her great declaration.”
 – Lewis Allen

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

- What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered or rabbit trails to be followed for you?
- Why does Sinclair Ferguson (above) link “justification by faith alone through grace alone” to concern for others?
 - How do the two correlate and drive each other?
 - How do we drink from the fountain of justification so that our mission as people and the church does not falter?
- Acts 11: 19–30 begins with a reference to the Christians in Jerusalem being forced out from the city and scattered into the surrounding region because of persecution.
 - Describe the temptations to circle the wagons and to keep life manageable and safe.
 - Where do you see this mentality in yourself or in Hope as a church?
 - What helps to keep us actively engaging the world, especially when friction and persecution try to force us inward?
- What is the encouragement from Chris Wright’s claim that “the church was made for mission – God’s mission”?
 - Where are you seeing and experiencing God’s commitment to and work for redemption?
 - How have you been encouraged to participate yourself or been encouraged by friends who are participating?
- The refrain of the passage is that great numbers of people are being added to the Lord.
 - Why is it so necessary to remember that God is at work and folks are being changed?