



WnL CONNECT GROUPS

The Church Scattered

Acts 11:19-21

MAIN POINT

God empowers the gospel message for salvation when we are faithful to speak it, even when our circumstances are dire.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

- Describe a time when God opened a door for you to talk about Jesus in an unlikely situation. What need or cause presented the opening?
- How aware are you of the needs in your own neighborhood? How would you like to see that change in the next six months?
- In which spheres has God given you unique influence? What would you say are the top two ways you could serve the people in those spheres?

In this week's session, Luke described how the gospel spread from a huddled group of Jewish believers in Jerusalem to Gentiles in Antioch. The event marked the beginning of the universal spread of the gospel, regardless of ethnicity. Interestingly, what spawned the movement was a forced diaspora of Jews from Jerusalem due to harsh persecution. Observing the messengers of the gospel reveals that the spread of the gospel was the result of men who harvested the opportunities presented to them for gospel witnessing.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Have a volunteer read Acts 11:19.



After tracing the ministry of Peter up through his defense of the gospel going to Gentiles in Acts 11:18, Luke resumed the description of the activity of other believers as a result of the persecution. In doing so, listing the names of Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch made it clear that Luke was turning his focus toward those believers who traveled northward when the persecution broke out. The fact that there was such a great distance between the three cities made the qualifying statement about the spread of the gospel all the more surprising. Specifically, they spoke only to other Jews about Jesus. The importance of recognizing how these events historically coincide with Peter's evangelistic ministry to the house of Cornelius is that it demonstrates God's desire for the gospel to go to the world.

- Would you say that it is easier to talk about Jesus to people that are like you and have a shared background, or people with whom you are completely unfamiliar? Why do you think so? Can you give a personal example?
- Who would you say culture has identified as “untouchable,” or those who should be avoided? In your opinion, what should gospel ministry to them look like?

Have a volunteer read Acts 11:20.

Among the fleeing evangelists, though, were a small group of daring souls. Luke did not mention their names, only their places of origin—Cyprus and Cyrene. The mark of distinction that made the mention of their hometowns important was their initiative to share the gospel with those believed to be outside the realm of the news of the Messiah. When they began sharing with Gentiles about the good news of the Lord Jesus, they were uniquely qualified to share that message precisely because they were not from Jerusalem.

- What distinctive features of the way you were raised influence your understanding of Jesus? How did you perceive Him growing up? How have your experiences shaped that?
- Who do you know that has a similar understanding and/or background? Why is that important to understand? How might God have uniquely formed you for that purpose?

Have a volunteer read Acts 11:21.

“The Lord’s hand” is a common metaphor for communicating the power of God at work. In this particular instance, the Lord was working in conjunction with his faithful, unnamed servants as they faithfully took advantage of the opportunities that presented themselves. What form did the validation that God was at work take? Saved souls. The best sign that God is at work among His people is the evidence of changed lives as hearts turn to Christ.

- How does knowing that it is God who empowers our ministry efforts shape your thinking about your own ministry service?
- What is your feeling on pioneering ministry in a place it has not previously been? Does it excite you? What areas are the most appealing to you in middle Tennessee?



APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

- How is God prompting you to serve others in your community? What particular causes or areas weigh heavily on your heart? What gives you a sense of burden?
- Describe a time when you unquestionably felt the power of God at work. What happened? What evidences of life change did you see? How did it impact your desire to experience it again?
- How confident are you in your ability to communicate the gospel and your own testimony? What would you say if the opportunity presented itself at your first appointment tomorrow?

PRAYER

Pray that God would use your group as a traveling force for the gospel.

