

Acts 11:19-27

# COURAGE

*"Courage for Persecution"*

*1 Peter 1:7, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:"*

**INTRODUCTION:** There is nothing wrong with going through persecution, as long as your faith remains in Jesus Christ. Persecution, like any trial, can refine us and cause us to make assessments and live more holy lives.

God never sends persecution so that we can abandon our faith and look for something else. If we are to overcome the fear of persecution, we must adjust to adversity with the proper response.

The church at Jerusalem was originally molded by a significant experience in the life of Stephen, the first Martyr of the Church. The church, now under persecution, spread out and came to Antioch. God sends a trial, not to hurt us, but that we may find the mind of Christ in the matter (Acts 7:54-60).

So how did the early church overcome their fear of persecution?

## I. THEY KEPT ON PREACHING (ACTS 11:19)

### A. THEY PREACHED THE WORD OF GOD (ACTS 11:19)

If you question the infallibility of the Bible, you are no longer under the authority of the Bible. If when you disagree with something, you can simply say, "That part isn't really inspired."

*"Well, some years your up; some years your down; but you never stop preaching." – Bobby Roberson*

### B. THEY PREACHED JESUS CHRIST (ACTS 11:20)

*Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."*

## II. THEY HAD GOD'S POWER (ACTS 11:21)

As Christians watched Stephen's stoning, they were humbled by his response. No doubt there was a feeling of remorse, but there was a far greater feeling of humility.

### A. HUMBLING PLACES US IN A POSITION FOR GOD'S POWER (11:21)

### B. EMPOWERED CHURCHES SEE SOULS SAVED (ACTS 11:21)

*Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

God may have to bring a trial that will humble you so that you can have power in order to win souls to Him.

*John 15:1-6, "1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."*

## III. THEY KEPT PARTICIPATING (ACTS 11:23-26)

Scenario: faithfulness for a while – persecution – lack of participation – retreat from where we were. That scenario depends on your response to the trial.

During persecution the church at Antioch participated together.

### A. THEY ASSEMBLED IN THE CHURCH (ACTS 11:26)

*Hebrews 10:24-25, "24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*

God's people have always been a people of the Book and the House.

### B. THEY GAVE OFFERINGS AT CHURCH (ACTS 11:27-30)

Fruitful churches are always churches who see the need and take the lead!

A drought was coming in Jerusalem:

1. An offering was taken
2. There was 100% participation
3. According to ability
4. With determination