

Lessons from a Model Church: Antioch

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[0 : 0 0] It doesn't hit till later. We can make our way home safely. And this is my first time actually being with you guys since you've been here in this new location. And so far, and I anticipate for the entire time, Peg and I are just so ecstatic and enjoying our time and getting to meet you guys and really in it all to see the grace of God at work.

That's the thing that's amazing. And maybe in some ways I offer a vantage point that no one else quite has, just haven't been part of this and working with the team and watching God work in our church, watching God work here in East Cambridge and our sister churches and watching God really put together this church and watching the grace of God at work.

So I'm really excited to be here. And I'm excited actually to speak from Acts 11 as well related to the grace of God, because that's what we see, that's what we heard as we listen to Acts 11 read.

It talked about the grace of God at work and forming a church, and a church that in many ways is a model church for us. God's given us his word, given us the book of Acts for many different purposes, but one is to paint a picture for us of what the church looks like or what the church ought to look like.

So that's what we'll be doing this morning. It's just learning from this model church in Antioch. Let me ask as I start out, how many people here grew up going to church?

[1 : 2 6] Just raise your hand. Did you grow up going to church? Wow, a lot of you guys. That's excellent. And how many here have been part of a church at some point, I know it wouldn't be this church, but like for five or ten years?

That's a lot of us. Okay, great. Now I'm sure for you guys that those experiences growing up and being part of a church have influenced you, have influenced you significantly, and perhaps in all sorts of ways.

For Peg and for me, our first church, well, we grew up in Roman Catholic churches and there's good things there that certainly influenced us, but our first church, having come to faith, was a church in the inner city.

It's still there, actually, in Jamaica Plain. At the time, it was called Rock Hill Alliance Church. It's called River of Life Church now. And that was our first church as a young couple.

And it's had a huge influence on our lives. We still refer to it often, our experience in that church and the things that went on. We got to see the Lord at work in many ways.

[2 : 3 0] And kind of our picture and paradigm of church life in many ways was influenced by our time there. I can just remember just the relationships that were there, the love that was there, the friendship that was there.

And it wasn't just love and friendship. You know, it was also this corporate experience of God at work. We were watching God work among us and there were all sorts of things happening.

We saw people come to Christ. We saw people coming out of all sorts of backgrounds. We saw God healing and moving in believers' lives in powerful ways, breakthroughs happening.

We saw a lot of crazy stuff. It was because we were in the inner city. There's just a brokenness around us, the brokenness in us as well. And there were just all sorts of things.

And we just watched the Lord at work. And I think for us, that has influenced how we look at church. And at this point in time even, this is now 20, 30 years ago, more than 30 years ago.

[3 : 28] I'm getting old. And it still influences us in our sense, in our anticipation, in eagerness to see God work amidst His people and through His people because of that experience.

Model churches, this is our churches that we were a part of, even if it were negative in some ways. Our experience in churches really instructs us and teaches us.

And thank God that, I would assume for many of us, we've had many positive experiences that have shaped how we understand the Christian life. Well, I think God wants it to be that way.

He wants us to be influenced and wants us to look back and say, wow, I learned this and it was fantastic. But even more importantly, God has given us, in His Word, a model church. And that's really what the church in Antioch is.

It's a model church. And I just want to draw some lessons from this church this morning, pointing out some of the things that we can observe in the passage, and then applying them. Applying them here for us.

[4 : 28] Actually, I need to, sorry, I need a clock to keep myself honest. And this is my clock. I'm going to put my Bible down. So we're just going to go through.

Let me tell you a little bit about the church in Antioch that will help you understand and kind of better absorb what we can learn from Antioch. That passage in Acts 11 is of the church in Antioch.

The time frame around when that was happening was about 45 AD. This is about 15 years after the church had started. So the church, I mean the whole church started in Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

So it's about 15 years later. And the church is growing. The church in Jerusalem is growing. There's things happening. But they're still trying to figure out. They're still trying to figure out kind of what they're supposed to be doing.

They know in some ways but they're still figuring out. And particularly related to their mission. And the particular items of confusion or concern were how do we do this thing with people that aren't Jewish?

[5 : 31] How do we do this thing? How do we relate to the temple and the Mosaic Law and the truths that we've learned from Jesus? So they're wrestling through that. And that's what you see happening in the early parts of the book of Acts.

And as that's going on, God is at work. And God is doing things actually in them and through them that they didn't necessarily expect. There was a persecution.

Stephen, who was a Greek-speaking Jew, was bold and he proclaimed the gospel. He was kind of ahead of his time in understanding the implications of Christ's coming and fulfilling the Old Testament, the implications on the temple and the law.

And he said some things that were true about that and even spoke prophetically to the leaders in Jerusalem. And as a result, he was stoned. He was put to death. And then a persecution broke out in the church.

And what happened was the Greek-speaking Jews who were living in Jerusalem who had stayed because they were part of the church and they were watching God work, they were scattered. And they started going throughout the Roman Empire, really, at that point.

[6 : 32] And we read about how some went only speaking to Jews as they went. They only would speak to Jews. But there were these Greek-speaking Jews, Christians, who went with the gospel and started speaking to Greeks, just regular old Greeks, not Jewish Greek people, but Greek Greek people.

And the word of God started to have an effect among those people. And so that happened in Antioch. That was the place it started to happen. This exciting new development that really had an influence in the church.

What goes on in the storyline in the book of Acts and in church history is the center of Christian life shifts around this point from Jerusalem to Antioch.

And Antioch has, just the grace of God gets poured out on Antioch. And we read about it. And as a result, Antioch grows and is a vibrant church and actually has an influence on the church that goes on for centuries as a result.

So that's some of the background here. And that's why this is a model church to learn from. This is why it's worthwhile examining and looking because of what God was doing through Antioch and what he did in leading the church.

[7 : 44] So we're just going to make some observations. First observation I want to make is just to note how this church grew. How it got started and how it grew.

Did you see as the passage was read and as you looked in your Bibles, did you see how it got started? Did you see what was going on? Did they kind of come up with a church service that offered something for everybody in Antioch and kind of invite people in?

You know, you can find something for everybody here. Is that what happened? Was that what formed this church and got this dynamic church growing? Did they have like a really cool children's program that attracted all the young families in Antioch to come?

Is that what went on? Did they have this amazing Sunday service that was entertaining and inviting and as a result everyone just decided I've got to check this place out. How did this church get started?

What went on? What grew this church? It was the proclamation of Christ. It says in the passage there were some of them on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also that would be the Greeks preaching the Lord Jesus and the hand of the Lord was with them.

[8 : 58] So they went and they proclaimed Christ as they went. They preached Christ. They proclaimed the truth of Jesus Christ. Christ crucified and risen. Christ as the God man.

God in the flesh who had come to rescue us and bring His kingdom. Christ who had come to create new creations to make people's lives new and different in Him through the good news of Christ.

Christ, Jesus. They proclaimed Christ and the entailments of Christ. They proclaimed the good news what we call the gospel. That's what was going on in this church. That's what God had started. That's what grew this church.

The proclamation of Jesus Christ. Verse 20. It says that a great number believed and turned to the Lord.

A great number of people through the proclamation of Christ. That's how the church got started. That's how it grew. They told their friends and their neighbors about Jesus. And God blessed that.

[10 : 01] The preaching of the word. And that's what started and grew this dynamic church. That's important to get. That's important to note here and that's important to understand its implications. It wasn't just actually their initial proclamation either.

This was a church that built itself up in the word of God. In the truth of the gospel at the core with the word of God. So it says that for a whole year Barnabas goes and he gets Saul.

He recruits Saul. Brings him to this church. Barnabas is actually a wonderful figure in scripture. An encouraging leader. A developer of younger leaders it looks like. And so he was always thinking how can I develop a new leader?

He knew about Saul already. Saul was a Greek speaking Jew and he probably thought this is perfect. This guy's been waiting in the wings for a while. I'm going to go get him. And he brings him to Antioch.

And they teach the church. It says for a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. So the church not only got started by the word of God but it grew by the word of God. the health of this model church was grounded in one thing above any other.

[11 : 06] The spirit anointed preaching sharing and teaching of God's word with Christ at the center. That's that's its strategy. That's the key to growth for this model church.

Guys I say that and you might be thinking well duh I mean we know that. But you know what it's so easy to drift from this simple and straightforward truth we see here at Acts. It's so easy to drift into other techniques to grow a church.

It's so easy to depend on something else rather than the word of God. Now just to add an important qualifier here don't hear what I'm not saying.

This doesn't mean that you can just forget about worrying about anything else. Right? Just preach Christ. So you can show up here on a Sunday morning you know don't comb your hair. Don't iron your clothes.

You know don't brush your teeth. Don't set up the chair. Don't try to have an organized meeting. Don't say anything to your neighbors. Don't be involved in the community.

[12 : 03] Don't do any of those things. Just preach Jesus. No I'm not saying that. All those things actually should follow in line with a heart shaped by the gospel. We should seek to bless others with all those other things.

But we can't depend on those other things. The tendency is to drift into depending on how polished your Sunday service is.

or how excellent your program is. Or how you know how in tune you are with the community and the culture which you should be but to depend on that as your means of growth.

That's not what we see in Antioch. It's the word of God. It's Christ crucified and risen. That's growing this church.

And guys here at Trinity Cambridge that's what God is going to use to grow you. That's what God has been using. That's what God will use to grow you. That the word of God the gospel at the core that's your fuel.

[13 : 02] That's what's going to power you. That's what's going to bring life to this church. And that's what's going to empower this church to bring life to others. The gospel the good news Christ and him crucified. It's like the reactor fuel for an aircraft carrier.

An aircraft carrier runs on actually nuclear fuel and the gospels like reactor fuel for the aircraft carrier. There's a lot that goes on in an aircraft carrier though. There's a lot of aspects to life on an aircraft carrier.

There's the planes taking off. There's planes that escort planes. There's maintenance facilities. There's mess halls and quarters. There's all sorts of life going on in an aircraft carrier. But without the fuel it's dead in the water.

And all those other accessories actually become burdens without the fuel to drive the aircraft carrier. That's what the gospel is. The gospel is your fuel. It empowers you as a church.

It drives you. And all those other things are empowered and directed because of that. So everything you do is fueled by the word of God and by the gospel at the core of that.

[14 : 05] That's so important to get. So important to remember. I know you guys are committed to these things. To keeping Christ at the center of your church. I see it in worship here.

I know from what I hear about the church this is what you guys are committed to and I want to celebrate that. I believe God is pleased with how you are doing things.

And I just want to encourage you in this. I want to encourage you to be steadfast in this. To not be distracted. To not start putting some other things above the preaching of the word.

To keep this as the fuel for the life of the church here. To continue to do what you're doing. When you meet together come together to hear God's word. To sing God's word.

To celebrate the truths of God's word. As you go out to reach out to others. Be fueled by the love of God you understand and know through the word. Be fueled by that as you do the things you do like game nights and ultimate frisbee and all the different things you guys do in reaching out to others.

[15 : 09] It's wonderful to hear about and it's wonderful to hear about how God is using you guys in relationships and I know those relationships are driven in your love for people because of the gospel.

It's wonderful to hear about things like baptisms. You guys have had baptisms already adding members and I know that that's because the word of God is fueling you guys and driving you guys.

I know that he's sustaining you in your life together. Your love for one another through the word. That there's a quality among you guys of care and love through the word.

I just want to encourage you to keep on looking to the word. To enjoy and celebrate what he's doing his grace at work in your midst but to look to his word filling your minds and hearts look to the gospel of Jesus Christ to shape you to animate your hands and feet to fill your minds and your lips to use you to touch the lives of people who don't yet know Christ and to tell them the good news.

That's what's going to be what makes a difference in their lives when they hear about Jesus. That's how God does it. That's how God did it in Antioch. That's how God continues to do it. It's through hearing the word of God and I trust that God's going to give you new believers.

[16 : 31] He's going to give you new life as you build relationships and as you share the gospel. That's the power of God for salvation the gospel. And so what do you do?

You share the gospel and then they come to know the Lord and then what do you do then? You share the gospel. You share the word. You build them into the word. You build the word into them so that they grow and grow in Christ and grow together with you as a church.

Colossians 3.16 says let the word of Christ dwell in you richly teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Trinity Church Trinity Cambridge Church look to the Lord and his words. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as a church. Don't look to other strategies for your growth.

Have a great Sunday worship service but make sure the word is most prominent in your service. Sponsor great community events but make sure they are about living out the word and looking for open doors for the word.

- [17 : 37] Run excellent programs but don't rely on excellence to reach people. But the power of God through his word build your church on the word of God.

A healthy church is built on the word of God. That's how Antioch built. Next observation Antioch reached diverse people.

They reached diverse people. This church was comprised of very diverse people and it got started because people crossed cultural barriers. Not easy to do that.

But the gospel has a way of propelling us in that doesn't it? When we know that God has crossed an amazing barrier to come and rescue us. That he came and lived among us and bore our sins.

The God man Jesus bore my sins, our sins. To pay for our sins so they could be completely forgiven and we could be reconciled and made one with him, invited into the eternal love of the Trinity.

- [18 : 38] When we recognize that and see that truth we realize what great lengths he's come to reach to us and that empowers us doesn't it? It compels us to go and to step out and cross cultural barriers to reach others.

And that's what was going on in Antioch. the Greek-speaking Jewish believers didn't just stick to their own kind. They could have. But the gospel compelled them to cross and to speak to those that were Greek, that were Greek Gentiles, not Jewish people.

And others. And God did something in bringing people to himself in this melting pot of a city, by the way. Antioch was full of people from all different backgrounds. It really was a crossroads.

one of the major cities of the Roman Empire. And so we read in Acts 13, actually, about the team that gets formed and the team itself. This is the leadership team for this church in Antioch.

And it says this, Now they were in the church in Antioch, prophets and teachers, and then list them. Barnabas, Simeon, who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Menaen, a lifelong friend of Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul.

- [19 : 47] So you have Barnabas, he's a Greek-speaking Jew. He would have been culturally Greek in some ways, but he's still Jewish. He's from Cyprus. There's Simeon, called Niger. So Simeon was probably a dark-skinned man, perhaps from Africa.

You have Lucius from Cyrene, that is in North Africa. And then you have Menaen, a childhood friend of Herod. So this guy is from the household of Herod. I mean, what a crew!

And then there's Saul as well, all together in this leadership team. What a diverse leadership team. But it really is a picture of this church, isn't it? The picture of the church in Antioch.

They're reaching all sorts of people. They've understood the implications of the gospel, that the gospel and the commission our Lord has given us calls us to go to all peoples, to reach people, to reach out, to cross cultural barriers.

And so God did something beautiful here in this church. church. There's a lesson for us. And this lesson is different than what you might hear.

- [20 : 47] Some of the conventional thinking in church growth and in church planting is don't do what we see here because it just makes it hard. Don't do it.

Just go to your own kind. And there's counsel even saying the lead pastor, like you should expect that's the sort of people you should be reaching. Reach people like the lead pastor. I'm so glad that our church is not full of people like me.

I wouldn't want that. We don't want to follow that wisdom but there's that trend that conventional wisdom that says, well, reach out to your own kind. It's easiest. It's easiest to do church life then. You don't have to cross any of the barriers and so there are churches actually that are doing that.

They are purposefully targeting only a narrow segment. But oh, how contradictory that is to the word of God and the purposes of God. God loves to show the power of the gospel in a vivid, glorious way by uniting diverse people and bringing them into close unity around the cross.

Doing that in such a way that the world looks and says there's something going on there that's really different because the world doesn't have a formula to make that work well. They're trying different ones and none of them are going to work.

[21 : 58] But there is a formula in the gospel. God has reconciled us to himself and in reconciling us to himself we are reconciled to one another. We are brought near to one another. No matter who we might be.

No matter what background we might have. No matter what ethnicity we might have. No matter what socioeconomic background we might have. We are brought near in Christ.

We are brought together. And it's glorious, isn't it? Just think in art. How do you paint a glorious picture?

Do you take a canvas that's white and then a white paintbrush and draw a snowman and a blizzard? Just all white? No one wants to see a painting like that, right?

What makes a painting beautiful? Diversity. Different colors, different textures on a canvas, together. This diversity put together and united along some theme, right?

[22 : 58] Some picture or some concept. There's a theme. But it's diversity with a central theme. That's what beauty is. That's what makes art beautiful. And that's how God makes things beautiful.

That's how he makes his church beautiful. He takes diversity. He takes diverse ethnicity and backgrounds and histories and stories and brings them all together in the power of the gospel.

Brings them all together on a canvas. The central theme of Christ at the center of our lives. Rescuing us and leading us in his new kingdom ways. That's the picture of beauty.

And it's wonderful to be here with you guys and watch what God's doing. Bringing diverse folks here together. There are folks in this room from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

And I trust there'll be even more and more. It's glorious. It's worth the effort. Yes, it takes effort. It's easiest just to relate to people who are just like you.

[23 : 59] There's culture and ethnic backgrounds that we have distinct ones and it's easiest to stay with the people that you're most like. It takes work. It takes the power of the gospel.

It forces us to run to the gospel is what it does. It makes us uncomfortable because we're going to be misunderstood and we're going to misunderstand others. We're going to have to ask for forgiveness.

We're going to have to admit that maybe my culture isn't superior in every way like I thought it was. Maybe there's aspects that I can learn from from other cultures and other peoples. And maybe together with Christ at the center we'll all grow in wisdom and we'll all grow in unity.

And together we will bring glory to him. Guys, you might know this but you know there are 62 different languages spoken in the homes of Cambridge public school students.

62 different languages. I'll say them really quickly starting with the most common to the least common. English, Spanish, Creole, America, Bengali, Arabic, Mandarin, Portuguese, Korean, Somali, French, Gujarati, Hebrew, German, Tigrinya, Nepali, Japanese, Tigre, Urdu, Italian, Cape Verdean, Hindi, Norwegian, Russian, Tibetan, Turkish, Swahili, Dutch, Pashto, Vietnamese, Albanian, Danish, Greek, Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian, Cantonese, Swedish, Armenian, Zonka, Tibetan, Farsi, Punjabi, Tamil, Catalan, Chichua, Finnish, Hungarian, Kiriwandu, Macedonian, Romanian, Slovene, Tagalog, Telugu, Thai, Tongan, and Tui.

[25 : 31] 62 different languages spoken by Cambridge public school students in their home and God has put you guys right here in the middle of all that.

Why? Well, for many reasons, but one is to watch the gospel work in 62 different cultures and ethnicities and more and watch it draw people together to be united around Christ, to love each other deeply from the heart, to love Christ supremely and to glorify him.

And I anticipate, and I'm sure it's your prayer, and if not, would you make it your prayer? God, would you make our church that diverse and unified around Christ?

Would you make us that canvas full of all those colors and textures that paints a beautiful picture of the power of the gospel and the glory of God? That's what went on in Antioch.

This was a church that reached diverse people. Next observation is Antioch lived out the message. It wasn't just a message they said and then didn't do.

[26 : 37] It was a message they lived out. It had gripped their hearts. It had changed who they are. And so it says, in Antioch, the disciples were first called Christians. A little phrase, but it has a lot of meaning.

They were first called Christians there. What a fantastic credit to the believers in Antioch to be called little Christ, followers of Christ. And probably at first it was to tease them.

You know, that's what we do sometimes. If someone's a follower of something, we add an ite on the end of it, you know. You're a what ite? Something. A Luddite or something like that, you know.

You follow Mr. Ludd, whoever that was. So we do that. That's what's going on here. They are being called Christians probably to tease them. But it's because they were known for being followers of Christ.

It was unmistakable that these people were followers of Christ. There was something about them that made it obvious to their neighbors and friends. You're a follower of Christ, aren't you?

[27 : 36] You are one of those Christians. And maybe at first it was intended to be derogatory, but it became standard description for a follower of Christ. To this day, actually, right?

When we say we're a follower, what do we say? We say we're a Christian. It started here in Antioch because of the quality of their walk, the quality of their life together, was distinct enough that the culture recognized something was going on and they were called Christians.

There's another example in the passage as well. Agabus makes a trip to Antioch. He's a New Testament prophet from Jerusalem and he prophesied that there would be a great famine throughout the Roman world.

And the church in Antioch responded to that. How did they respond? What did they do when they heard that there was a famine? Wow. We're in trouble. We better fill up our cellars with food and get ready for this thing and circle the wagons, Antioch, right, so we can survive this thing and who cares about the rest.

We just need to get by on our own. No, what do they do? They determined to send a gift to the church in Jerusalem. Their hearts are generous, gracious hearts affected by the gospel, affected by the Lord.

[28 : 49] And so they're outward. And so they give away things with an approaching famine. That's crazy. But that's what Jesus looks like, right?

That's what his people look like. And that's what this church looked like. They determined that they would send a gift to relieve the brothers living in Jerusalem because they knew that it was especially hard for them. It was an impoverished part of the Roman Empire.

And these were their brothers. And so they determined to send a gift down to them. They were gracious. They were generous. Their hearts were full of faith in God, the faithful supplier and compassion for others.

That's what characterized them. And they were living out the message. Again, the gospel propels us in this. We know the love of God through Christ. And we know the compassion he's had for us.

So it empowers us and compels us to do the same. To love God and to love others. To care about others. To give ourselves and our resources away for others. And you guys are doing that here at Trinity Cambridge.

[29 : 55] Cambridge. It actually looks kind of crazy to be doing what you guys are doing here. You guys have decided to start a church in probably one of the most expensive cities in the whole country.

I actually looked it up. Boston is like number three. And I know Cambridge is more expensive than Boston. So you guys might be like number one or number two. That's crazy.

Why did you do that? Because there's people here who need to know about Jesus. And there are believers here who need a good church to grow with and to serve with.

You know with the culture going the way it's going and going away from Christendom or from a Christian influenced culture it would have made more sense just to have found a good church just to stay at King of Grace.

Circle the wagons. Just try to survive the storm of cultural decline. Right? That makes sense. But when we understand the gospel when we're gripped by the love of God when we love people we don't care a whole lot about our own safety.

[31 : 08] We don't care about our comfort as much. And we're willing to go to places that are costly. Costly in different ways. Financially or just moving from a home you've known or a church you've known.

We're compelled by the gospel. We're affected just like the people in Antioch and you guys are doing that here and it's wonderful. It's wonderful to watch what's happening watching you guys sacrifice and serving and giving and trusting God and laboring and loving each other.

You guys live the message among yourselves as well so there's no inconsistency here. Right? There's an integrity. I can say that for you. You might feel awkward patting yourselves on the back but there's an integrity here.

So what started you guys on this mission has sustained you. There's a quality of love for one another and a love for the community. So when you guys reach out to the community and you just hang out with them and you play ultimate frisbee or invite them to games it's not bait and switch.

You're just being yourselves because you have been compelled by the love of God. You love one another and you love people and you're just inviting them to be a part to at least observe it and then Lord willing to join in and experience it.

[32 : 27] I know this goes on in your midst and I'm sure there's lots of stories caring for each other. Just this week you guys probably know Sean and Hannah got in a very serious accident. I found out during the week.

I was actually texting Sean about some this I think this time and he let me know like wow forget about what you need to do. I'm glad you guys are okay. So they're okay. A highway accident just miraculous that you guys weren't hurt so thank God for that.

But then your care hearing about the care for them in that. Someone drove down to pick them up somewhere down in Connecticut wherever you guys were Sturbridge Omas okay almost Connecticut to pick them up to bring them back here and then just the care and the care I know in other situations making meals for each other loving each other walking through sorrow and trial together there's a sincerity there's a love there's a living out of the message that's going on here and it's glorious and it's like Antioch and I just want to say that to encourage you guys to encourage you in it to keep up the good work to keep walking in these things to keep living like Antioch more and more.

A couple more observations real quickly and then we'll finish. Antioch developed and sent their very best. Part of the storyline here is that they developed leaders they developed leaders and they deployed leaders.

They developed some really great leaders real diverse leaders but good leaders this is a healthy church full of good leaders it's got Barnabas and Saul in the church and again it would have made sense just to kind of circle the wagons let's just kind of keep on building up our leaders here make a really strong leadership but no they send out their very best the Spirit of God actually speaks to them and says do it you better do it when he speaks that way but they send out their best they deploy leaders it says in Acts 13 while they were worshipping the Lord and fasting the Holy Spirit said set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off so being sent out by the Holy Spirit they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus and then they went with their team Barnabas and Saul John Mark probably others on the team they went throughout the Roman Empire and planted churches and changed the world as a result this is a church that developed leaders for the health of their own church but also to deploy them there's a lesson here in Antioch and I know this is in your heart to be a church that develops leaders and it's just great to hear so early on in your church life actually it's amazing it's amazing and it's unusual that God is raising up leaders here you guys have three small groups and leaders for your small groups at this early stage fantastic

[35 : 21] I know that there's a leadership team and future elders being raised up I know there's a number of deacons male and female deacons being raised up to lead things here that's great for the stage of your church life to have that happening is wonderful and so keep on doing that keep on celebrating the grace of God keep on being a church that does that I would trust that God would use you guys as a leader factory but not just for your own good but to send out your very best when the time comes to send out your very best when the time comes I would trust that God would even in the next five years send out a church plant through Trinity Cambridge maybe your first step is just something nearby somewhere in Boston itself Boston another part of Cambridge around here somewhere so that would be maybe your first one and if you just dream with me a little bit if I can do that with you maybe your second one is to some place where there is no church at all some place in the world that's under under unreached and unengaged there's 3,000 people groups out there that are not only unreached but they're unengaged so they're another category and what I mean by unengaged there's no church there there's unreached people that are not effectively reached but that have believers working there but there are 3,000 groups 3,000 different ethnic groups in the world unreached and unengaged and there are great cities throughout the world that have hardly any Christian witness so maybe your second plan from the leaders you raise up here would be to send them to one of those places to be like

Antioch to watch God do what he did in Antioch true Trinity Cambridge finally Antioch was a church that experienced the grace of God this is the most important thing I want to leave you with they experienced the grace of God all these other things were happening ultimately because God chose to pour out his glorious divine favor his undeserved favor on this city and its people God is a God full of grace and mercy he's a gracious God who's at work and he loves to rescue undeserving sinners he loves to bring them near and bring them near to each other he loves to put them in a body and cause that body to shine for the glory of Christ and to enjoy all the blessings of life in Christ God had been gracious it says here that Barnabas came and people heard the church in Jerusalem heard about what was going on and it says the hand of the Lord was with them and then Barnabas was sent and it says when he came and saw the grace of God he was glad

Barnabas came and he observed what was going on the church in Jerusalem was saying what's happening we don't know how to handle this there are Greek people coming to Christ there's a church being formed there in Antioch what's up with that so they send Barnabas Barnabas he's at work here and he celebrates that and he serves that what God is doing through his grace there's grace God's grace is being poured out his mercy and kindness and nearness have been poured out on this church and that's what makes all the difference in Antioch and guys that's what makes all the difference here in Trinity Cambridge ultimately all the things that you're seeing that are good all the things that you're experiencing that are good all the things that you're investing in that are good all are driven by the amazing sovereign grace of God God is at work you didn't bring God to East

Cambridge God brought you to East Cambridge he was already here he was already here among his people that were living here and probably praying oh God would you reach East Cambridge more and more just hearing from a couple this morning about that they're praying this is an answer to prayer there are others praying God would you do this God was already at work among people and preparing their hearts there's people out there you don't you have no idea what's going on in their lives but God's at work and he's preparing them and they're going to walk in here one day or you're going to walk into their house one day as a friend and then you're going to watch what God does his grace is at work his grace has been at work so Trinity Cambridge live in that place of enjoying and celebrating and anticipating his grace take time as you walk along to be like Barnabas to look around and see the grace of God at work and to celebrate it I really enjoyed doing that with you and just watching

I was here helping to move in I did my little part to help move in the Woos and the Millers back in summer of 2015 right August 2015 and it's just a little crew that got started here a little crew with a lot of faith and a big God wondering oh Lord you better show up and here you are here you are in this wonderful place to meet wonderful blessing to have a place like this and anywhere and to have it in the city and have it be affordable I mean that's just a miracle story and here you are I know very few of you God has brought you guys here together and you're operating as a church together that's grace that's his grace at work he is working here he's been working throughout his church throughout time he worked in Antioch he's working in you it's the grace of

[41 : 23] God that makes all the difference well these are just some lessons from the church in Antioch things to learn from things to set the course of our lives and our church life on and ways to remember to celebrate God's amazing grace let's pray Lord thank you thank you for the church in Antioch thank you for this model church the things to learn thank you for what you're doing here in this church Trinity Cambridge we give you praise and we give you thanks oh Lord and we say Lord we want more of you and more of your grace bless this body to be brought close together through the power of your word Lord through you working bring them together and make them shine add diverse people Lord we pray that there be even the next year more of those 62 language groups represented here and more and more brought in pour out your grace and then use them Lord to reach this area and to reach beyond this area as well you are a God full of glorious grace and we thank you for all that you're doing and ask these things in

Christ's name amen thank you going to you so Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[45 : 22] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[47 : 52] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[50 : 22] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[52 : 52] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[55 : 22] Thank you.

Thank you.