

040 - The Disciples Were Called Christians Acts 11:25-30 2012-10-07

Call to Worship: Psalm 7:17

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 36:21-28

Sermon: The Disciple Were Called Christians Acts 11:25-30

Benediction: 2 Timothy 2:19

We read here in the last few verses of Acts, how the disciples of Jesus Christ were first called, "Christians" during this time in the city of Antioch. Christian means something like, "followers of Christ," or "disciples of Christ," or "those belonging to Christ."

Let us see what is said about the church in Antioch during that time when believers were first called Christians. When we see these things that characterized that church, let us determine that when we call ourselves Christians, we will practice the same devotion to Christ that caused them to be called that.

I. Christians humbly shared the leadership of Christ's church (25-26a)

illus. they could pull together like two horses (or two mules)

A. Barnabas was a very good man, and was surely loved by the church in Antioch

B. He was presiding over a large group of new believers

C. Whatever honor, whatever respect, whatever money, whatever hospitality, the church wanted to share with its pastor, Barnabas had it all to himself

D. But Barnabas was not ruled by covetousness or any other selfish motive; he was ruled by the Holy Spirit, sent to the church by the Lord Jesus Christ

1. Christ had modeled a servant leadership, humbling Himself even unto death, laying down His own life for the good of His beloved church

2. Christ had commanded a servant leadership from His disciples, saying, "If anyone wants to be first among you, let him be your servant."

E. So Barnabas, the leader of the Christians, acted in humility, and went to find help, in the person of Saul, whom he knew to be well suited to the work

F. Barnabas knew Saul, and must have understood that Saul was a powerful, assertive man, and an extremely knowledgeable bible scholar; if he brought in Saul, Barnabas would have to play second fiddle

-we see this in Acts 14:12

G. we would suppose there would be great agreement between these two pastors

H. we would also suppose there was some substantial disagreement, as between any two human beings; if we understand this, surely Barnabas, a better man than any of us, understood that there would be disagreement along the way if he brought in another man

indeed there was

Acts 15:36-39

Galatians 2:13

I. yet this is the way of Christians, to cooperate in the leadership of the church

J. the world teaches the church several different models for church leadership

II. Christians assembled with the other followers of Christ (26b)

IA. The Lord Jesus Christ had told His original disciples (John 13:35) "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

B. The Lord Christ also had prayed to the Father for future disciples (John 17:20-21)

John 17:20-21 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, (21) that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world

may believe that you have sent me.

C. And this is just what happened in Antioch; the disciples of Jesus Christ loved one another; they had a blessed unity or one-ness, that found expression in their meeting together

D. We learn elsewhere that these meetings were on the first day of the week, but doubtless other times, also

### III. Christians submitted to the teaching about Christ (26c)

A. we generally are mindful of the fact that Christ commanded His church to preach the good news about Him, so as to make disciples for Him

B. but be reminded that making disciples is only the first part of the church's commission; the church is charged also with teaching Christ's disciples

1. see this in the Great Commission "teaching them to observe" (Matthew 28:18-20)

2. see this in Christ's command to Peter (John 21:15-18a)

C. see that the first church in Jerusalem was devoted to this (Acts 2:42)

1. the apostles taught them of Christ

2. the believers devoted themselves to that teaching

D. see that the church's officers were given for this purpose (Ephesians 4:11-15)

E. this teaching is to be to obey Christ's commands

F. this teaching is to include the most basic matters of the true religion of Jesus Christ  
see the list in Hebrews 6 of the most basic things which constitute milk

G. this teaching is to include more meaty things, also (Hebrews 5:10-11)

### IV. Christians were willing to sacrifice for the other churches of Christ (27-30)

A. prophets came

B. one of them, Agabus, foretold a famine, or dearth

C. the disciples determined to send relief

D. see how it was handled

1. each person gave according to his ability

2. the money was entrusted to the church's pastors

3. they delivered it to the other church's pastors

E. notice the two things that go together here

they determined to do this

they actually did this