

**Dr. Ron Armstrong • August 29, 2021**  
**The Movement Begins: On Just the Other Side of the Problem ...**

**Acts 11:19** Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. [20] Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. [21] The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

[22] News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. [23] When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. [24] He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

[25] Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, [26] and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called **Christians** first at Antioch.

[27] During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. [28] One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) [29] The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. [30] This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

**A. The error: Everyone should look like, well, me.**

1. The chapter 10 problem rolls right into chapter 11. I'll only love people like me. Let's review:

Hebraic  
Jews

Hellenistic  
Jews

Gentiles

2. Antioch becomes a critical key. As the 3<sup>rd</sup> most important city in the Roman Empire, it became a conduit for Christianity to spread.
3. From the start, Antioch knew their mission:
  - a. Teaching. The Church trains disciples.
  - b. Reaching. They focused on their community and strategic opportunities by sending Paul on missionary journeys.
  - c. Giving. Notice 3 things about their giving:
    - I. Those who had more gave more.
    - II. They supported teaching, reaching, and compassion ministry.
    - III. They gave when it was scary.

**B. I hate problems, but they're the key to growth.**

1. It was the persecution that led to the expansion of the Church.
2. Problems (not tragedies) are better for growth than prosperity.
  - a. It's easier to be motivated when you're "up a creek." Even procrastinators get moving.
  - b. When things are good, we're scared to change; when things are bad, we're desperate to.
  - c. When it all looks "bad," I'm more willing to trying things I'm scared to do.

3. Some problems are clear; some you have to work to uncover; some you have to open your eyes to.
4. I know it scares you, but what if just on the other side of that problem ...